

POWER AND PERSUASION: CATECHETICAL TREATMENTS OF THE
SACRAMENTS IN REFORMATION GERMANY, 1529-1597

by

RUTH KIMBERLEY ATHERTON

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Department of History
School of History and Cultures
University of Birmingham
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Short Abstract

This study considers the nature of the sacramental knowledge that was taught in the sixteenth-century catechisms of Martin Luther, Andreas Osiander, Peter Canisius, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent. Focusing on the sacraments of baptism, penance, and communion, this thesis seeks to present two principal arguments that are rooted in the indisputable fact that the catechisms were intended for a lay audience. Firstly the knowledge imparted in sacramental instruction was too limited to delineate effectively along confessional lines, thereby raising questions about the extent to which catechisms can be viewed as tools by which to create fixed confessional identities. The second argument is that catechisms should be seen as facilitators of concord rather than division. The avoidance of complex sacramental doctrine suggests that catechisms were intended to help the laity live together. This does not suggest that there was an attempt to merge together doctrinal beliefs: each of the catechisms taught the elements of a Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed faith. Moreover, the German catechists were fiercely devoted to their respective confessions, as evidenced by their broader publications. However, in providing religious edification for the laity, the heat was taken out of these theological divisions.

Long Abstract

Catechesis as a method of religious instruction has existed in various forms since the beginning of the Christian Church. On the eve of the Reformation, the genre was broad, encompassing material on the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, the Ave Maria, the Creed, and the Passion, as well as model sermons, preaching aids and biblical commentaries. However, its target audience was restricted: illiteracy rates remained high, and much of the catechetical text was in Latin. In 1517, Martin Luther produced his Ninety-Five Theses, unwittingly initiating the start of a rift with the Catholic Church that was to become permanent. His teachings led to the emergence of distinct groups, keen for a faster-paced and more radical reform than Luther was prepared to undertake. The proximity of these sects to Wittenberg, along with the disappointing Saxon parish visitation results of 1528-1529, led Luther to pen his Large and Small catechisms. Though rooted in the broader genre of medieval catechesis, the publication of these catechisms contributed to a growing urgency in the content and delivery of religious instruction. Medieval catechesis had often been limited to an educated readership, but the increasing use of the vernacular, spurred on by Catholic and Protestant propaganda, polemic, and other printed material, encouraged the diversification of catechetical literature. The whole laity now became the target of religious instruction.

This development directly influenced the nature of the content included in the catechisms. The laity comprised adults and children, the literate and illiterate, the rich and the poor. The catechisms therefore needed to include material that was suitable for this broad spectrum of knowledge and education, resulting in the publication of catechisms with different levels of doctrinal content and complexity. Small catechisms were aimed at children and 'simple folk'; intermediate catechisms were directed towards advanced pupils or educated adults; and large catechisms were intended as resources to support clergy and schoolteachers in the delivery of religious instruction to their parishioners or pupils. In each case, the laity remained the ultimate target audience. In grounding the analysis of sacramental content on this indisputable fact, two principal themes will be developed. Firstly, this thesis seeks to consider the extent to which catechisms can be viewed as tools that created fixed confessional identities. Secondly, this study asks whether catechisms should be seen as facilitators of concord rather than division. In exploring these principal themes, this thesis seeks to contribute to the fields of religious, social and cultural history of sixteenth-century Germany.

By the late Middle Ages, the practice of providing sacramental instruction to the laity had gradually decreased. The doctrinal foundations of the church and their theological complexities were not perceived as crucial, or even possible, for the laity to know. Thus, one challenge facing sixteenth-century catechists when it came to teaching the sacraments was that there was no fixed set of words that could be taught. Religious instruction encompassed the sacraments, but unlike

the Lord's Prayer or the Creed, there was no uniform set of words to draw on. The highly ritualised nature of the administration of the sacraments complicated matters further because catechists had to overcome the problem of reconciling diverse customs with prescribed doctrine. The Reformation challenged core aspects of Catholic doctrine, including, in particular, the theology of of salvation, and the resulting divisions were compounded by Luther's reduction of the number of sacraments from seven to two: baptism and communion. His concept of sacramental doctrine represented a shift from the medieval focus on penance, to one that rested on the doctrine of justification: the merits of good works, including indulgences and votive masses, along with the powers of intercession were rejected in favour of an emphasis on faith alone.

The impact of this shift in doctrinal emphasis on sacramental practice was profound and far-reaching. As the gulf between Catholicism and the emerging Protestant factions widened, attacks intensified both on established sacramental doctrines and the direction of revised doctrines. Questions such as the possibility of the real presence, the nature of the Eucharistic change, the benefits of infant baptism, communion in both kinds, the process of forgiveness, and the lasting impact of original sin presented theologians with numerous difficulties, including the problem of transmitting doctrinal complexities to the masses. In analysing the textual and visual content of the catechisms, this thesis seeks to investigate how the catechists sought to bridge the gap between sacramental knowledge and the differing content of the education provided to the laity.

The administration of the sacraments was didactic, emotive, and evocative. It could draw on previously universal practices, such as elevating the host – which became a marker of confessional identity between Lutherans and Calvinists – as well as a diverse range of local traditions. Thus, a second aspect of this thesis is its consideration of how catechisms intentionally designed for a broad readership – such as those of Luther and Canisius – overcame the existence of devotional diversity. In viewing catechisms as tools of social control, current scholarship does not acknowledge fully the impact of the audience on the development of catechetical content or its impact on the understanding of that content. Altering doctrinal meaning was one thing, but making changes to the experience of receiving a sacrament was quite another. The consideration of the texts of the catechisms as well as any accompanying woodcuts seeks to explain whether this diversity was allowed for in the catechisms.

Finally, the significance of local context will be explored. Each catechist was shaped by the contours of local politics, society, and religion. Situating the catechisms within this context allows for an exploration of how individual authors shaped their catechisms to further their own specific agendas. Osiander's career in Nuremberg was marked by a series of disputes with the city council over clerical authority. His catechism, published during a period of increasing hostility between him and the council, included a chapter on the 'Office of the Keys', in which Osiander defended the role of the pastor in an individual's journey towards

salvation. Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate commissioned a catechism to be published in the confessionally divided Upper Palatinate. Despite his inclination towards the Reformed faith, the overwhelming majority of Frederick's subjects were Lutheran, necessitating the production of a catechism that would not offend either the Reformed ruling class at the court and academics in the university or the Lutheran population. In considering the significance of local context, this thesis develops the existing scholarship on catechisms, which has viewed catechisms as shapers of religious identities. It questions whether it is possible to perceive catechisms as methods by which to unite geographically disparate confessions when the catechisms they were reading were created in a context that was potentially unrepresentative of their own experiences.

The thesis has two main parts. The first part addresses the main themes and immediate circumstances of the creation of the catechisms. Chapter one places the catechisms in context, exploring the reasons why they were created, the local concerns and objectives of the catechists, and considers the significance of structural placement and the use of woodcuts. Building on these themes, chapter two provides an analysis of the broader objectives of the catechetical genre. This chapter explores their intended uses: education, propaganda, conversion, or discipline. Key to this chapter will be an analysis of the various prefaces to the catechisms, as well as ancillary material including letters and church orders.

Part two consists of three chapters that discuss baptism, penance and communion. Together, these chapters demonstrate how the catechisms married the tenets of their confessional identity with the author's perceived reluctance of lay people to divorce themselves from traditional beliefs and popular practices. Chapter three addresses baptism, followed by an exploration of penance in chapter four. While, ultimately, Protestants ceased to regard penance as a sacrament, they retained very strong connections between the appropriate responses to sin and the enjoyment of worthy communion. This latter point will be the focus of the fifth chapter, which explores the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Threading between the chapters will be the constant evaluation of the catechisms as pedagogical tools, platforms for individual agendas, and mirrors reflective of perceived lay emotions and beliefs. Whilst church leaders sought the collection of souls, secular bodies pursued obedience, and catechists desired to teach their own interpretation of a doctrine, the catechisms themselves reflected the influence of popular agency, which could support, curtail or reject each of these goals. The argument developed throughout is that the catechisms were not agents of confessional division, or providers of inflexible sacramental instruction. Rather, they should instead be seen as contributing to a broader platform of peacekeeping measures. This does not suggest that there was an attempt to merge together doctrinal beliefs: each of the catechisms taught the elements of a Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed faith. However, in reducing the degree of confessional complexity in the catechisms to suit the capabilities of their

audience, the catechists diffused areas of conflict in order to enable people to live together peacefully.

This thesis is based on a close textual analysis of German language catechisms. These catechisms were aimed at a broader range of users with their authors recognising that Latin tended to be the preserve of the elite. Canisius and Luther translated their catechisms from Latin into German, while the *Heidelberg Catechism* and Osiander's were initially composed in the vernacular and translated into Latin later. The analysis of German language catechisms is crucial given that a central tenet of this thesis is based on the fact that catechisms were intended to educate the ordinary laity, the majority of which would not be proficient in Latin.

Collectively, the thesis suggests that confessional 'truths' were blurred and found little clarification in the catechisms. Instead, the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist catechisms drew on shared aspects of medieval religion and sacramental practice to defend the Christian faith from seditious attack. Rather than fuelling confessional division, a significant degree of cross-confessional harmony can be seen in how the sacraments were taught to the laity. Divisive doctrine was diluted in the catechisms, and their sacramental instruction facilitated the continuation of local practices, many of which were incongruous with strict Protestant or Catholic thought.

For Zachary and Alfie

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Editorial Conventions

This thesis has anglicised many German spellings of places and names, for instance Friedrich becomes Frederick, Nürnberg becomes Nuremberg. I have referred to the anglicised title of the catechisms in the text, for instance, *Short Catechism*, but the German title appears in the footnotes. For convenience, *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* has been shortened throughout to its colloquial title, the *Tridentine Catechism*.

Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate and Elector Frederick III of Saxony are referred to in full throughout this thesis because of the potential for confusion.

The vast majority of translations are my own. In cases where I have used an existing English translation, I have compared this to the original German and cited both in the footnotes. I have included the dates of specific catechisms in the footnotes when multiple editions of the catechism have been consulted throughout.

Finally, I have included the name of the printer, whenever possible, for the catechisms. When several editions from the same year have been consulted, this identifies the specific edition referred.

Introduction

Deriving their name from the Greek 'katecho', early catechisms represented the formal religious education provided by apostles for new Christian converts.¹

Though the original purpose of catechetical texts had been to impart religious instruction, by the start of the 1500s the genre had evolved into literary moral compasses offering their users advice on how to live godly and upstanding lives.²

From the eleventh century onwards, there had been a concerted attempt to teach people what 'being Christian' meant, and medieval catechetical literature had encompassed a diverse range of doctrinal and pastoral matters, including the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, the Ave Maria, the Creed, and the Passion, as well as model sermons, preaching aids and biblical commentaries.³ With regards to the sacraments, however, the late Middle Ages had gradually stopped providing in-depth sacramental instruction with it becoming sufficient for people simply to know what the sacraments were.⁴ The challenge facing sixteenth-century catechists when it came to teaching the sacraments was that there was no fixed set of words that could be taught.⁵ Knowledge had to be conveyed, but there was

¹ Robert James Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400-1600* (Leiden, 1997), p. 2.

² Medieval catechetical literature encompassed tracts dealing with specific subjects such as the Decalogue or the Lord's Prayer, but there were also guides for priests on how to perform catechetical classes, deliver catechetical sermons, participate in role-plays and even songs, *ibid.*, p. 95.

³ Eric Leland Saak, *Catechesis in the Later Middle Ages I: The Exposition of the Lord's Prayer of Jordan of Quedlinburg, OESA (d. 1380)* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 3, 20. Saak distinguishes between catechetical literature and catechisms, claiming the latter did not exist in the Middle Ages, *ibid.*, pp. 1-4.

⁴ Charles P. Arand, *That I may be his Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms* (St. Louis, 2000), p. 40.

⁵ Lee Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms, Teaching Religion* (Leiden, 2016), p. 229.

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no uniform way in which to do so. The highly ritualised nature surrounding the administration of the sacraments complicated matters further because catechists had to overcome the problem of reconciling diverse customs with prescribed doctrine. The alacrity with which Lutheranism and then Calvinism spread through the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth century both alarmed and threatened the Roman Church. For the first time, the Catholic Church was faced with a credible, dynamic, durable, and increasingly powerful alternative to its authority in Western Europe, forcing it to compete for loyal adherents. The Catholic and Protestant Churches found themselves giving ground to local ruling bodies, whose support was vital for the continuation or introduction of a religion. Equally, the laity achieved an element of control over their faith, and it became patently apparent to theologians, pastors, and secular rulers that popular attachment to customs and rituals, both regarding the sacraments and religious life more broadly, had to be accommodated in order for headway to be made at grassroots level.

Despite their lack of attention in medieval catechetical literature, the sacraments lay at the heart of late-medieval Catholic practice. From welcoming a newborn into the Catholic fold in baptism through to the deathbed administration of the Last Rites, the sacraments marked the key stages of the life-cycle and affirmed the power of God, the Church, and the priestly office. The administration of the sacraments was didactic and evocative: baptisms were marked by a series of elaborate exorcisms; masses were accompanied by the smell of incense; weddings were celebrated with the joyful pealing of bells; deaths and funerals by

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a sombre tolling. The sacraments provided structure and could offer a significant degree of comfort for individuals struggling with the hardships of everyday life.

This thesis investigates how baptism, penance and communion were taught in the catechisms of the prolific Catholic author Peter Canisius (1521-97), the Catechism of the Catholic Council of Trent (1566), the Lutheran catechisms of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Andreas Osiander (1498-1552), and the Reformed *Heidelberg Catechism* of the Palatinate (1563). Canisius' set of three catechisms – the *Large*, *Small* and *Smaller* – became the most popular and widely available Catholic catechisms in sixteenth-century Germany and, by his death in 1597, at least 357 editions had appeared.⁶ The Council of Trent's catechism, intended to be the authoritative and definitive statement of Catholic doctrine, was printed widely throughout Catholic Europe, including translations from Latin into German, Polish, and French.⁷ Luther's catechisms 'proved to be the bestsellers of the sixteenth century'; between 1529 and 1600, 484 known editions were printed and they sold more than 600,000 copies.⁸ Osiander's catechism was printed numerous times in Germany and across wider Europe, with 54 editions appearing during Osiander's life.⁹ Thomas Cranmer, when translating the catechism into English, referred to it as 'the catechism of

⁶ Paul Begheyn, 'The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History', *Quaerendo* 36 (2006), pp. 51-84, p. 61. Such was their popularity that *Der Canisi* became synonymous in German-speaking areas of Europe with learning the Catholic catechism: Wolfgang Nastainczyk, 'Die Katechismen des Petrus Canisius: Ein Aufbruch', in Karl Hillerbrand (ed.), *Petrus Canisius: Zu seinem 400. Todestag am 21. Dezember 1997* (Würzburg, 1998), pp. 49-66, p. 49.

⁷ John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 263.

⁸ Begheyn, 'The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius', p. 53.

⁹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 39.

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Germany', reflecting its influence across the Holy Roman Empire and beyond.¹⁰

Finally, the *Heidelberg Catechism* was the first Reformed catechism to be publically adopted by a ruling prince in the Holy Roman Empire.¹¹ Within the first hundred years of its appearance, twelve editions were published in German, eleven in Latin, and a further forty-two in other languages.¹² The analysis of these influential catechisms seeks to question whether they served as agents of confessional division, or whether they ought to be conceived instead as promoters of civic and religious peace.

Though Catholics recognised seven sacraments and Protestants ultimately rejected all but baptism and communion, the analysis of baptism, penance and communion – which Canisius also taught were the most 'necessary for salvation' – will reveal a great deal about how the Church and state attempted to regulate events which had long been left unregulated.¹³ For most of the sixteenth century, these three rites – which for convenience I shall refer to in this thesis as

¹⁰ Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Harvard, 2004), p. 195.

¹¹ A useful work on the catechism is Arnold Huijen (ed.), *The Spirituality of the Heidelberg Catechism: Papers of the International Conference on the Heidelberg Catechism Held in Apeldoorn 2013* (Göttingen, 2015).

¹² Karin Y. Maag, 'Early Editions and Translations of the Heidelberg Catechism', in Lyle D. Bierma (ed.), *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 103-117, pp. 113-117.

¹³ Petrus Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus, oder kurtze Summa des wahren Christlichen und Catholischen Glaubens* [hereafter, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574)] (Dillingen: Sebald Meyer, 1574), p. 112. Incidentally, in the 1558 edition of the *Small Catechism*, Canisius declared that the sacrament of the altar is 'truly the highest and holiest Sacrament' ('das ist warlichen dz hochst und heiligst Sacament'), but this was removed in the 1571 edition of the *Small Catechism*, when the question was changed to 'What should one believe of the reverent Sacrament of the Altar?' (Was sol man von dem hochwürdigen Sacrament des Altars glauben?): Petrus Canisius, *Der Klain Catechismus sampt kurzen gebetlen für die ainfältigen* (Dillingen: Sebald Meyer, 1558), p. 52; Petrus Canisius, *Der Klain Catechismus / oder kurze Summa des waren Chrislichen und Catholischen Glaubens* (Ingolstadt: Alexander Weißenhorn, 1571), p. 119.

sacraments, even though for Lutherans and Reformed, penance was not regarded as a sacrament – remained at the heart of both Catholic and Protestant faith; communion and baptism brought communities together, transcending social distinctions, and penance remained a fundamental source of comfort for penitent sinners. In analysing their treatment in the catechisms, four core arguments will be developed. Firstly, through investigating how catechisms were used to coordinate the religious experience of receiving the sacraments, it will be demonstrated that areas of major discord between Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists were subdued, at least on paper. Piety and the creation of well-informed adherents to a faith was certainly an aim of the catechists, but the tempered level of doctrine and ritual direction offered in the catechisms restricted the degree and depth of knowledge that could be learned, as well as permitted the continued practice of local rituals. Connected to this, the second strand to be developed is that, while areas of common agreement were highlighted through both emphases and critical omissions, the doctrines of fringe groups were collectively denounced. Whilst this is most pronounced in the cross-confessional defence of infant baptism, it can also be detected in discussions surrounding the divine institution of baptism and the Real Presence. This suggests that conformity to a form of Christianity that had its roots in shared aspects of Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism rather than the promotion of division was the more important aim of these catechisms.

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While each of the catechisms analysed here had appeal across the Holy Roman Empire and beyond, a third strand of this thesis seeks to situate them in their local urban and regional contexts. For Luther, this was Wittenberg, for Osiander it was Nuremberg, for Canisius it was the duchy of Bavaria, and for the *Heidelberg Catechism* it was the Palatinate. The impact of local dynamics on the content, language, emphasis and tone of the catechisms will be explored, along with a consideration of the influence of the concerns of local parishioners. This angle, in particular, will contribute to existing scholarship on the role of the laity in shaping their religious experiences and practical expressions of piety. Finally, situating the catechisms within the context of local politics and religious feeling reveals how individual authors shaped their catechisms to further their own specific agendas. In the case of Luther, this was to divorce himself from any association with radical groups, for Osiander, it was to protect clerical authority and for Elector Frederick III, it was to establish control over the Church and religion in the Palatinate. Canisius' aim was to promote a version of Catholicism that was suited to the Germans and that could meet their spiritual needs, while the *Tridentine Catechism* endeavoured to instil a uniform concept of Catholic doctrine across Christian Europe. Each catechism promoted obedience to either the Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed faiths, but, ultimately, the shade of that faith was not uniform within and between the catechisms.

Throughout this thesis, the acknowledgement that the catechisms were designed for a lay audience is paramount. It underpins the analysis of textual and visual

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content, and remains at the core of the arguments that will be developed over the coming chapters. The laity were not all educated in theology, indeed, many were barely educated at all. It was not plausible to expect an ordinary German to grasp complex doctrinal matters that even highly trained theologians struggled to comprehend fully. Catechisms, therefore, taught the basics of the faith. In stripping away complexity, the remaining material was intended to be basic, simple, and easy to understand. Moreover, could the ordinary German be trusted with sensitive doctrinal complexities? After the outbreak of the Peasants' War in the mid-1520s, in which insurgent groups tried to connect the nature of their complaints with Luther's religious messages, the importance of avoiding the potential for misunderstandings was made paramount. Thus, the intended audience of the catechisms lies at the heart of the following discussion.

Early-modern catechisms are increasingly attracting scholarly attention. Karen Carter's 2011 study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French catechisms, for instance, investigates how Catholic catechisms for children were taught in village schools and demonstrates that the Church and state's vision of a uniform, obedient society can be detected in how the education of children was coordinated.¹⁴ Her work stresses the importance of lay agency in directing the form of education that was provided for village children. A separate strand of catechetical scholarship has focused on the fundamental purpose of catechisms; writing in the 1970s, Gerald Strauss argued that 'the implicit aim of catechesis ...

¹⁴ Karen E. Carter, *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (Notre Dame, 2011).

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was to inculcate piety'.¹⁵ More recently, Charles P. Arand and Gordon A. Jensen have taken a similar view, with Arand commenting that Luther's catechisms were designed to provide an 'evangelical theology ... that often filtered down to shape the religious life of the village parish and its ... parishioners'.¹⁶ On the other hand, Robert Bast argues that catechisms were one of the tools used by reformers to create their perception of ideal leaders and 'bind all others to their benevolent authority'.¹⁷ His research has led him to conclude that the catechetical treatment of the Decalogue points towards a society whose rulers were envisioned to be 'virtuous men who would fight back against the forces of disorder by imposing discipline and promoting true religion'.¹⁸ However, this is not reflected in the catechetical treatment of the sacraments. Instead, there are indications that there was both an effort to appeal to, or neutralise, popular sentiment as well as to downplay doctrinally divisive issues. Yet, Bast's comment that in sixteenth-century catechisms 'we find the contours of a program that united the most unlikely pairings: Gerson and Hus, Luther and Eck, Protestants and Jesuits' is intriguing.¹⁹ Bast rests this conclusion on the personal characteristics of the catechists: they were zealous, critical of the state, society and the Church, and believed discipline was the only way to remedy God's anger towards the sinfulness of mortals.²⁰ The sacraments certainly had disciplining qualities –

¹⁵ Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, 1978), p. 290.

¹⁶ Gordon A. Jensen, 'Shaping Piety Through Catechetical Structures: The Importance of Order', *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 10 (2008), pp. 223-246, p. 224; Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, p. 29, quotation on p. 21.

¹⁷ Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, p. xi.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

access to communion was denied to unrepentant sinners, for instance – but it will be argued here that discipline and, particularly, ‘true religion’ were issues of lesser import than fostering a degree of peaceful coexistence between the confessions in the local enactment of faith.

The concepts of ‘true religion’ and ‘true knowledge’ have been considered most recently in Lee Palmer Wandel’s 2016 work on the use of catechisms in teaching religion. Her study draws, in particular, on the catechisms of Canisius, the Council of Trent, Luther, Calvin and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, which, with the exception of Calvin’s catechism, are all analysed in this thesis. Whilst other studies have looked at distinct parts of the catechisms, or from perspectives such as discipline or education more broadly, Palmer Wandel’s research seeks to understand how catechisms were ‘designed to work – to reach readers, to form minds and hearts, to build communities of persons all of whom embodied the same texts’.²¹ Her methodology has led her to view the catechisms of each doctrine as discrete texts whose success lay in helping to form discrete Churches that united the faithful to that Church, despite the geographical location of the individual.²² For Palmer Wandel, catechisms were key in the formation of a religious identity that was based on imparting ‘true knowledge’ to their users.²³

²¹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 27.

²² Palmer Wandel notes that ‘From the sea of texts in the early years of the fragmentation of Christianity, a small handful of catechisms emerged by the end of the century ... that were to form “Churches” whose members were scattered across the face of the globe’, in *ibid.*, p. 27. She further comments that a catechism could be read in a geographic area that recognized the catechism’s teachings as illegal, thus speaking the words removed the reader from their local church and united them with their ‘true’ church – ‘the hand that held the codex should not be taken as physically located within a spatially contiguous church’, *ibid.*, p. 41.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Knowledge, in this context, was that which 'separated a true Christian from a false Christian'.²⁴ These conclusions are an extension of Bast's findings that indicated that catechisms were expressly designed to resolve the religious, political and social challenges caused by the development of rival confessions.²⁵ However, the catechetical treatment of the sacraments questions these findings. Firstly, catechisms as a genre were largely silent on the matter of ritual, but the administration of the sacraments was a hugely ritualistic affair; to avoid any rigorous discussion of these rituals left the whole concept of the sacraments incomplete and open to local interpretation. As a result, the identity that catechisms were supposed to create through imparting 'true knowledge' could be neither uniform nor complete. In this, Ulinka Rublack's caution that religion 'is not defined by a fixed set of beliefs and ideas; it rests on their diverse social interpretations' is vital.²⁶ The analysis of the texts in this thesis will explore the possibility that the catechisms transcended confessional boundaries between themselves, collectively uniting against the Anabaptists and other radical movements, whilst seeking to promote a brand of faith that would encourage a degree of harmonisation between Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism through the continuation of locally-developed practices. In this context, harmony should be understood to mean peaceful co-existence, rather than the merging together of distinct doctrines. Like Palmer Wandel's study, this thesis seeks to compare the texts of the catechisms directly, but it will then develop this comparison to investigate how their sacramental knowledge was shaped, visually

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

²⁵ Bast, *Honour Your Fathers*, p. 231.

²⁶ Ulinka Rublack, *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 11.

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and textually, to reflect the aims of the catechists and patrons. It will suggest that the catechism was removed from its immediate purpose of teaching knowledge and recast into a position that bridged the chasm between 'true doctrine' and the practical enactment of 'true worship'.

The incorporation of traditional or long-established rituals into church services significantly contributed to the religious experience provided by the late medieval Church and they proved to be frustratingly difficult to remove, reduce, or successfully monitor in the sixteenth century.²⁷ Peter Lombard had encouraged the connection between ritual and the sacraments in the twelfth century and this became an official dogma of the Church in 1439.²⁸ During the Middle Ages, all manner of regional customs had sprung up, with villages, towns and cities celebrating various saints' days and other such occasions practically unhindered. As expressions of local identity, the laity, along with parish priests, could be hostile to state pressure to abolish the rituals which lived out and demonstrated their piety.²⁹ However, the rise and gradual spread of Protestantism, along with Tridentine efforts to increase Catholic uniformity threatened to derail local enactments of piety. Thus, authorities hostile to reform clung on vigorously to their traditions and the laity were not always receptive to changes that threatened their understandings and expectations of the religious experience offered by the

²⁷ Bernd Moeller, 'Religious Life on the Eve of the Reformation', in Gerald Strauss (ed.), *Pre-Reformation Germany* (New York, 1972), pp. 13-42. Charles Zika, 'Hosts, Processions and Pilgrimages: Controlling the Sacred in Fifteenth Century Germany', *Past and Present* 118 (1988), pp. 25-64; Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (second edition) (Cambridge, 2005).

²⁸ Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, p. 163.

²⁹ John Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe', *Past and Present* 47 (1970), pp. 51-70, pp. 55-56.

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Church.³⁰ Despite the importance of ritual, particularly in the administration of the sacraments, the catechisms offered very little direction regarding which rituals were to be employed and how they were to be performed. This thesis considers whether the lack of specific instruction regarding rituals in the catechisms was an attempt to avoid prescribing on what was a highly charged and emotive issue. Yet, while the texts of the catechisms were mostly silent regarding ritual, woodcuts – when included – often gave hints regarding the use of rituals in church services.

Woodcuts were an integral feature of the early Protestant faith and there has been intensive focus on those created by leading evangelical artists such as the Saxon court painter, Lucas Cranach, and the Nuremberg-based Albrecht Dürer, to name but a couple.³¹ Images were included in several editions of the catechisms of Luther, Osiander and Canisius. They did not appear in every edition, and the choice of woodcuts varied between editions and in terms of structural placement. In 2004, Keith Moxey commented that the significance of

³⁰ Marc R. Forster, 'The Elite and Popular Foundations of German Catholicism in the Age of Confessionalization: The Reichskirche', *Central European History* 26 (1993), pp. 311-325. Forster blames the intense devotion to popular traditions for 'Tridentine Universalism' failing to capture the German church and argues that the clergy of smaller church institutions tried to hinder the implementation of reform measures, *ibid.*, p. 311; p. 314. Canisius noted that it was not just traditions that were protected but also privileges, writing in a letter to Bishop Frederick of Würzburg in April 1567 that bishops were concerned that cathedral chapters would refuse to reform if it meant relinquishing any rights and privileges: Otto Braunsberger (ed.), *Beati Petri Canisii, Societatis Iesu, Epistulae et acta*, [hereafter, *Beati*], 8 volumes (Freiburg, 1896-1923), vol. 4, pp. 412-417, p. 416.

³¹ John Dillenberger, *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth Century Europe* (Oxford, 1999), especially chapters three and four; Bonnie Noble, *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation* (Lanham, 2009).

woodcuts for sixteenth-century German society has been overlooked.³² Whilst this appraisal was directed towards scholars of art history, the same is true for history and, indeed, theology. In many instances, studies on sixteenth-century German catechisms have either discussed woodcuts in passing, or have offered descriptions of the scenes depicted without comparing them directly to the text. More will be said on woodcuts later in this chapter, but it is relevant here that Palmer Wandel has recently analysed Canisius' Latin *Institutiones* (1575), which was richly illustrated with woodcuts designed to '[situate] the catechumen in a visually complex space'.³³ She suggests, rightly, that images could be used to teach what words alone could not. In so doing, she touches on an inherent problem in much of the existing literature: woodcuts are often seen as accompaniments to the words rather than communicating their own messages. She argues that 'reading the image requires both knowledge of the scriptural texts cited within it and an understanding of symbols', and suggests that a deeper knowledge of scripture would lead to a deeper understanding and reading of the woodcut.³⁴ Though persuasive, this argument perhaps can be developed further when comparing woodcuts from different editions of a given catechism, printed by different publishers in various locations across the German Empire. Occupying a position that straddled the gap between high and low art, and high

³² Keith Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago, 2004), p. 1.

³³ Lee Palmer Wandel, 'Catechisms: Teaching the Eye to Read the World', in Feike Dietz, Adam Morton, Lien Roggen and Els Stronks (eds.), *Illustrated Religious Texts in the North of Europe, 1500-1800* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 53-76, p. 62.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-4.

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and low culture, woodcuts in catechisms can also provide information adding to our understanding of popular religion.

Research into popular religion is extensive, although much of this work has only been conducted in the past thirty years. In the 1980s, Bob Scribner noted that for all the different ways the role of popular religion had been explored, 'only recently has attention been directed at liturgical and sacramental forms and so far only to a rather limited extent'.³⁵ Scribner analysed the use of sacred ceremonies (*functiones sacrae*), sacramentals, and folk and magical beliefs to assess how they were incorporated into, or rejected from, the formal liturgical structure. He concluded that popular religion was neither fixed nor thoroughly separate from 'official religion' and that, despite efforts to abolish 'superstitious' practices, both Protestants and Catholics continued to use processions, exorcisms and blessings to beseech God for protection from natural disasters and evil spirits.³⁶ Euan Cameron has built on the work of Scribner, but has sought to 'put the theological controversy back into the history of the assault on "popular superstition"'.³⁷ He discusses the distinction between the treatment of what were regarded as superstitious beliefs between the Protestants and Catholics and draws on sermons, pamphlets, pastoral studies and university theses to conclude

³⁵ Robert W. Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion in Catholic Germany at the Time of the Reformation', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984), pp. 47-77, p. 48. See also R.W. Scribner, 'Cosmic Order and Daily Life: Sacred and Secular in Pre-Industrial German Society', in *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London, 1987), pp. 1-16; Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Oxford, 2012), p. 18.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

³⁷ Euan Cameron, 'For Reasoned Faith or Embattled Creed? Religion for the People in Early Modern Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 8 (1998), pp. 165-187, p. 168.

that, despite the common drive to remove superstition from religious practice and their shared understanding of demonology, the theological differences between the confessions were very clear.³⁸ Henry Kamen agrees with both these conclusions, commenting that there was a shared effort to abolish false belief, but that the doctrines behind this movement were fundamentally different.³⁹ Yet, whilst sixteenth-century reformers saw superstitious beliefs arising as a result of ignorance, the German catechisms rarely mentioned sacramentals such as holy water, baptismal oil, and bells.⁴⁰ There is a disconnect between the explicit references to such practices in the texts on which Cameron draws in his research and what was included in the catechisms. Considering that catechisms were intended to educate on doctrine, and doctrine either condemned or condoned given rituals, this begs the obvious question of why sacramentals and superstitious beliefs were not broached in the catechisms. This is not just seen in the catechisms of one particular doctrine, but it is cross-confessional and fairly consistent throughout the texts. Each chapter of this thesis will therefore address the ritual and ceremonial aspects of the sacrament it considers, comparing the text and images – when included – with the known ritual practices of the catechism's location to consider the potential relationship between catechisms and the lived experience of the sacraments. In so doing, the chapters reassert the difficulty of trying to quantify religious and ritual culture in fixed terms for the laity.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-171.

³⁹ Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society* (London, 2005), p. 52.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Indeed, scholars have struggled to agree on how to accurately define culture and ritual. In seeking to define the latter, Muir has commented that ‘possibilities range from a narrow definition that restricts ritual to religious practices that attempt to gain access to the supernatural to a broad one that sees ritual in nearly any form of repeated, formalised human activity’.⁴¹ Scholars have interpreted the use or not of ritual as either divisive or unifying, but Muir suggests that a definition of ritual should not be our question.⁴² Rather, we should investigate ‘how the concept can be framed so that it is useful for analysis’.⁴³ In terms of culture, Clifford Geertz has defined it as ‘an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life’.⁴⁴ More recently, Karant-Nunn has suggested that James Fernandez’s view that symbols bind people together regardless of the lack of a uniform meaning is a suitable assessment of late-medieval and Reformation Europe.⁴⁵ The catechisms, with their lack of ritual and symbolic direction, were not designed to engage with cultural expression directly, but this became problematic when trying to teach the sacraments which fused together doctrine and rituals that were based on distinct cultural identities. It undermines the concept of confessionalization as advocated by Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, who viewed catechisms, along with a number of other

⁴¹ Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, p. 3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Clifford Geertz, ‘Religion as a Cultural System’, in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, 1973), pp. 87-125, p. 89.

⁴⁵ Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London, 1997), p. 3.

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mechanisms, as tools used by the state and Church to promote confessional homogeneity.⁴⁶ Uniformity in ritual could not be achieved without clear instruction and its absence points to the strength of lay agency and entrenched notions of local and traditional expressions of piety.

Schilling and Reinhard's work was an extension of and corollary to the concept of social discipline. This was initially born of research undertaken in the 1950s with the publication of Ernst Walter Zeeden's 1958 paper introducing the theory of 'confession formation' (*Konfessionsbildung*). This argued that Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism began implementing clearly defined Churches based on written confessions of faith.⁴⁷ Gerhard Oestreich developed the concept of social discipline based on the hypothesis that the late-medieval Church was unable to regulate effectively lay morals and behaviour, forcing the secular regimes to step in.⁴⁸ Schilling's and Reinhard's works, published in the 1970s and 1980s, extended and developed these strands; each independently advocated the theory of confessionalization.⁴⁹ Essentially, this argues for a process of increasing integration between the territorial church and the state with

⁴⁶ Wolfgang Reinhart, 'Pressures towards Confessionalization? Prolegomena to a Theory of the Confessional Age', in C. Scott Dixon (ed.), *The German Reformation. The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 169-192. A list of the other mechanisms of confessionalization can be found in Ute Lotz-Heumann, 'Confessionalization', in Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen and Mary Laven (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 33-53, p. 35.

⁴⁷ Ernst Walter Zeeden, 'Grundlagen und Wege der Konfessionsbildung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe', *Historische Zeitschrift* 185 (1958), pp. 249-299.

⁴⁸ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Strukturprobleme des europäischen Absolutismus', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 50 (1968), pp. 329-347, p. 338.

⁴⁹ Wolfgang Reinhart, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment', *Catholic Historical Review* 75 (1989), pp. 383-404. Confessionalization as a concept can ultimately be traced back to Max Weber. His study on the Protestant work ethic investigated the role of the church and other ecclesiastical institutions in spreading discipline: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, 1930).

the state gradually attaining supremacy over the church. Schilling defined the concept as a 'fundamental process of society, which had far-reaching effects upon the public and private life of individual European societies' and Reinhard argued that in the face of competing religions, the faiths had to establish themselves as churches 'with well-defined membership'.⁵⁰ It is this political aspect of the confessionalization theory, rather than the earlier concept of confession-formation, which my analysis of the catechisms renders problematic. The concept of a 'well-defined membership' is difficult to achieve through the use of catechisms, which, I shall argue, often avoided both contention and ritual definition. Whilst there is clear evidence of confession-formation, including the production of such texts as the Formula of Concord (1577), the decoration of churches, the use of images, the incorporation of music and hymns, and the language of the liturgy, the role and influence of catechisms in confession-formation and subsequent development of confessional identities cannot be assumed. I shall argue that catechisms did not – and were not intended to – function at a high confessional level: they were intended to provide instruction for the ordinary laity, the majority of which likely would possess only a rudimentary degree of literacy and theological understanding. Catechisms were confessional in that they were attached to confessional churches – Luther's were recognised as being Protestant and Canisius' were certainly Catholic – but their content is not as divisive as has been perceived in much of the existing literature.

⁵⁰ Heinz Schilling, 'Confessionalization in the Empire: Religious and Social Change in Germany between 1555 and 1620', in *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society: Essays in German and Dutch History* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 204-245, p. 209; Reinhart, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation', p. 390.

The connected theories of confessionalization and social control have come under intense criticism by scholars.⁵¹ Advocates insist that the state imposed order onto society from above. Detractors, however, disagree, arguing that if social control even existed it was only successful because of self-regulation at grass roots level, not because of state pressure.⁵² Ute Lotz-Heumann has published a number of studies on the viability of the confessionalization concept, most recently focusing on Ireland. She concludes that early-modern rulers used 'religion as an instrument of state formation – even if they often did not have the power to impose their will on their territories', and further comments that more focus needs to be placed on opposition to state and church measures.⁵³ William Bradford Smith has noted that for the German villages of Hollfeld and Kronach and the city of Bamberg 'the community came to exercise greater influence over its religious life' than the Church.⁵⁴ Yet, as catechisms were patronised and promoted by state and Church leaders, this study will respect Reinhard's and Schilling's caution that to focus entirely on a grassroots perspective would be as one-sided as looking at the paradigm from an entirely elite approach, and that 'we have to keep the crucial role of the state in mind, when we examine the

⁵¹ Ute Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of "Confessionalization": A Historiographical Paradigm in Dispute', *Memoria y Civilización (MyC)* 4 (2001), pp. 93-114; Stefan Breuer, 'Sozialdisziplinierung. Probleme und Problemverlagerungen eines Konzepts bei Max Weber, Gerhard Oestreich und Michel Foucault', in Christopher Sachsse and Florian Tennstedt (eds.), *Soziale Sicherheit und Soziale Disziplinierung: Beiträge zu einer historischen Theorie der Sozialpolitik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), pp. 45-69.

⁵² Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of "Confessionalization"', pp. 109-110.

⁵³ Lotz-Heumann, 'Confessionalization', p. 44, 50. Also, Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of "Confessionalization"', pp. 109-110.

⁵⁴ William Bradford Smith, *Reformation and the German Territorial State: Upper Franconia, 1300-1630* (Rochester, 2008), p. 18.

results of “confessionalization”⁵⁵. In this, they were criticising those works that focused purely on reform from below: Bernd Moeller, for instance, has argued that ‘the magistrates were anything but the motive force behind the Reformation’.⁵⁶ The analysis of the catechisms within both a macro and micro context will validate the concerns of both Bradford Smith and Lotz-Heumann regarding the confessionalization theory. Each of the catechisms was written with a broad user base in mind and they were each employed extensively across the Holy Roman Empire and wider Christian Europe. Moreover, they were each shaped by the contours of local politics, society and religion in their initial place of origin. Both of these aspects challenged the depth of doctrine and degree of state-directed piety that could be channelled through these simultaneously local and trans-regional catechisms.

A second concern regarding the confessionalization theory is its tendency to only look at the function of religion in state and society rather than address specific characteristics of its manifestations. Bradford Smith notes that much of the existing work on confessionalization implies that religion was not important save as a way to ensure political control and, in some instances, it is denied any role in society ‘as religion’.⁵⁷ Palmer Wandel suggests that by the end of the sixteenth century, catechisms emerged ‘as the preeminent printed instrument for forming

⁵⁵ Reinhart, ‘Reformation, Counter-Reformation’, p. 397.

⁵⁶ Bernd Moeller, ‘Imperial Cities and the Reformation’, in *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H.C. Erik Midelfort and Mark V. Edwards Jr. (Durham, 1982), pp. 41-115, p. 61.

⁵⁷ Bradford Smith, *Reformation and the German Territorial State*, p. 4. Lotz-Heumann comments that there needs to be increased research into the development of confessional cultures and identities: Lotz-Heumann, ‘Confessionalization’, p. 50.

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religious identity'.⁵⁸ Simone Laqua-O'Donnell has also recently raised the important question of identity and meaning: what did being a Protestant or a Catholic mean to people?⁵⁹ Catechisms cannot answer this question on their own, but their teachings on the sacraments may provide strong indications of the relative independence of local territories in shaping their own religious experiences based on their perception of the meaning of being a Catholic or Protestant. It is often not what the catechisms say that can imply meaning, rather it is what they do not say that is important in this regard. The concept of meaning further considers the problems of imposing broad categories or labels – such as confessionalization – onto early modern society. In her study on gender as an analytical concept, Jeanne Boydston has noted that anomalies in a given framework should not be forced to conform to the parameters of that model but, instead, they should be examined because 'irregularities point to more fundamental problems in the category itself'.⁶⁰ This same conclusion can easily be transferred to the confessionalization paradigm as well as labels of Protestant and Catholic more generally. The sacraments were a representation of doctrinal truth and their core theological understanding distinguished Protestantism from Catholicism and Lutheranism from Calvinism, but at a local level, this truth was blurred and found little clarification in the catechisms. It is hard to conceive that

⁵⁸ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 22.

⁵⁹ Simone Laqua-O'Donnell, 'Catholic Piety and Community', in Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen and Mary Laven (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 281-297, p. 286. Euan Cameron has also questioned what being a Protestant meant – did they belong to a state church, confession or Protestant communion across Europe? See Euan Cameron, 'One Reformation or Many? Protestant Identities in the Later Reformation in Germany', in Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 108-127, p. 110.

⁶⁰ Jeanne Boydston, 'Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis', *Gender & History* 20 (2008), pp. 558-583, p. 560.

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this did not impact on meaning and identity, but it also draws attention to the fundamental problem of seeing catechisms as tools of confessionalization. The concept is too inflexible to accommodate the sacramental flexibility offered by the catechisms.

A problem arising from the concept of confession-formation is that its application to sixteenth-century Europe precludes a close reading of confessional documents. Lincoln Mullen has argued that a closer analysis of such texts – creeds, confessions and catechisms – demonstrates that they do not fit into the broader confessionalization theory. He suggests that advocates of confessionalization and confession-formation intentionally ignore the textual details of texts that serve to distinguish the confessions from each other.⁶¹ He concludes that the texts have shared characteristics that oppose the supposition that they created ‘mutually antagonistic confessional groups’, and he rejects the idea that the confessionalization process was ultimately divisive.⁶² At the same time, Heal notes that confessional cultures did exist in Germany by the seventeenth century. People recognised them because of their doctrinal teachings, structures and liturgical rituals, as well as their social and cultural

⁶¹ Lincoln Mullen, ‘Confessionalization and the Creedal Tradition’, *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (2010), pp. 79-90, p. 80.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 84-5. Hsia argues that the Jesuits’ preference for putting ‘pure religion’ above toleration in Munster created divisions in the body politic and suggests they were behind the formation of political parties based on confessional lines: R. Po-chia Hsia, *Society and Religion in Münster, 1535-1618* (New Haven, 1984), p. 59. Michael Hughes implies the divisive nature of confessionalization arguing ‘most German states were essentially confessional, in that one religion was regarded as the basis of the entire political structure and toleration of other faiths was seen as inherently dangerous’, Michael Hughes, *Early Modern Germany, 1477-1806* (London, 1992), p. 66.

practices.⁶³ This raises the question of how these confessional identities were communicated. Palmer Wandel's study of sixteenth-century confessions of faith suggests that 'confessions were intended to articulate for members in as precise language as possible the core tenets that defined that community'.⁶⁴ As with catechisms, she views confessions as facilitators of identity formation leading to the development of confessional churches. However, this present study lends weight to Mullen's conclusions by showing that, far from focusing on division, there is a discernible degree of continuity and uniformity in approach, content, tone and language between the sacramental teachings of confessionally distinct groups. Yet, whilst Mullen ultimately concludes that confessional texts were an effort 'to put Europe back together' after the onset of the Reformation, the following chapters seek to qualify this assertion through demonstrating that there was indeed an effort to heal, but there was also a desire to separate and exclude groups commonly perceived as radical.⁶⁵ This aspect will draw attention to the broader themes of toleration, co-existence and peacekeeping, which continue to be developed in the wider scholarship on early modern Germany and Europe more broadly.

In the 1990s, Scribner described nine different types of toleration that existed in sixteenth-century Germany but concluded that, ultimately, 'only a very meagre degree of toleration was possible ... and then it existed only on an *ad hoc*

⁶³ Bridget Heal, *A Magnificent Faith: Art and Identity in Lutheran Germany* (Oxford, 2017), p. 6.

⁶⁴ Lee Palmer Wandel, 'Confessions', in Thomas Max Safley (ed.), *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 23-43, p. 32.

⁶⁵ Mullen, 'Confessionalization and the Creedal Tradition', p. 87.

basis'.⁶⁶ Of the nine forms of toleration discussed by Scribner, this thesis will explore those related to 'passive freedom of belief' where a blind eye was turned against dissident groups; the concept of *cuius regio, eius religio*, which permitted the secular regime to impose their own church regulations – Lutheran or Catholic – on their territories; the notion of 'de facto toleration by virtue of pastoral latitudinarianism', by which outward conformity was accepted as sufficient; the concept of toleration due to a lack of means to enforce uniformity; and, finally, toleration due to 'political rationality', which was found amongst ordinary people in their daily lives.⁶⁷ This final aspect has been developed more fully by Benjamin Kaplan and Marjorie Plummer who suggest that peaceful coexistence was a practical response to the problem of living in religiously diverse communities.⁶⁸ Indeed, Laqua-O'Donnell has found that localised outbreaks of violence between Catholics and Protestants were fairly infrequent in sixteenth-century Germany and points to recent studies that have demonstrated that coexistence, as opposed to conflict, was more often the norm.⁶⁹

The forms of toleration described by Scribner can be detected in each of the catechisms, but any reference to a degree of cross-confessional harmonising, regardless of its origin, leads to questions regarding whether this was deliberate

⁶⁶ Bob Scribner, 'Preconditions of Tolerance and Intolerance in Sixteenth Century Germany', in Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 32-47, p. 39.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-38.

⁶⁸ Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Tolerance in Early Modern Europe* (Harvard, 2010); Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation* (Farnham, 2012).

⁶⁹ Laqua-O'Donnell, 'Catholic Piety and Community', p. 286.

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or simply a coincidence. It was probably a bit of both. Luther cautioned against implementing drastic reforms too quickly and appreciated the need to keep the people on board with his programme of renewal.⁷⁰ His catechisms denounced extreme views and emphasised some areas of continuity with the Roman faith. For his part, Canisius also advocated moderation in his catechism. He very probably had read the work of Luther and other Protestants, as evidenced by his quotations from and references to Protestant tracts in his other works.⁷¹ Osiander and Luther were aware of each other's catechisms, but both had died before the publication of the *Heidelberg Catechism* in 1563. The Heidelberg catechists would have been familiar with Luther's catechism. Indeed, one of the probable authors, Caspar Olevianus used Luther's *Small Catechism* as the basis for his *Proposal*, published in the 1570s. Lyle Bierma has commented that the *Proposal* was deliberately non-polemical and compared the similarities between Lutheranism and the Reformed doctrine, rather than drew attention to the differences.⁷² The second assumed author, Zacharias Ursinus, being a

⁷⁰ Peter G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation: Religion, Political Conflict, and the Search for Conformity, 1350-1750* (second edition) (Houndmills, 2012), p. 95. Luther's *Invocavit Sermons*, delivered in March 1522, advised patience, explaining 'What does a mother do to her child? First she gives it milk, then gruel, then eggs and soft food, whereas if she turned about and gave it solid food, the child would never thrive ... So we should also deal with our brother, have patience with him for a time, have patience with his weakness and help him bear it; we should also give him mild food, too': cited in Eric Lund (ed.), *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517-1750* (Minneapolis, 2002), p. 37. See *D. Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe* [hereafter, *WA*], 128 vols. (Weimar, 1883-1929), vol. 51, pp. 69-79.

⁷¹ John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Harvard, 1995), p. 280. In the preface to his collection of the writings of Leo the Great (1546), Canisius denounced the Protestants' 'unbridled passion for fabricating new doctrines': *tum effrenis illa libido comminiscendi noua dogmata*: Peter Canisius, *D. Leonis Papae huius nominis primi, qui svmmpp iure magni cogno menum iam olim obtinet, opera, quae quidem extant, omnia* (Köln; Melchior von Neuß, 1546). Trans. Hilmar Pabel, 'Peter Canisius and the "Truly Catholic" Augustine', *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), pp. 903-925, p. 909.

⁷² Lyle D. Bierma, 'Lutheran-Reformed Polemics in the Late Reformation: Olevianus's Conciliatory Proposal', in Derk J. Visser (ed.), *Controversy and Conciliation: The Reformation and the Palatinate 1559-1583* (Eugene, 1986), pp. 51-72, p. 55.

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Wittenberg graduate, albeit under the tutelage of Melanchthon, would almost certainly have been familiar with Luther's catechisms. Just as Luther was cautious about implementing reform too quickly, Ursinus and Olevianus were alert to the fact that the catechism had to be accepted by a theologically diverse population. It seems to be the case that whether by wilful design or not, circumstances dictated that the catechisms avoid polemic, controversy and too much detail.

Building on this process of toleration and partly in response to concerns that the confessionalization paradigm does not sufficiently take into account the role of either the laity or grass-roots activity, scholars have attempted to look in more depth at the ways the Church and state attempted to coordinate the religious experience at the level of praxis. In his examination of East Swabian towns and cities, for instance, Christopher Close comments that 'alongside the internal dialogue that occurred within many cities, negotiation between cities exerted a powerful influence on the South German urban Reformation'.⁷³ He explains that urban reform was not directed purely from either above or below, but instead it was based on the magistrates' perception of how the city's inhabitants would receive any reforms.⁷⁴ This process of perception-based negotiation – explicit or implicit – can be seen in the catechisms. Each of the catechists had to negotiate with the concerns of local parishioners and the ambitions of their secular patrons whilst still teaching the fundamental aspects of the Catholic or Protestant faiths.

⁷³ Christopher W. Close, *The Negotiated Reformation: Imperial Cities and the Politics of Urban Reform, 1525-1550* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 252.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

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Particularly in the Palatinate, the fractured and religiously diverse population impacted on the manner in which Frederick III and his predecessors attempted to implement religious change. Moreover, as will be discussed in chapter one, a central tenet of the sacramental teachings of the *Heidelberg Catechism* on the Lord's Supper was permitted because of negotiation with other princes in the Naumburg Prince's conference of 1561.⁷⁵

One of the ways in which rulers could both try to understand and influence popular feeling was through the use of sermons. These were an established pedagogical tool and were, theoretically, used alongside catechisms to teach and instruct on matters of faith and morality.⁷⁶ Sermons, being oratorical, did not require any reading skills on the part of the individual listener and did not demand memorisation. Certainly, sermons were often printed with the intention of being read and remembered, but their delivery in a public setting was an inclusive way of spreading religious messages. They could be immensely evocative experiences and popular preachers could draw huge crowds to hear them speak.⁷⁷ Church leaders encouraged preaching across the religious spectrum, but it had a number of flaws that made it potentially dangerous to civic order. One of the most obvious problems was the danger posed by unauthorised hedge-

⁷⁵ See below, p. 70.

⁷⁶ For an assessment of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist sermons see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling: Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany* (New York, 2010). It has been suggested that the role of preaching has been undervalued and that preachers could direct the loyalty of the people: Patrick T. Ferry, 'Confessionalization and Popular Preaching: Sermons against Synergism in Reformation Saxony', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997), pp. 1143-1166, p. 1164.

⁷⁷ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling*, p. 50. She argues that listeners of a sermon probably outnumbered all those who read books and pamphlets: *ibid.*, p. 72.

preachers who waxed lyrical whenever they had an audience. Not only were they elusive to authorities, but also they could attract large crowds to hear their messages. Authorities were keen to suppress such preachers and instead favoured their own duly appointed and supervised clergy.⁷⁸ Moreover, for all the enthusiasm, fire, entertainment, and energy that may have accompanied the delivery of a sermon, the actual educational and emotional impact on listeners could be negligible, especially if the crowd was large and not everyone could hear the preacher. Moreover, they were open to later distortion and, therefore, could induce the spreading of messages dangerous to civic order. Susan Karant-Nunn has undertaken important research regarding the ways in which sermons were used to reconstruct emotion in post-Reformation German society. She concludes that sermons reached their audiences in a way that 'rational argumentation or compulsion' could not.⁷⁹ With regards to the Protestants, she argues that emotion-oriented piety was restricted or even ended with changes to the liturgy, objects, ritual and spatial arrangements expressly designed to teach people not to incorporate too much drama into outward expressions of piety.⁸⁰

Part of the methodological framework employed in this study borrows from that of Karant-Nunn in that it looks at catechisms to assess how they were used to shape the behaviour of parishioners and fellow clergy. However, the findings of this thesis will challenge her conclusions. The portrayal of the sacraments in the catechisms indicates that, even in Protestant areas, popular attachment to

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

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emotive forms of piety was maintained. The catechisms of Luther, Osiander and Frederick III avoided condemning such practices outright, suggesting that regardless of sermons emphasising the power of faith alone and the redundancy of emotion-oriented piety in Protestant thought, the attachment to traditional forms of comfort was too entrenched to be fully eradicated. In this way, the findings presented here support both Scribner and Rublack's challenges to Max Weber's notion that the Protestant Reformation stripped society of its reliance on ritual to provide spiritual succour.⁸¹ By not attacking popular practices, the catechisms implicitly acknowledged the power of emotions and their value in practical piety. They demonstrate also that it was not simply a matter of convincing minds of the true faith, but catechists recognised that hearts needed to be won over too.

Education was a crucial method by which the minds of the laity could be influenced.⁸² Traditionally the remit of the Church, the Middle Ages had witnessed an increasing secularisation of pedagogical institutions. German princes had wanted more control over educational institutions and political authorities became increasingly intolerant towards religious autonomy in this

⁸¹ Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, p. 105; Robert W. Scribner, 'The Reformation, Popular Magic and the "Disenchantment of the World"', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3 (1993), pp. 475-494; Rublack, *Reformation Europe*, p. 10. Evidence from church orders suggests that authorities made efforts to permit unorthodox rituals when deemed necessary: Ruth Atherton, 'The Pursuit of Power: Death, Dying and the Quest for Social Control in the Palatinate, 1547-1610', in Elizabeth C. Tingle and Jonathan Willis (eds.), *Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Reformation Europe* (Farnham, 2015), pp. 25-48, pp. 40-41.

⁸² By 1525, Luther and other reformers had realised that their messages were not changing attitudes and behaviour, thus new methods of instruction were needed: Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (second edition) (Oxford, 2010), p. 82.

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regard.⁸³ Reflective of the gradual secularisation of education, local rulers began publishing school orders (*Schulordnungen*), and other similar orders, which often expressly dictated which educational materials, including catechisms, were to be used throughout the territory.⁸⁴ For instance, in 1535, Duke Ulrich imposed the *Reformation und neue Ordnung* onto the university of Tübingen, which instructed all students to attend lectures on the catechism, as well as on the Old and New Testaments.⁸⁵ Later, in 1580, the Lutheran Elector of Saxony ruled that only Luther's catechisms could be used in schools, churches and at home.⁸⁶ Secular regimes also sought to control who could be permitted to teach, as demonstrated by the actions of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria who purged his pedagogical institutions of Protestant teachers.⁸⁷ The inclusion of children in educational aims was indicative of the expansion of sixteenth-century educational techniques and

⁸³ David L. Sheffler, *Schools and Schooling in Late Medieval Germany: Regensburg, 1250 -1500* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 9-11. Joel F. Harrington and Helmut Walser Smith stress that 'the Reformation generally accelerated but by no means initiated the process of secular expansion' in Joel F. Harrington and Helmut Walser Smith, 'Confessionalization, Community and State Building, 1555-1870', *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997), pp. 77-101, p. 79.

⁸⁴ School orders were endorsed by secular rulers and their religious aspects were carried out by ecclesiastics and trained theologians. For more information see Gerald Strauss, 'The Social Functions of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany', *History of Education Quarterly* 28 (1988), pp. 191-206. Strauss quoted Melanchthon's argument that schools were for 'raising up people who are skilled to teach in the church and govern the world', *ibid.*, p. 196; Grendler argues that 'German universities were structured to make it possible for the university to introduce changes into religion and society': Paul F. Grendler, 'The Universities of the Reformation and Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly* 57 (2004), pp. 1-42, p. 12. Bireley suggests that both sides of the confessional divide realised that schools were a vital means of propagating the faith and both understood the need to win over the youth: Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700: A Reassessment of the Counter-Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 121.

⁸⁵ Charlotte Methuen, 'Securing the Reformation through Education: The Duke's Scholarship System of Sixteenth-Century Württemberg', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994), pp. 841-851, pp. 842-43.

⁸⁶ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, p. 166. By 1600, there were over one hundred *Schulordnungen* in Germany; Charlotte Methuen, 'Education in the Reformation', in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 483-503, p. 487.

⁸⁷ Philip M. Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley, 1993), p. 79. Similarly, by the end of 1535, the university of Tübingen had reluctantly accepted new Lutheran professors in the faculties of theology, law and medicine, who had been approved by the duke: Methuen, 'Securing the Reformation', p. 843.

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the extension of pedagogical aims. Prior to the 1500s, children were largely excluded from the target audience of religious literature with parents and the Church bearing the responsibility of ensuring children grew up as sound Christians. Attitudes towards education began to change in the early sixteenth century when it began to be seen as vital for the formation of well-rounded, pious Christians.⁸⁸ Young children were malleable and impressionable and could be more easily taught. Indeed, in 1516, Erasmus commented that 'nothing makes so deep and indelible a mark as that which is impressed in those first years'.⁸⁹

Catechisms for children grew in popularity during the sixteenth century and featured prominently on curricula across the Empire. The Württemberg school ordinance, for instance, decreed that 'before and after lunch, before the boys are allowed to go home, one of them is to recite from memory, orderly and clearly, a part of the catechism, so that all the others hear it'.⁹⁰ The drive to influence the

⁸⁸ Luther was aware that children were malleable and open to instruction, much more so than adults: Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, pp. 34-5. Jesuit schools in Germany devoted at least half an hour each week to the study of catechisms and there were frequent public performances of catechisms at weekends: Jeffrey Chipps Smith, 'The Art of Salvation in Bavaria', in John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy (eds.), *The Jesuits, Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1775* (Toronto, 2000), pp. 568-599, p. 573.

⁸⁹ Lisa Jardine (ed.), *Erasmus: The Education of a Christian Prince with the Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 5. In his Testament, Canisius recalled that the Small and Smaller catechisms were used in the schools for the first instruction of the children, and also in the churches, so that from them the faithful can be brought closer to the rudiments of Catholic piety: 'und man benützt sie in den Schulen für die erste Unterweisung der Kinder und auch in den Kirchen, damit die Anfangsgründe der katholischen Frömmigkeit von da aus besser den Gläubigen nahegebracht werden können': Julius Oswald SJ and Rita Haub (eds.), *Das Testament des Petrus Canisius: Vermächtnis und Auftrag* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), pp. 86-87. See also Jane E. Strohl, 'The Child in Luther's Theology: "For What Purpose Do We Older Folks Exist, Other Than to Care For ... the Young"', in Marcia J. Bunge (ed.), *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, 2001), pp. 134-159, especially pp. 144-152.

⁹⁰ 'Vor und nach Mittag, ehe man die Knaben hein gehen laßt, einer und inen, ordenlich und deutlich ein stuck auß dem Catechismo, das es die andern alle horen, memoriter recitiren': 'Schulordnung aus der Württemberischen Kirchenordnung, 1559', in Reinhold Vormbaum (ed.),

minds of children coincided with growing efforts to teach the laity as a whole.

Whilst this aim was not novel to the Reformation era, the sixteenth century witnessed a far more concerted attempt to instil the rudiments of the faith into the minds of parishioners. In so doing, the format of catechisms underwent a marked change with it increasingly becoming the norm to produce them in question and answer format. This configuration was not innovative: Palmer Wandel has noted that the Waldensian Catechism of 1498 was presented in this manner.⁹¹

However, this catechism was atypical in its composition in comparison to other medieval catechisms and it was not until the sixteenth century that question and answer format became a standard feature.⁹²

This layout aided the absorption of the knowledge included within the catechisms and helped to influence the ways in which the minds of their users were shaped. Moreover, the ways in which the questions were broken down structured the way in which that knowledge was learned. Yet, any attempt to assess the successes or failures of catechisms regarding their influence over hearts and minds is weakened by our inability to gauge accurately their reception by the masses. This is a problem that has ever-plagued scholars and one that has no simple solution. We do not have the methodological means to determine the impact they had on lay or clerical thoughts, emotions or consciences. Historians have been forced to develop methodologies and implement research frameworks that

Die evangelischen Schulordnung des Sechszehnten Jahrhunderts (Güttersloh, 1860), pp. 68-164, p. 91.

⁹¹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 57.

⁹² Palmer Wandel lists a number of catechists who used question and answer format in *ibid.*, p. 58.

attempt to work around this lack of insight into the minds of early-modern contemporaries. Inferences can be made through consulting diaries, ballads, wills, letters, official records, school and church orders but ultimately, the thoughts and inner beliefs of contemporary parishioners remain beyond our reach. Despite this, Gerald Strauss, in his influential article assessing the successes and failures of the German Reformation, stressed the limits of Protestant achievements in the first century of the Reformation.⁹³ He criticised the pedagogical technique favoured in sixteenth-century Germany of breaking a subject down into small parts and having the pupils learn them by repetition.⁹⁴ He argued that, though there is evidence to suggest that people could sometimes repeat the catechism, and although they were incorporated into most, if not all, German school curricula, the actual depth of belief remained questionable: reciting words does not automatically result in faith in the doctrine. He commented that Catholic states such as Bavaria fared no better than the Lutheran territories because the authorities simply took outward compliance as a 'sufficient criterion of belief'.⁹⁵ For these reasons, Strauss denied that the pedagogical aims of the catechists were achieved in the sixteenth century.

While Strauss was correct in that the depth of faith held by the ordinary people cannot be easily measured, his proposition suggests that genuine devotion was the aim of the catechists. This was not necessarily the case: simply acting as a

⁹³ Gerald Strauss, 'Success and Failure in the German Reformation', *Past and Present* 67 (1975), pp. 30-63.

⁹⁴ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, pp. 176-177.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290. Strauss noted that this changed under Maximilian in the 17th century.

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Catholic or Protestant was often enough for both catechists and the secular regime. In fact, compliance was deemed an excellent result by secular authorities as conformity drastically reduced episodes of disorder.⁹⁶ Certainly for the state, the individual conscience was almost irrelevant as long as public adherence to the prescribed doctrine and liturgy was maintained. This would seem to contradict the notion that catechisms were designed to win hearts as well as minds. Yet, in not condemning the diverse range of practices that accompanied the reception of the sacraments, a policy of accommodation can be detected. It is this inclusive approach that can be seen to have helped win hearts. This inclusivity only extended as far as Lutheranism, Catholicism and, later, Calvinism, but in omitting catechetical instruction that dealt fully with divisive issues between these confessions, the obstacles preventing a heartfelt allegiance to a faith were removed. A person could claim to be a Lutheran, and indeed, feel as one, even though they were still performing or participating in rituals that belonged to their Catholic past.

⁹⁶ The debates of contemporaries regarding missions to China and the New World demonstrate that the churches were prepared to accept outward signs of devotion as sufficient. John van Engen has suggested that early modern conversion was understood as a voluntary process whereby people decided to embrace 'more intense forms of religious life within the Christian community', rather than an effort to bring heretics back to the fold: John van Engen, 'Conversion and Conformity in the Early Fifteenth Century', in Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Conversion: Old Worlds and New* (Rochester, 2003), pp. 30-65, pp. 30-31. Hsia has commented that records of Chinese conversions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are 'stories of adherence to Christianity' as opposed to records of 'personal spiritual journeys': R. Po-chia Hsia, 'Translating Christianity: Counter-Reformation Europe and the Catholic Mission in China, 1580-1780', in Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Conversion: Old Worlds and New* (Rochester, 2003), pp. 87-108, p. 88. Peter Marshall notes that during the reign of Elizabeth I of England, 'secular authorities were more interested in conformity as a token of outward obedience, in accordance with Queen Elizabeth's famous disinclination to make "windows into men's hearts": Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642* (second edition) (London, 2012), p. 199.

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Furthermore, Strauss' appraisal of the manner and success of sixteenth-century catechetical education has been challenged on several other fronts. Geoffrey Parker has argued that Strauss was too narrow in his approach towards assessing the impact of the Protestant Reformation and cast serious shadows over the accuracy and transparency of the visitation records used as evidence in Strauss' study.⁹⁷ In response to Strauss' argument that catechising was intended to infantilise the people and break the spirit of the youth, Ronald Rittgers instead suggests that catechising intended to promote confidence in divine forgiveness and to induce 'modesty in matters of the soul'.⁹⁸ Part of the issue is that Strauss' methodological approach used the available evidence to look backwards in assessing the impact of catechisms: he started with the pessimism of late sixteenth-century visitation records to argue that the catechisms had failed in their objective to indoctrinate society. In contrast, the methodology employed here will be forward-facing, in that it will chart how the catechisms were changed, re-ordered, re-affirmed, and presented in order to consider whether emphases changed according to local social and political concerns. This, in turn, will shed light on the aspects of doctrine individual catechists felt it most important to convey at a given point in time. Success or failure is less important here than exploring how catechists responded to social, religious and political pressures, and investigating what these can tell us about the objectives of each catechist and about the catechetical genre more broadly. However, the main pedagogical argument to be considered is whether or not the, catechisms taught the lesson of

⁹⁷ Geoffrey Parker, 'Success and Failures in the First Century of the Reformation', *Past and Present* 136 (1992), pp. 43-82.

⁹⁸ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 194.

coexistence and, if they did, to assess whether they can be viewed as methods by which confessional peace was sought in the Holy Roman Empire.

Sources and Methodology

The bulk of the source material for this thesis is the catechisms themselves. It will look mainly at those produced or revised by each author: intellectual property rights were virtually non-existent in the sixteenth century and the archives hold copious numbers of edited and 'revised' editions by others who may not have fully comprehended – or deliberately misinterpreted – the aims and messages of the original author.⁹⁹ Indeed, Luther complained in 1541 that 'it has happened often to me, that I have read the printer's reprint and found it falsified, so that I have not recognised my own work in many places, and have to improve it again'.¹⁰⁰ Later in the century, Canisius also complained about errors caused by unsolicited and unauthorised adaptations of his catechisms.¹⁰¹ Verifying the authenticity of the different catechisms is therefore a crucial aspect of this thesis. By comparing multiple editions of the catechisms, and cross-referencing with existing catalogues, the authorial authenticity of the catechisms can be strengthened.

⁹⁹ John L. Flood, 'The Book in Reformation Germany', in Jean-François Gilmont (ed.), trans. Karin Maag, *The Reformation and the Book* (Farnham, 1998), pp. 21-103, p. 52.

¹⁰⁰ 'Und ist mir offt widerfaren / das ich der Nachdrücker druck gelesen / also verfelschet gefunden / das ich meine eigen Erbeit / an vielen Orten nicht gekennet / auffs newe habe müssen bessern': Martin Luther, 'Warnung D. Mart. Luth.', *Biblia, das ist die ganze Heilige Schrift: Deudsch: Auffs New zugericht* (Hans Lufft: Wittemberg, 1541), p. ii.

¹⁰¹ More will be said on this in chapter three.

Copies of the catechisms have been located in individual archives as well as accessed online through VD-16.¹⁰² For Luther and Canisius, a number of different editions have been consulted to demonstrate the differences in emphasis, tone and content between them. In the case of Luther's catechisms, closer attention is paid to those editions that included guidelines on confession. For the *Heidelberg Catechism* and that of Osiander, the original German versions will be used, although chapter two will also discuss briefly an edition of Osiander's catechism published in Magdeburg in 1534. Though the catechisms were often published in both German and Latin, this thesis focuses predominantly on those in German. These vernacular catechisms were aimed at a broader range of users, and their authors recognised that Latin tended to be the preserve of the elite. Canisius and Luther translated their catechisms from Latin into German, while the *Heidelberg Catechism* and Osiander's were initially composed in the vernacular and translated into Latin later.¹⁰³ The analysis of German language catechisms is crucial given that this thesis seeks to investigate the role of popular agency, the perceived impact of religious education, and doctrinal and ritualistic changes on sacramental teachings.

¹⁰² VD-16 is a database containing details of texts published in German speaking nations in the sixteenth century. It currently includes over 100,000 titles with ownership records from over 260 libraries, and offers full digitization URLs for a significant amount of documents.

¹⁰³ Translating the catechisms into Latin allowed for an international audience. The catechism was not confined to a German audience, but it could be more easily distributed throughout Europe. Karin Maag notes that eleven Latin editions of the *Heidelberg Catechism* were published between 1563 and 1657 in places as diverse as Leiden (1587), Hanau (1603), Oxford (1629) and Edinburgh (1657): see Maag, 'Early Editions and Translations of the Heidelberg Catechism', pp. 114-115.

To complement the analysis of catechisms, Protestant church orders will be consulted. Catechisms were frequently incorporated into these documents and, especially in the case of Osiander and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, significant differences between the stipulations laid out in the ordinances and the instructions included in the catechisms can be detected. Additionally, where a catechism was silent or ambiguous on a given issue – particularly with regards to the use of rituals – the church orders can shed light on the matter; for example, chapter two will consult them for more information on the use of exorcisms in baptism. Other texts will also be analysed, including Canisius' *Testament* which was composed at the end of his life and provides insight into the dynamics behind his prolific literary career.¹⁰⁴ Luther's broader works, including various treatises on the sacraments – particularly that on the keys – as well as his orders for baptism and confession will be consulted throughout. Similarly, relevant sections of the Council of Trent's canons and decrees will be drawn upon to help contextualise the numerous differences between Canisius' catechisms and the *Tridentine Catechism*.

The first two chapters consider the important aspect of authorship, the structure of each catechism, and the circumstances surrounding the creation of the catechisms chosen for analysis. The first chapter discusses the significance of the structural placement of elements within the catechisms, and the role of woodcuts. In order to fully understand the reasons behind the tone and various

¹⁰⁴ Julius Oswald SJ and Rita Haub (eds.), *Das Testament des Petrus Canisius: Vermächtnis und Auftrag* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997).

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emphases – or omissions – within the catechisms, this chapter examines the important aspect of context. Indeed, part of the reason why Palmer Wandel's study on catechisms does not fully analyse the reasons for the similarities and differences she detects in the texts lies in the fact that her methodology does not allow for a full discussion of the original location of each catechism. Her emphasis on the ultimate universality of the catechisms and their ability to unite geographically discrete readers to their churches overlooks the vital role local context in the original formation of the texts. The second chapter takes a broader view, charting how the catechetical genre developed and illustrating shared objectives. This chapter explores their intended uses: education, propaganda, conversion, or discipline. Key to this chapter will be an analysis of the various prefaces to the catechisms, as well as ancillary material including letters and church orders.

The following three chapters will discuss baptism, penance and communion. As a whole, they serve to demonstrate how the catechisms married the tenets of their faiths with the author's perceived reluctance of society to divorce themselves from traditional beliefs and popular practices. The first to be addressed will be baptism, followed by an exploration of the sacrament of penance. While, ultimately, Protestants ceased to regard penance as a sacrament, they saw very strong connections between the appropriate responses to sin and the enjoyment of worthy communion. This latter point will be the focus of the third chapter, which will explore the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Threading between the chapters will be the constant evaluation of the catechisms as pedagogical tools, platforms for individual agendas, and mirrors reflective of lay emotions and beliefs. Whilst church leaders sought the collection of souls, secular bodies pursued obedience, and catechists desired to teach their own interpretation of a doctrine, the catechisms themselves reflected the influence of popular agency, which could support, curtail or reject each of these goals. What will become clear is that the catechisms were not agents of confessional division through the teaching of inflexible sacramental instruction. Rather, they should instead be seen as contributing to a broader platform of peacekeeping measures. This does not suggest that there was an attempt to merge together doctrinal beliefs: each of the catechisms taught the elements of a Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed faith. However, in reducing the degree of confessional complexity in the catechisms to suit the capabilities of their audience, the catechists diffused areas of conflict in such a way that people could live together peacefully.

Chapter One: 'Like milk for children': The Catechisms in Context

This chapter introduces in detail the catechisms that are analysed throughout this thesis. It aims to situate the catechisms within their immediate religious and political contexts, as well as to offer an overview of the scholarship of each catechism. Following this, the structural placement of chapters within the catechisms is considered, allowing for an insight into how the catechists intended their readers to develop as Christians. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of images in the catechisms. With the exception of the *Heidelberg* and *Tridentine Catechisms*, several editions of the catechisms of Luther, Osiander, and Canisius incorporated woodcuts. The following chapters include analyses of a number of catechetical woodcuts. Thus, it is important to clarify their purpose in early-modern print culture, and to discuss the degree of authorial choice regarding the nature and content of the images incorporated into their catechisms.

The catechisms were all intended for a lay audience: the small catechisms were expected to be read by the laity directly, while the large catechisms presented material that was to be passed to the laity by the clergy or school teachers. The shorter catechisms of Luther and Canisius, as well as the *Heidelberg Catechism*, were to be memorised by their audiences word for word, whilst large catechisms were to be consulted regularly. The content of Osiander's catechism was to be delivered to the laity in the form of sermons. There is no doubt that catechisms

were intended as educational tools; Jesuit schools devoted at least half an hour each week to the study of the catechism and they put on frequent public performances at weekends in front of family and friends.¹ Likewise, Luther's catechisms featured in many school orders promulgated in Lutheran lands across the Empire, and his *Small Catechism* was published as a wall chart, enabling individual pages to be hung up around the home, thus encouraging regular engagement.² Osiander's catechism was different to those of Luther, Canisius and Frederick III in that it was a collection of sermons to be expounded in church, rather than learned in schools or at home. The method of delivery meant pastors were keepers of catechetical knowledge, which mirrored Osiander's determination to preserve the role of ministers in the lives of parishioners. Nonetheless, twenty-eight editions of his catechism were published in octavo, nine appeared as quarto, while only twelve were published in the larger folio format, indicating that even his catechism was generally formatted as a book that could easily be held by the reader, or carried by the pastor.³

A common feature of the German catechisms is that they were not designed to be overly complex in terms of theology or doctrinal controversy on the assumption that this was beyond the intellectual capabilities of the majority of the laity. There are clear differences between the content and tone of the other works

¹ Chipps Smith, 'Art of Salvation', p. 573. Rittgers notes that Nuremberg preachers provided weekly catechisms classes, while school teachers taught pupils the articles of the new faith in daily lessons: Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 194.

² Albrecht Beutel, 'Luther's Life', in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 3-19, p. 17.

³ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 39.

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and writings of Luther, Canisius, and Osiander and that provided in the catechisms. Charlotte Methuen, for example, has pointed to the differences between Luther's theodicy in *On the Bondage of the Will*, and the discussion of evil in his *Large Catechism*. The former was a theological tract, written in Latin, in response to Erasmus' defence of free will *The Freedom of the Will*. In this work, Luther suggested that humans are incapable of affecting their fate and, as Methuen comments, 'the human will is simply not free in matters of salvation'.⁴ As a Latin work, this was not intended for general readership. However, in the *Large Catechism*, Luther sought to teach his audience to do their best in the fight against evil, offering consolation and comfort to his readers in their daily battle against the devil and temptation.⁵ Luther's message in the catechisms was adapted to suit their audience. Indeed, adapting texts to reflect the capabilities and demands of different audiences was not unusual: Calvin's French translations of his Latin texts were often either simplified in terms of language composition, or included additional explanatory detail to accommodate the intellectual abilities of his vernacular readers.⁶ This thesis seeks to explore the implications of removing theological complexity from the catechisms. If the doctrinal differences between the confessions were not made explicit, what impact does this have on our understanding of the nature of religious education? Moreover, can the catechisms be seen to be creating fixed confessional identities

⁴ Methuen, 'An Exceedingly Effectual Help', p. 129.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁶ Olivier Millet, 'Calvin's Self-Awareness as Author', in Irena Backus and Philip Benedict (eds.), *Calvin and his Influence, 1509-2009* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 84-101, p. 88; Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, 2000), p. 31.

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when the differences between these identities are not made overt? In attempting to answer these questions, the intended audience of the catechisms is of paramount importance.

Martin Luther

Luther was based in the city of Wittenberg, the capital of Electoral Saxony. Despite its status, the city was small, with a mere c.2000 inhabitants: Johannes Cochlaeus described it as 'a miserable, poor, dirty village ... it is not worthy to be called a town of Germany', and upon his arrival at the university in 1508 as professor of theology, Luther considered it to be 'on the edge of civilization'.⁷ Yet, after the onset of the Reformation, Wittenberg became an important centre of printing and learning, with the university soon becoming one of the most popular in Germany.⁸ Wittenberg proved fertile for reform and Luther combined his literary prowess with regular preaching and lecturing in order to aid religious change.⁹ After his excommunication by Pope Leo X in 1521, Luther was left in a potentially dangerous position, which was compounded by Emperor Charles V's

⁷ Helmar Junghans, 'Luther's Wittenberg', trans. Katharina Gustavs in Donald M. McKin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 20-38, pp. 21-23; Andrew Pettegree, *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, 2015), pp. 7-8.

⁸ Junghans, 'Luther's Wittenberg', p. 27; Pettegree, *Brand Luther*, especially p. 11. For the spread of the early Reformation in Saxony, see Thomas Kaufmann, *Der Anfang der Reformation: Studien zue Kontextualität der Theologie, Publizistik und Inszenierung Luthers und der reformatorischen Bewegung* (Tübingen, 2012).

⁹ In a letter of 1518, Luther wrote 'each evening I expound to children and ordinary folk the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer': cited in Pettegree, *Brand Luther*, p. 118.

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declaration after the Diet of Worms (1521) that Luther was an outlaw.¹⁰ It was due to the political support of his patron, the Elector Frederick III of Saxony, that Luther was able to continue his reform efforts.¹¹

After the Diet of Worms, Elector Frederick arranged for Luther to be taken to the Wartburg for his own safety. It was during this period (1521-22), that real and visible changes began to occur in the city. In his absence, Luther had left command of the reform in the hands of his two colleagues and supporters, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt and Philip Melanchthon. The former proved to be a dangerous caretaker. Less patient than Luther, Karlstadt was keen to bring about change quickly and firmly. Luther, for instance, had suggested in 1519 – before his excommunication – that both the bread and wine should be offered to, but not forced upon, those who attend mass.¹² Yet, Karlstadt came to believe that it was a sin to either withhold or refuse to receive both elements.¹³ His actions led to an outbreak of violence towards the clergy, which resulted in the city council warning Elector Frederick that they were not prepared to endorse any more reforms if anarchy and violence was the result. Despite this, Karlstadt continued to encourage drastic reform, declaring that from 1st January 1522, he would offer both the bread and the wine to the laity, speak the words of Jesus in German,

¹⁰ For more on the Diet of Worms, see Roper, *Martin Luther*, pp. 173-193.

¹¹ For a consideration of Luther's 'friendship' with the Saxon duke, see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Personal Luther: Essays on the Reformer from a Cultural Historical Perspective* (Leiden, 2018), esp. pp. 46-66.

¹² Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (Yale, 2016), p. 83.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

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and omit the canon.¹⁴ The 1522 ordinance for Wittenberg decreed that people can hold the consecrated host 'and put it in their mouth themselves, in the same way, drink from the chalice'.¹⁵ For Luther, too much compulsory reform was dangerous, and he declared in March that, though changes in the service of the mass could not be delayed, people who were not yet ready to accept communion in both kinds should not be forced to.¹⁶

However, by the time Luther published his catechisms, his position had hardened. The early 1520s were marked with a series of attacks on Luther's theology: Johann Cochleaus, one of Luther's most ardent critics, had printed at least thirteen tracts against Luther by 1525.¹⁷ Perhaps partly in response to his Catholic enemies, in 1525, Luther supported the abolition of the private masses, approved the suppression of public displays of dissenting faiths, and agreed with the expulsion of non-Lutherans.¹⁸ Luther called for a zero-tolerance approach to dissent and envisioned the principle of 'one state, one religion'.¹⁹

Part of Luther's increasing intolerance was rooted in his hostility towards radicalism, particularly that of the Anabaptists and Karlstadt, and rebellion.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

¹⁵ 'Es mag auch der communicant die consecrierten Hostien in die hand nemen / und selbs in den mund schieben / dergleychē auch den kelch / und darauß trincken': *Ain löblich ordnung der Fürstlichen stat Wittenberg* (Wittenberg, 1522), p. iii.

¹⁶ Hendrix, *Martin Luther*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁷ Timothy Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness: Philip Melancthon's Exegetical Dispute with Erasmus of Rotterdam* (Oxford, 1998), p. 80. For more on Luther's early Catholic opponents, see David V.N. Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents: Catholic Controversialists, 1518-1525* (Minneapolis, 1991).

¹⁸ In a letter to Melancthon of August 1522, Luther declared he would 'never hold a private mass again' (sed et ego amplius non faciam missam privatam in aeternum): *WA BW*, vol. 2, p. 372.

¹⁹ Gary Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (Pennsylvania, 2010), pp. 83-84.

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Luther's movement had been shaken by the German peasants' war of the mid-1520s. The *Twelve Article of Upper Swabia* (1525) tried to tie the peasants' demands with Luther's reform messages, calling for their demands to be judged by the bible. Despite Luther's harsh opposition to the peasants' revolts, Luther was held to be responsible by his enemies for the outbreak of violence nonetheless.²⁰ Whether or not Luther and his teachings were directly responsible for the outbreak of violence is irrelevant here. What is significant is that Luther was concerned that evangelical princes would withdraw their support from the Reformation should such disorder be threatened again.²¹

By 1525, Luther's reform had taken root in only a few cities: Nuremberg accepted Lutheranism officially in 1525, but in other areas the evangelical teachings lacked official sanction. By no means was Luther's position assured and though, by the time he published his catechisms, the Dukes of Brunswick and Schleswig, the count of Mansfeld and the Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach had all left the Catholic faith, his evangelical teachings remained a minority movement.²² During this period, Luther refined and developed his theology. Scholars have pointed to the connections between Luther and medieval thought, and his later use of

²⁰ David M. Whitford, 'Luther's Political Encounters', in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 179-191, p.185.

²¹ Harry Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals: Another Look at Some Aspects of the Struggle Between Luther and the Radical Reformers* (Waterloo, 1974), pp. 60-64. Johann Cochleaus blamed Luther for the emergence of radical sects such as the Anabaptists: Mark U. Edwards, Jr. *Printing, Propaganda and Luther*, p. 149.

²² Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 20.

catechisms had strong links to medieval methods of religious instruction.²³ The fragility of his movement in the 1520s will remain an important consideration in the analysis of the sacramental instruction provided in Luther's catechisms. The following chapters consider how Luther addressed secular concerns, and explore the extent to which he delineated from medieval sacramental thought and practice, as well as separated himself from dangerous charges of sedition and radicalism.

This latter concern is made apparent in his *Small Catechism* which reminded pastors that 'we cannot and should not force anyone to believe' and, with regards to the sacraments in particular, 'we are to force no one to believe, or to receive the sacrament. Also do not fix any law, nor time, nor place for it'.²⁴ This is a continuation of Luther's earlier concern regarding implementing reform too quickly, although he added that if people are 'unwilling to learn ... they should be told that they deny Christ and are no Christians. They should not be admitted to the sacrament, [or be] accepted as sponsors at baptism. Also, [they should] not exercise any part of Christian liberty'.²⁵ Such people 'should simply be turned back to the Pope and his officials, yea, to the devil himself', demonstrating that

²³ Volker Leppin, 'Luther's Transformation of Medieval Thought: Continuity and Discontinuity', in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and Lubomír Batka (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 115-126.

²⁴ 'Denn wiewol man niemant zwingē kan noch sol / zum glauben'; 'Wir sollen niemandt zum glauben oder zum Sacrament zwingē / Auch kein gesez / noch zeit / noch stett styren': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529), pp. 9, 11.

²⁵ 'Welche es aber nicht lerner wollen / das man den selbigen sage / wie sie Christum verleugnen / unnd keine Christen sind / Sollen auch nicht zu dem Sacrament gelassen werden / kein kynd auß der Taufe heben / Auch kein stück der Cristlichen freyheit brauchen ...': *ibid.*, p. 8.

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there was a difference between the coercion of fearful souls, and the stubborn retention of heretical belief.²⁶

Luther was asked to produce a catechism for the simple folk as early as 1525.²⁷ However, it was not until the disappointing results of the Saxon parish visitations in 1527-28 that he was galvanized into action because of the 'wretched, miserable' condition of the common people 'especially in the villages'.²⁸ The visitations revealed widespread ignorance and alarming degrees of non-conformity across Saxony.²⁹ In 1528, Luther delivered a series of catechetical sermons, which have been seen as the basis for his printed catechisms.³⁰ These sermons were directed towards an audience that contained children and, as such, they avoided in-depth theological considerations. Old notes that the sermons on the Commandments, for instance, focused on what a Christian should and should not do, rather than expound on the law and Gospel. Moreover, the sermon on the Lord's Prayer did not discuss its theological themes, instead exhorting his audience to daily prayer.³¹ In his sermons on the sacraments, Luther acknowledged that there were 'fanatical' opinions, but declared that 'I am

²⁶ 'Sondern slechst dem Bapst unnd seinenn Officialen / dazu dem teufel selbs heym geweisert sein': *ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷ Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* (Minneapolis, 2009), p. 9. Nicholas Hausmann of Zwickau approached both Luther and the Elector on the matter.

²⁸ 'Kleglich elende'; 'sonderlich auff dē Dorffern': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1528), p. aii. Luther wrote to Martin Görlitz, a pastor in Braunschweig, in January 1529 informing him that 'just now I am turning to the preparation of a catechism for the ignorant pagans': cited in James M. Kittelson, 'Luther the Educational Reformer', in Marilyn J. Harran (ed.), *Luther and Learning: The Wittenberg University Luther Symposium* (Selinsgrove, 1985), pp. 95-114, p. 101.

²⁹ Kat Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief in Reformation Germany: Anabaptism and Lutheranism, 1525-1585* (Oxford, 2015), p. 50.

³⁰ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church Volume Four: The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, 2002), p. 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

not contending with them now, but teaching the simple'.³² The sermon on communion exhorted his audience to attend the service, and did not touch on theological matters in any great depth. In his sermon on baptism, despite saying he did not want to engage in contentious discourse, he discussed theological themes, such as the unity of the Word and water, the divine institution of baptism, and the question of infant baptism: all areas that were attacked by Anabaptist doctrine. He concluded this sermon by announcing that the fanatics are 'blinded' and rebellious.³³ The catechisms drew on these sermons, which were designed to shape religious instruction to accommodate the needs and abilities of the intended audience.

Luther's German-language catechism aimed at children and simple folk was published in 1529, and was followed up in the same year with a large catechism, again published in German, for the use of literate lay people.³⁴ Luther's anger about the visitation results was conveyed in the prefaces to his catechisms. The *Large Catechism* complained that 'I remember well the time, indeed it goes for today, that one finds ignorant and elderly people who have known nothing or still know [nothing], but go readily to baptism and [receive the] sacraments and

³² 'Iam non pugno contra eos, sed vos doceo simplicen': *WA*, vol. 30:1, p. 113.

³³ 'Excaecati': *ibid.*, p. 116.

³⁴ Martin Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus: Für die gemeyne Pfarherr und Pregider* (Wittenberg, 1529); Martin Luther, *Deutsche Catechismus* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1529). A Latin translation of the Large Catechism (*Deutsche Catechismus*) appeared in 1529 and, in the same year, Luther issued a revised edition including an 'Exhortation to Confession', a longer introduction and more marginal notes: Martin Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus. Gemehret mit einer neuen vnterricht vnd vermanung zu der Beicht* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1529).

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exercise all that Christians have'.³⁵ He denounced pastors as 'shameful gluttons and servants of their own bellies who more properly ought to be swineherds and dog-tenders than guardians of souls and pastors'.³⁶ Luther published the first part of his *Small Catechism* in the form of broadsheets in January 1529.³⁷ These sheets did not include sacramental instruction, teaching only the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer.³⁸ However, in mid-1529, Luther published the entire catechism, which included teachings on baptism and communion.

Moreover, after becoming alarmed by the consequential misunderstanding that confession was no longer required, Luther issued a revised edition of the *Large Catechism* in June 1529, incorporating an appendix entitled 'A Brief Exhortation to Confession'. In 1531, he also issued a revised *Small Catechism*, which included a section on 'How Simple People are to be Taught to Confess'. Since the earliest version of Luther's catechism, produced in the form of broadsheets, did not offer instruction on the sacraments or confession, this thesis focuses on the revised editions published during his lifetime. Most of his catechisms were illustrated, usually with biblical themes, although chapter three discusses woodcuts from several editions that portray contemporary scenes. For ease of language, the *Deudsch Catechismus* will be referred to as the *Large Catechism*,

³⁵ 'Denn ich denke wol der zeit / ja es begibt sich noch teglich / das man grobe / alte betagte leute findet / die hie von gar nichts gewust haben / oder noch wissen / gehen doch gleichwol zur Tauffe und Sacrament / und brauchen alles was die Chris-ten haben': Luther, *Deudsch Catechism* (1535), p. 6a.

³⁶ 'Ach das sind zumal schendliche freslinhe uñ bauchdiener / die billicher sewhirten oder hunde knechtè sein solten / denn seelwarter und Pfarher': *ibid.*, pp. 2-2a.

³⁷ 'The Small Catechism', in Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert and Charlels P. Arand (eds.), *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, 2000), p. 346.

³⁸ Luther produced an early catechetical presentation of the Lord's Prayer in 1519: *Eine Kurze Form das Paternoster zu verstehen und zu beten* (Nürnberg: Jobst Gutknecht, 1519), *WA*, vol. 6, pp. 9-19.

while the *Kleine Catechismus* will be referred to as the Small Catechism throughout and the dates, and where appropriate the printer, of the specific editions cited will be given in each reference to the catechisms.

Luther's catechisms have been included in this thesis for a number of reasons. Most obviously, but not necessarily most importantly, they are the catechisms of the embryonic Lutheran faith, and were written by the man whose ideas ultimately caused the most serious and permanent break from the Catholic Church. Secondly, the large number of editions shows they were in wide use, either to be read, heard or collected: there were at least thirty editions of the *Small Catechism*, and twenty-nine editions of the *Large Catechism* in circulation before Luther's death in February 1546.³⁹ Thirdly, they were the prescribed educational texts of Lutheran lands, appearing in many Lutheran church orders across the empire in the sixteenth century. Further, the catechisms' format, layout, and content demonstrate the expansion of the educational technique favoured in medieval tradition. This point is important because it illustrates Luther's awareness of the need to change and adapt previously accepted methods of pedagogy to tackle the ignorance of society, whilst still appealing to secular authorities which could to help enforce the utilisation of the new catechisms. Finally, Luther's catechetical treatment of the sacraments can be seen to have promoted areas of common agreement with the Catholics, downplaying very difficult issues and directing instead most of his anger towards

³⁹ Gerhard Bode, 'Instruction of the Christian Faith', p. 168. Bode further notes that after Luther's death, 125 more editions of the *Small Catechism* and twenty-five editions of the *Large Catechism* were published by the end of the sixteenth century.

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the Anabaptists and Zwinglians. This does not mean that Luther did not successfully convey his evangelical teachings, nor avoid insulting the Catholics but, by 1529, Luther was well aware of potential hostility to his reforms, not just amongst the clergy, but also amongst the laity. Luther's message was one of faith and hope; belief in God's promise of salvation was all that parishioners were required to possess. However, the laity all across Germany were accustomed to various forms of didactic rituals that not only 'proved' the efficacy of the sacraments, but also could offer comfort in times of need. His catechisms were concerted efforts to appeal to popular sentiment, to protect local customs, and to meet the widespread need for comfort and consolation.

A huge amount of scholarly attention has been directed towards Martin Luther. Biographies line library shelves, translated volumes of his letters and works are widely available, and his impact on religion, society and politics in Germany, Europe and the wider world has been keenly analysed.⁴⁰ Hans-Jürgen Fraas' study on the use of Luther's *Small Catechism* in churches and schools examines its lasting significance for religious education.⁴¹ Slightly later, Strauss' thorough and comprehensive study on the approach to learning of Luther and other reformers covers all aspects of Protestant educational techniques, but it is not

⁴⁰ Key works on Luther include Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel* (Berlin, 1982); Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 3 vols., trans. James Schaaf (Philadelphia, 1985-1993); Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis, 1999); David C. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* (second edition) (Grand Rapids, 2002); Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003); Thomas Kaufmann, *Martin Luther* (Munich, 2006); Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (London, 2016).

⁴¹ Hans-Jürgen Fraas, *Katechismustradition. Luthers kleiner Katechismus in Kirche und Schule* (Göttingen, 1971).

particularly recent and there is much scope for the work further being developed in light of new findings and directions in research.⁴² Marilyn J. Harran has contributed useful studies to Luther and education, with her work demonstrating Luther's own experiences of learning, and assessing the ways in which he changed sixteenth-century education.⁴³ She suggests that 'all of Luther's efforts at education ... were founded upon a vision of the Christian community as composed of those equal by faith before God'.⁴⁴ Focusing entirely on Luther's catechisms, Gottfried Krodel's study looks at the formation and structure of the texts in the context of the medieval tradition and Luther's earlier works.⁴⁵ Krodel attempts to assess how Luther worked with the tradition of catechetical literature and notes that, though he was grounded in the medieval tradition, as seen in his adoption of the usual triad of the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, he departed from it sequentially.⁴⁶ Arand comments that Luther's catechism was 'written first and foremost in order to acquaint the reader with the inexhaustible riches that the catechism offers'.⁴⁷ In his study of Luther's catechisms, Arand explores three specific points; the continuity of Luther's catechisms from the medieval tradition; their structure, themes and theological expressions; and examines their language to see how Luther used the *Small Catechism* to 'teach people how to make sense of their lives'.⁴⁸

⁴² Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*.

⁴³ Marilyn J. Harran, *Martin Luther: Learning for Life* (St. Louis, 1997), p. 233; see also Harran, *Luther and Learning*.

⁴⁴ Harran, *Martin Luther*, p. 233.

⁴⁵ Gottfried G. Krodel, 'Luther's Work on the Catechism in the Context of Late Medieval Catechetical Literature', *Concordia Journal* 25 (1999), pp. 364-404.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 375-376.

⁴⁷ Arand, *That I may be his Own*, p. 19.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

The historiography surrounding Luther's catechisms largely seeks to comprehend more fully his theological teachings.⁴⁹ It is accepted broadly that the main aim of the catechisms was to educate the laity and clergy in the Christian faith, although it has been recognised also that they were vital in the formation and development of the evangelical church.⁵⁰ Gerhard Bode has commented that Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone and his reconceptualisation of the relationship between humans and God, and with each other, created the need for people to be educated in these principles.⁵¹ Timothy Wengert suggests that Luther produced the *Small Catechism* because he wanted to offer comfort, rather than leave unchallenged the fear and uncertainty evoked by medieval catechisms, and that it was his own personal confession of faith.⁵² All of these points have merit and are well-supported by surviving evidence. However, an emphasis on continuity with the late-medieval church, along with the condemnation fanatical sects must have been a significant factor in the creation of Luther's catechisms. This will be explored in the next chapter more fully but, as an example, though the opening paragraph of his teachings on baptism in the

⁴⁹ See Johann Michel Reu, *Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A History of its Origin, its Distribution and its Use* (Chicago, 1929), especially pp. 219-300; Albrecht Peters, *Kommentar zu Luthers Katechismen*, vols. 1-5 (Göttingen, 1990-94) especially vol. 3 on baptism and communion and vol. 4 on penance; Klaus Schwarzwäller, *Fülle des Lebens: Luthers Kleiner Katechismus. Ein Kommentar* (Münster, 2000).

⁵⁰ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532* (Minneapolis, 1994), p. 275; Michael J. Halvorson, *Heinrich Heshusius and Confessional Polemic in Early Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Farnham, 2010), p. 76; Bode, 'Instruction of the Christian Faith', p. 168.

⁵¹ Bode, 'Instruction of the Christian Faith', pp. 161-162.

⁵² Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms*, p. 16. Luther also wanted to reject Agricola's antinomianism, *ibid.*, pp. 12-13, p. 16. Methuen suggests that knowledge of the catechism was intended to replace the use of comforts such as incense and holy water that were popular in late medieval religious practices; Charlotte Methuen, "'An exceedingly effectual help aganst the devil": Luther's Large Catechism and the Practical Implications of Evil', in Paul Fiddes and Jochen Schmidt (eds.), *Rhetorik des Bösen/The Rhetoric of Evil* (Würzburg, 2013), pp. 127-142, p. 129.

Large Catechism stated that ‘how [baptism] is to be maintained and defended against the heretics and sects, we must commend to the learned’, he goes on to reject systematically key aspects of Anabaptist theology, as he had done in his 1528 catechetical sermon.⁵³ Whilst Catholics could be viewed as heretics in Luther’s eyes, the rejection of radical doctrines in his catechisms suggests that his objective was to distinguish between the evangelical faith and the radical offshoots. In 1528, Luther published a tract against the Anabaptists in which he rejected their theology, particularly that of re-baptism.⁵⁴ His quarrels with Karlstadt remained an on-going concern, with Karlstadt refusing to condemn Zwingli and Oecolampadius, much to Luther’s frustration.⁵⁵ It is evident that sectarians and their theology were a concern to Luther during 1528, perhaps explaining why his catechisms rejected their doctrines so forcefully.

It is important to note that Luther produced his catechisms at a time when his reform movement remained fragile, and that Luther was caught up in fierce polemic against the Anabaptists and Catholics. Moreover, the visitation records have revealed that there was much irreligious activity and poor Christian knowledge in Saxony’s rural areas. In 1529, Luther’s theological development by no means was complete, and was being formed, refined and revised in response to Catholic and ‘fanatic’ attacks, as well as political concerns. These will remain important considerations throughout the following chapters, as will the crucial

⁵³ ‘Denn wie mans erhalten und verfechten müssen / wider dir Kezer und Rotten / wollen wir den gelerten befehlen’: Luther, *Deudsch Catechism* (1535), pp. 94-96.

⁵⁴ Martin Luther, ‘Von der Widertaufe an zwei Pfarherrn’, *WA*, vol. 26, pp. 137-174.

⁵⁵ Amy Nelson Burnett, *The Eucharistic Pamphlets of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt* (Kirksville, 2011), p. 17.

point that Luther was directing his catechisms towards a largely unlearned audience.

Andreas Osiander

Not all states that officially embraced Lutheranism specifically ordered the inclusion of Luther's catechisms in their churches, instead relying on other prominent reformers to provide the local laity and clergy with religious instruction.⁵⁶ Andreas Osiander (1498-1552) was one such catechist. A direct contemporary of Luther, Osiander became a leading reformer largely based in the imperial city of Nuremberg.⁵⁷ He was elected as preacher of St. Lorenz Church in March 1522, and went on to become the city's leading evangelical preacher. His views regarding secular encroachment into areas that were the traditional remit of the Church, and especially the magistrates' desire to curtail the disciplining powers of the clergy, set him at odds with a number of his Lutheran colleagues in Nuremberg and beyond. Osiander jointly authored the Nuremberg Church Order with Johannes Brenz, which was published in 1533 – the same year as Osiander's catechism. The production of the church order had been a protracted process and the final result was not entirely to Osiander's

⁵⁶ Graeme Murdoch has examined the difficulties in mapping religious changes across the Empire, rightly commenting that the issue is much more complex than merely looking at state boundaries: Graeme Murdoch, 'Geographies of the Protestant Reformation', in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformation* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 105-123.

⁵⁷ For more on his career in Nuremberg see Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*. For the early years of the Reformation see Günter Vogler, *Nürnberg 1524/25: Studien zur Geschichte der reformatorischen und sozialen Bewegung in der Reichsstadt* (Berlin, 1982).

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liking, in spite of his own influence on its composition.⁵⁸ Osiander's overarching goal whilst in Nuremberg was to protect clerical authority from further secular erosion. During his tenure in the city, the main areas of contention between Osiander, the city magistrates, and other members of the clergy were the small ban and private confession. Chapter four will address these issues in much more depth, but it is important to note that despite having the same author, the church order and the catechism present different teachings regarding ecclesiastical authority.

An imperial free city since 1219, the southern German city of Nuremberg was a populous and economically powerful territory in the sixteenth century.⁵⁹ Jean Bodin described the city as 'the greatest, most famous, and best ordered of all the imperial cities'.⁶⁰ Since 1424, it had held the imperial regalia; it was where a newly elected emperor tended to hold his first diet; and between 1522 and 1524, it served as the capital of the Empire while the imperial court was in residence there.⁶¹ The Reformation in Nuremberg was cautious. The city's imperial status meant that it owed allegiance to the Emperor, who had outlawed evangelical teachings in the Edict of Worms (1521). The presence of the imperial court in the city further complicated matters. However, despite superficially strict censorship

⁵⁸ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, pp. 138-145.

⁵⁹ After the decline of the Hanseatic League post 1400, merchants from Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Augsburg and Ulm began controlling international trade in textiles, timber and metal ores as well as spices coming from the East; Guy Fitch Lytle, 'The Renaissance, the Reformation and the City of Nuremberg', in Jeffrey Chipps Smith (ed.), *Nuremberg: A Renaissance City 1500-1618* (Texas, 1983), pp. 17-22, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Stephen Brockmann, *Nuremberg: the Imaginary Capital* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 15. For more see Charles Zika, *Exorcising Our Demons: Magic, Witchcraft and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2002), especially chapter 15.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

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laws, by 1524 the council was no longer overly concerned with preventing the spread of Lutheran ideas.⁶² Paul Russell has commented that the Nuremberg city councillors saw no reason why they could not remain Catholic, maintain loyalty to the Emperor, and still carry out a reform of the Church.⁶³

In March 1525, Catholic and Lutheran theologians participated in a public debate in the City Hall. The debate was conducted in German, with Osiander acting as the primary Protestant representative. The audience judged Osiander to be the winner of the debate and the Reformation was formally adopted in the city. The magistrates sought to use the opportunity to reduce the control of the clergy in order to protect the consciences' of the citizens from unwelcome ecclesiastical interference.⁶⁴ In 1529, the city magistrates commissioned Osiander and three fellow preachers to create a new church order intended to replace the temporary *Brandenburg-Nuremberg Church Order* of 1528, which was too brief to communicate effectively the changes in doctrine and practices ushered in during the 1520s.⁶⁵ The publication of this church order was delayed by wider political events but, more locally, the magistrates and preachers struggled to agree on the connected matters of confession and absolution. The magistrates were concerned about the dangers of too much clerical authority, but the preachers maintained that they should retain the power to rebuke lay ignorance and

⁶² Allyson F. Creasman, *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany, 1517–1648: "Printed Poison & Evil Talk"* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 65-67.

⁶³ Paul A. Russell, *Lay Theology in the Reformation: Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany 1521-1525* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 152.

⁶⁴ Zika, *Exorcising Our Demons*, p. 573.

⁶⁵ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 115.

impiety, as well as the authority to release penitent sinners from the burden of a guilty conscience, arguing that to prohibit the clergy from performing their task would invoke God's anger.⁶⁶ It was against this backdrop of local religio-political tensions that Osiander, a keen advocate of clerical authority, penned his catechism.

While his fellow preachers were in agreement with Osiander on the issues of confession and absolution, he lost much potential support because he was a difficult man to get along with, and he opposed the moderate policies of Luther and, later, Melanchthon. He had attended the Diet of Worms in 1521 as a Lutheran delegate, but was sent back to Nuremberg in disgrace after he offended his fellow Lutherans by his obvious hostility towards Melanchthon.⁶⁷ In the following year, he encouraged Nuremberg's citizens to push for communion in both kinds and, despite the opposition of the Bishop of Bamberg, during Holy Week in 1523, more than three thousand parishioners received both the bread and wine in communion from the Augustinian prior, Wolfgang Volprecht.⁶⁸ In 1537, four years after the publication of his catechism, Osiander preached a sermon that was critical of Luther, and he was seen thereafter as a Lutheran dissenter.⁶⁹ In February 1539, the Nuremberg citizens openly demonstrated their

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁶⁷ Steinmetz, 'Andreas Osiander', p. 64. Steinmetz suggests that Osiander was always 'sure to leave a legacy of bad feeling behind him', alienating colleagues and citizens alike in Nuremberg and, later, Königsberg; Friedrich Roth, *Die Einführung der Reformation in Nürnberg, 1517-1528: Nach der Quellen Dargestellt* (Würzburg, 1885), p. 143. Roth further comments that communion in both kinds was offered to Charles V's sister, Isabella.

⁶⁸ Steinmetz, 'Andreas Osiander', p. 65.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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hostility towards him and his perceived abuse of religious authority in the recently revived *Schembartlauf*, a pre-Lenten parade. These forms of carnival were a way for the commoners to express their discontent to their superiors in an acceptable manner. Traditionally, Nuremberg's parade produced a float known as *die Hölle* (hell), on which they displayed people and objects worthy of damnation.⁷⁰ In the 1539 parade, they singled out Osiander for damnation, placing an actor resembling him onto the float surrounded by two demons, a physician, and an astrologer, a reminder that he had condemned the work of the physicians and astrologers as 'spiritual adultery' during a plague outbreak in the 1530s.⁷¹ A key hung to Osiander's left, which symbolised his commitment to defending clerical power and the citizens' rejection of this claim. As the float made its way through the city, riots broke out near Osiander's house and fireworks were shot through his windows. The parade eventually ended with the storming and burning of the float.⁷²

Hostility towards Osiander was not confined to Nuremberg. In 1541, Luther had predicted, 'many sects will come, and Osiander will found one of them'.⁷³ He went on to say that 'we have translated the bible, but he took out of our translation a word or two, reformed and mastered the same, so that he has

⁷⁰ For more on this parade see Hans Ulrich Roller, *Der Nürnberger Schembartlauf: Studien zum Fest- und Maskenwesen des späten Mittelalters* (Tübingen, 1965); Samuel Kinser, 'Presentation and Representation: Carnival at Nuremberg, 1450-1550', *Representations* 13 (1986), pp. 1-41.

⁷¹ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, pp. 166-167.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷³ 'Es würden noch viel Secten kommen und Osiander würde auch noch eine anrichten': *WA TR*, vol. 4, p. 478.

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translated it much better'.⁷⁴ Indeed, in 1550, a mere four years after Luther's death, Osiander became embroiled in a controversy surrounding the doctrine of justification. Much more will be said about this in chapter five but, briefly, in his inauguration disputation at the university in Königsberg in 1549, Osiander attacked Melancthon's theory of justification. Halvorson notes that, for Osiander, 'sinners were not only justified and *declared righteous* by Christ, but ... they possessed an *actual righteousness* from the indwelling Christ'.⁷⁵ Osiander disagreed that righteousness was imputed, placing him at odds with fellow Lutherans, and engulfing him in a hotly contested debate, known as the Osianderian Controversy, which was by no means resolved by the time of his death in 1552.

It is this aspect of Osiander's life that has received the most attention from historians.⁷⁶ Jörg Rainer Fligge has noted that Osiander's theology conformed to Lutheran orthodoxy whilst in Nuremberg, but that it changed whilst he was in Königsberg.⁷⁷ This thesis seeks to trace the origins of his perceived unorthodoxy, and considers whether his catechism sheds light on the evolution of his theology.

This is especially pertinent in the discussions of baptism and penance in

⁷⁴ 'Wir haben die Bibel verdeutscht; aber er nimmt aus unser Translation ein Word oder zwei, reformiret und meistert diselbigen also, daß ers viel besser wollt verdeuscht haben': *ibid*, p. 478.

⁷⁵ Halvorson, *Heinrich Heshusius*, p. 38. The italics are in Halvorson's text.

⁷⁶ David C. Steinmetz, 'Andreas Osiander (1498-1552): The Renewal of Human Life', in David C. Steinmetz (ed.), *Reformers in the Wings: From Geiler Von Kaysersberg to Theodore Beza* (second edition) (Oxford, 2001), pp. 64-69, especially pp. 66-69; Jason Van Vliet, *Children of God: The Imago Dei In John Calvin and His Context* (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 211-212; Timothy J. Wengert, *Defending Faith: Lutheran Responses to Andreas Osiander's Doctrine of Justification, 1551-1559* (Tübingen, 2012).

⁷⁷ Susanne Klemens, *Die Nürnberger Kinderpredigten Andreas Osianders d.Ä.: Entstehungsgeschichte, theologischer Duktus, didaktisch-methodischer Gehalt und Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Bamberg, 2014), p. 24.

chapters three and four respectively. Their conclusions will contribute to the historiography of Osiander, and the use of catechisms to promote personal agendas or doctrinal interpretations. Moreover, Osiander's later defence of his view on justification hints at problems within Luther's own doctrines: Osiander argued that his doctrine was in line with Luther's, and he could not understand why there was so much controversy over it.⁷⁸ Finally, Osiander's catechism was used as a template for later Lutheran catechisms, indicating that his views regarding clerical authority had influence beyond the boundaries of Nuremberg. Therefore, in discussing Osiander's catechism, the lasting impact of internal divisions and unclear doctrines within the early Lutheran faith will be explored.

Little scholarly attention has been drawn to investigating any connections between the catechism and his later views on justification. Anglo-American scholars generally have relegated Osiander and his catechism to their footnotes, and there is little close textual analysis of his catechism, particularly in conjunction with Luther's own catechisms. Ronald Rittgers has published a detailed study of Osiander's impact in Nuremberg, with particular emphasis on the magistrates' handling of private confession, the small ban, and Osiander's reaction to the limits placed on ecclesiastical authority.⁷⁹ Other studies in English tend to be rather brief overviews that do not engage in any depth with the core

⁷⁸ Olli-Pekka Vainio, *Justification and Participation in Christ: The Development of the Lutheran Doctrine of Justification from Luther to the Formula of Concord (1580)* (Leiden, 2008), p. 97.

⁷⁹ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*.

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issues that lay at the heart of Osiander's religious and political outlook.⁸⁰ In contrast, German scholars have focused more attention on the reformer. In the nineteenth century, Ernst Wilhelm Möller published a lengthy biography of Osiander, along with transcripts of a selection of his writings.⁸¹ Kurt-Victor Selge has argued that Osiander's catechism provides deep insights into the social and cultural identity of Nuremberg, as well as the behaviour of the city's inhabitants.⁸² This thesis supports Selge's conclusion, arguing that the catechism reveals much about the tension between popular agency and Osiander's attempt to regulate the outward expressions of piety. More recently, Susanne Klemens' study on his catechism has sought to analyse its context, its theological and didactical methodology, as well as its reception.⁸³ Klemens' work does not compare Osiander's catechism with any other, nor does it seek to explain the reasons for Osiander's approach, tone, or content in any depth. Rather, her methodology is similar to Palmer Wandel's in that it tends to explain *what* was taught rather than assess *why* it was taught. In analysing Osiander's catechism, this thesis contributes to a broader understanding of Osiander's theological position, as well as considers how early differences within the Lutheran faith stemmed from local social and political concerns.

⁸⁰ Maurice Schild, 'Observations on Osiander's Catechism Sermons', *Lutheran Theological Journal* 20 (1986), pp. 97-107. This article looks at continuities and variances within the context of Lutheranism p. 99; Steinmetz, 'Andreas Osiander', pp. 64-70.

⁸¹ Ernst Wilhelm Möller, *Andreas Osiander: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfeld, 1870).

⁸² Klemens, *Die Nürnberger Kinderpredigten*, p. 28.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

The Heidelberg Catechism

The *Heidelberg Catechism* was composed at the behest of Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate (r.1559-1576), and was published in 1563. The document was presented as an appendix to the 1563 church order and no single author was acknowledged publically. Instead, in the preface Frederick announced that it had been written ‘with the advice and help of our entire theological faculty here and all the superintendents and principal ministers of the church’.⁸⁴ Four slightly different versions of the catechism were published between January and November 1563.⁸⁵ The second version added a question regarding the difference between the Lord’s Supper and the Mass, and the third edition expanded on this answer. The fourth version retained the text of the third edition, but the title changed, and it included ordinances on how to celebrate baptisms and the Lord’s Supper. Despite the existence of a fourth edition, the third edition became to be recognised as the definitive version, serving as the base for later German editions and translations.⁸⁶

Much of the current historiography focuses on the authorship of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. Scholars have endeavoured to unravel the mystery of who wrote the

⁸⁴ ‘Und demnach mit rhat und zuthun Unserer ganzen Theologischen facultet all hie / auch aller Superintendenten und fürnemsten kirchendiernen’: *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht / wie der in Kirchen und Schulen der Churfürstlichen Pfalz getrieben wirdt* [hereafter, *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*] (Heidelberg: Johannes Meyer, 1563), pp. 8-9.

⁸⁵ For more on the different versions, see Maag, ‘Early Editions and Translations of the Heidelberg Catechism’, pp. 103-117; J.I. Doedes, *De Heidelbergse Catechismus in zijne eerste levensjaren, 1563-1567* (Utrecht, 1867). Doedes argues that the first edition was published in February, rather than January: *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸⁶ Maag, ‘Early Editions and Translations of the Heidelberg Catechism’, pp. 104-105.

catechism, but the lack of contemporary evidence has made it difficult. Not only are the minutes from the meetings discussing the catechism absent from the historical record, but letters written by those suspected of being involved in its authorship were shy of naming anyone directly. Generally, it is accepted that the lack of a named author was an effort on the part of the elector to present a united front.⁸⁷ However, chapter two considers a slightly different reason for the lack of a specific named author or authors: in only allowing his own name to be connected to the document, Frederick associated himself directly with the religious and moral supervision, education, and instruction of his citizens. In doing this, the catechism became a political document, and the political problems facing the elector in his attempts to rule effectively and unify the Palatinate under one confession were translated into his catechism.

The Palatinate was a tempestuous region in the sixteenth century. Charles Gunnoe Jr. has provided a comprehensive overview of the territory in the decades before the publication of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and highlights the political expediency of the Palatine Electors remaining on good terms with the Habsburgs. A main tenet of his argument is that, whilst not officially embracing the new faith, Lutheranism made deep inroads into the Palatinate in the 1520s, thus facilitating its formal acceptance in the mid-sixteenth century.⁸⁸ Unlike his

⁸⁷ Fred H. Klooster, 'The Priority of Ursinus in the Composition of the Heidelberg Catechism', in Derk Visser (ed.), *Controversy and Conciliation: The Reformation and the Palatinate* (Eugene, 1986), pp. 73-100, p. 76.

⁸⁸ Charles D. Gunnoe Jr., 'The Reformation of the Palatinate and the Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1500-1562', in Lyle D. Bierma (ed.), *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechisms: Sources, History, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 15-47, p. 20. The infiltration of

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predecessors, Frederick III had strong Calvinist leanings and, upon his succession to the Palatinate in 1559, he faced fierce opposition in his council between Reformed Protestants, the Lutherans, and the remaining Catholic factions. Gunnoe argues that the sympathy towards Lutheranism and Elector Frederick III's eventual embracing of the Reformed faith can be traced continuously from the reign of Ludwig V (1508-44) in the early part of the century.⁸⁹ Both Gunnoe and Eike Wolgast have suggested that Elector Frederick II (r. 1544-56) based his religious policy on political considerations, rather than personal conviction. Despite publically receiving communion in both kinds at Easter in 1545, and introducing a Lutheran church order in 1546, his fear of losing the favour of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, led him to proclaim the Augsburg Interim (1548) in his lands, which outlawed Protestantism. Even after the Treaty of Passau (1552), which provided *de facto* legalisation of the Lutheran faith, Frederick II did not re-establish the Lutheran faith in the Palatinate, and in 1562 a Lutheran pastor complained that his parishioners wanted him to celebrate the mass as it been done traditionally.⁹⁰ The middle ground adopted by Frederick

Lutheranism began in the 1520's and by 1558, there was a majority of Lutheran followers in the council at Amberg: Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 28-29.

⁸⁹ Gunnoe warns the reader of the misleading and simplistic interpretation of the events of the Palatinate being seen as either leaning towards a reformed religion under some electors, but reverting back to a more conservative stance under others. Instead, it was a continuous development marked quite clearly by a number of events in the first half of the century: Gunnoe, 'The Reformation of the Palatinate', p. 20.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30; Eike Wolgast, *Reformierte Konfession und Politik im 16. Jahrhundert: Studien zur Geschichte der Kurpfalz im Reformationszeitalter* (Heidelberg, 1998), p. 22; Peter Schmid, 'Die Reformation in der Oberpfalz', in Hans-Jürgen Becker (ed.), *Der Pfälzer Löwe in Bayern. Geschichte der Oberpfalz in der kurpfälzischen Epoch* (Regensburg, 2003), pp. 102-129, pp.112-113. Useful studies charting the political and religious developments of the Palatinate until 1563 include Hans Rott, *Friedrich II. Von der Pfalz und die Reformation* (Heidelberg, 1904); Joh B. Götz, *Die Erste Einführung des Calvinismus in der Oberpfalz 1559-1576* (Münster, 1933); Fritz Hauß, 'Die Durchführung der Reformation', in Georg Poensgen (ed.), *Ottheinrich: Gedenkschrift*

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III in the *Heidelberg Catechism* echoed his predecessor's reluctance to commit firmly to a doctrine because of the uproar such a policy would probably have caused. This caution in promoting a fully Calvinist doctrine has been noticed by scholars, who have attempted to define and label the faith taught in the catechism.⁹¹ Its inclusion in this thesis is not to confirm or challenge existing theories regarding its author or its specific faith, but instead to consider how the catechism was shaped by the political considerations of the elector and the spiritual demands of the laity. Each of the following chapters addresses the reluctance of the elector to impose inflexible restraints on his people and clergy on both theological and practical levels. Instead, areas of contention between Lutheranism and Calvinism were suppressed, or ignored completely, while points of agreement were emphasised, such as its defence of infant baptism, or its rejection of Osiander's understanding of justification.

The Palatinate had been granted electoral status by the Golden Bull of 1356 and, by the start of the sixteenth century, the region 'appeared poised to emerge as

zur Vierhundertjährigen Wiederkehr seiner Kurfürstenzeit in der Pfalz (1556-1559) (Heidelberg, 1956), pp. 194-206; Claus-Peter Clasen, *The Palatinate in European History 1559-1660* (Oxford, 1963); Volker Press, *Calvinismus und Territorialstaat: Regierung und Zentralbehörden der Kurpfalz, 1559-1619* (Stuttgart, 1970); Owen Chadwick, 'The Making of a Reforming Prince: Frederick III, Elector Palatine', in R. Buick Knox (ed.), *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent* (London, 1977), pp. 44-69; Meinrad Schaab, 'Obrigkeittlicher Calvinismus und Genfer Gemeindefmodell. Die Kurpfalz als frühestes reformiertes Territorium im Reich und ihre Einwirkung auf Pfalz-Zweibrücken', in Meinrad Schaab (ed.), *Territorialstaat und Calvinismus* (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 34-86.

⁹¹ Lyle D. Bierma, *The Doctrine of the Sacraments in the Heidelberg Catechism: Melancthonian, Calvinist, or Zwinglian?* (Princeton, 1999), see pp. 1-7 for a detailed overview of the debate regarding the theology of the catechism; Lyle D. Bierma, 'The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism', in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 75-102; Lyle D. Bierma, *The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism: A Reformation Synthesis* (Columbia, 2013).

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the dominant power in south-west Germany'.⁹² By the time Frederick III came to power in 1559, the electorate was divided confessionally, with Lutheran factions pitted against themselves, as well as emerging Reformed groups. Moreover, the 1556 visitation in the Palatinate found 'all sorts of idolatrous images, altars ... and similar papist ceremonies', indicating that Catholic practices were still popular in some areas.⁹³ Shortly after Frederick's accession, the Lutheran theologian Tilemann Heshusius and the Reformed preacher Wilhelm Klebitz became engaged in a public dispute over the real presence in the Lord's Supper.⁹⁴ The dispute resulted in the dismissal of both men, but the conflict increased Frederick's interest in scripture and divinity.⁹⁵ The quarrel, especially its public nature, served as a warning to the elector over the dangers of theological subtleties, and Halvorson suggests that this encouraged him to avoid including 'overtly offensive language' in his catechism.⁹⁶ Similarly, Lyle D. Bierma suggests that the catechism did not specify an author because 'public emphasis on collective authorship would serve to stress the unity of the elector's reformation – and helped to dispel criticism of it as being distinctly Calvinist, Zwinglian or Philippist'.⁹⁷

⁹² Gunnoe, 'Reformation of the Palatinate', p. 18.

⁹³ Georg Biundo, 'Bericht und Bedenken über die Kurpfälzische Kirchenvisitation im Jahre 1556', *Jahrbuch der Hessischen Kirchengeschichtlichen* 10 (1959), pp. 1-41, p. 24.

⁹⁴ Chadwick, 'The Making of a Reforming Prince', p. 62.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁹⁶ Halvorson, *Heinrich Heshusius*, p. 89.

⁹⁷ Lyle D. Bierma, 'The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism', in Lyle D. Bierma (ed.), *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechisms: Sources, History, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 49-74, p. 55.

In the absence of real unity, the illusion of unity was something that the elector was keen to protect, and this became a key policy throughout the entirety of his reign. The Naumburg Prince's Conference (1561) exemplifies Frederick's inclination to unity rather than discord. The conference brought together Germany's evangelical princes with the intention of reaffirming their commitment to the Augsburg Confession. Their purpose was to demonstrate their unity to the Catholics and to limit internal dissent amongst the Lutherans.⁹⁸ However, the problem was that two versions of the Confession existed, both written by Melancthon: the original of 1530 (the *Invariata*), and a later version of 1540 (*Variata*), which had been amended to take into account doctrinal shifts. This later version altered the wording regarding the Lord's Supper to make it more acceptable to the Reformed faith, and it was this version that had formed the basis of Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Whilst Elector Frederick, unsurprisingly given his own religious inclinations, preferred the later version, the other Lutheran princes supported overwhelmingly the *Invariata*. Its wording on the Lord's Supper was rejected outright by Frederick and a compromise eventually was reached whereby the *Invariata* was accepted as the official version, but the *Variata* was allowed as a viable interpretation of the Augsburg Confession.⁹⁹ Frederick's actions were a crucial step in his developing religious policy because the resulting compromise enabled him to foster relations with the moderate camps of both the Lutheran and the Reformed factions at his court and in the university. Moreover, it was in this climate of factional hostility and broader

⁹⁸ Gunnoe, 'Reformation of the Palatinate', p. 42.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

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political compromise that his catechism was created. Its analysis in this thesis will add to our understanding of how local tensions could result in doctrinal teachings that were designed to appease and, through this, assert political control.

Peter Canisius

Born in Nijmegen in 1521, Canisius rejected his father's ambition for him to study law and get married, instead electing to join the Society of Jesus in 1543.

Founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1540, the Society's purpose was to strengthen Catholicism across Europe and beyond.¹⁰⁰ After a series of wars and political setbacks, Emperor Charles V lost his fight to prevent the spread of Lutheranism, and the Peace of Augsburg confirmed its legal status in the Empire in 1555. The legalisation of Lutheranism was not welcomed by Catholics, with Canisius informing Cardinal Truchess in January 1556 that in Austria and Bavaria, many people 'pester and attack rulers' to adopt the 'Confession, or rather, Confusion of Augsburg'.¹⁰¹ The Peace made the containment of Lutheranism a far harder task for the Catholics and, in despair at the state of affairs in Germany, Charles abdicated, leaving his brother, Ferdinand, to succeed as Emperor. Unfortunately, the pope did not recognise Ferdinand's succession because Charles had not asked for permission to abdicate.¹⁰² This slight to Ferdinand's pride caused

¹⁰⁰ See John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Harvard, 1995).

¹⁰¹ 'Urgentet infestare Principes'; 'Augustanae Confessionis aut potius confusionis': *Beati*, vol. 1, p. 595.

¹⁰² James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago, 1980), p. 354.

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Canisius to worry that the new Emperor might make 'dangerous concessions' to the Lutherans, a concern that plagued Canisius for the rest of his life.¹⁰³

Georg Witzel's catechism of 1535 was the first German Catholic response to the Lutheran attack, followed by those of other Catholics including Johann Dietenberger (1537), Johann Gropper (1538) and Friedrich Nausea (1543).

However, it was the catechisms of Peter Canisius that became the most popular and widespread in Catholic Europe. Canisius produced three versions of his catechism: the *Large*, the *Small*, and the *Smaller*. The *Large Catechism*, aimed at university students and the clergy, was published in Latin in 1555, and a German translation followed in 1556.¹⁰⁴ The *Smaller Catechism*, intended for young children appeared later in the same year, while the *Small Catechism*, designed for older school children and 'simple' adults, was published in 1558.¹⁰⁵

Emperor Ferdinand decreed that Canisius' catechisms were to be used in all Latin and German schools in his Austrian domains and, in a letter to the Jesuit dated 16th March 1554 – whilst Canisius was still penning the *Large Catechism* – he ruled that no other catechism should be taught on pain of punishment and disgrace.¹⁰⁶ Reflecting on his life in 1596, Canisius commented in his *Testament* that his *Large Catechism* was 'used widely in the schools during lectures, [such]

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

¹⁰⁴ Petrus Canisius, *Summa doctrinae christianae* (Wien: Michael Zimmermann, 1555); Petrus Canisius, *Frag und Antwort Christlicher Leer* (Wien: Michael Zimmermann, 1556).

¹⁰⁵ Peter Canisius, *Catechismus Minimus* (Ingolstadt, 1556). A German translation of this catechism appeared as *Der Klein Catechismus sampt kurtzen Gebeten für die einfältigen* (Ingolstadt, 1556). Peter Canisius, *Parvus catechismus* (Dillingen: Sebald Meyer, 1558).

¹⁰⁶ Otto Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Bresigau, 1893), p. 19. O'Malley has commented that Emperor Ferdinand's decree on the use of Canisius' catechisms aided their dissemination: O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 123.

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as in Paris, Cologne, and Louvain. The same work was spread in Poland, Spain, Italy and Sicily'.¹⁰⁷

Considering the popularity of Canisius' catechisms, there has been surprisingly little modern scholarly attention paid to them.¹⁰⁸ Anglo-American scholarship has recognised the importance of Canisius' career and literary endeavours in the Holy Roman Empire, with James Brodrick's twentieth-century biography remaining one of the most authoritative and exhaustive studies of Canisius' life.¹⁰⁹ However, whilst an important reference work, the breadth of Brodrick's study prevented any rigorous analysis of Canisius' catechisms. More recently, Hilmar Pabel has sought to explore the literary career of Canisius in more depth. His study on Canisius' use of Augustine in the catechisms argued that the Jesuit 'contributed to a widespread confessionalization of Augustine, to an Augustine always ready to testify on behalf of Catholic truth and against heresy' – the latter including all those who disagreed with the authority of the pope.¹¹⁰ In his later work on Canisius and the Protestants, Pabel maintains and extends his view of Canisius as a 'typical Catholic controversialist' who was 'disposed to display

¹⁰⁷ 'Daß es auch in den Schulen in den Vorlesungen überall Verwendung fand, wie in Paris, Köln un Löwen. Dasselbe Werk fand eine Verbreitung in Polen, Spanien, Italien und Sizilien': Canisius, *Das Testament*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁸ O'Malley hits upon the problem in his discussion on how to view the Catholic Reformation; 'True, reliable and helpful works in the subject appear with regularity, but they tend to be long on information, short on analysis': John W. O'Malley, *Saints or Devils Incarnate?: Studies in Jesuit History* (Leiden, 2013), p. 74.

¹⁰⁹ James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago, 1980). See also Aloysius Ambruzzi, *Peter Canisius, S.J., 1521-97. His work and Sanctity* (Mangalore, 1925) and A. Anzini, *Blessed Peter Canisius* (London, 1905) for short biographies of Canisius' life containing examples of prayers formulated by him.

¹¹⁰ Hilmar Pabel, 'Peter Canisius and the "Truly Catholic" Augustine', *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), pp. 903-925, p. 907.

hostility, more than good will to Protestants'.¹¹¹ In this study, Pabel rejects suggestions that Canisius was ecumenical in his dealings with the Protestants, suggesting that to see him as such 'distorts historical vision'.¹¹² In so doing, Pabel challenges Julius Oswald's claim that Canisius displayed a friendly attitude towards Protestants.¹¹³ Of particular relevance to this thesis, Pabel dismisses the argument that Canisius' catechisms were 'free of spite', claiming that it does 'not withstand the scrutiny of these manuals'.¹¹⁴ Whilst in agreement with Pabel's conclusions regarding Canisius' controversialist approach towards Protestants across his literary career more broadly, this thesis suggests that his catechetical treatment of the sacraments stands in opposition to his otherwise combative attitude. Canisius displayed a moderate approach to conflicting Protestant sacramental doctrine in his catechisms; he discussed areas of common agreement and refrained from sustained polemic on disputed points. Indeed, his catechisms are all the more noteworthy because of the difference in approach compared to his other works. This is not to suggest that Canisius was attempting to engage in ecumenical discourse with the Protestants. Rather, he was appealing to those Catholics who lived and worked in areas that co-existed with

¹¹¹ Hilmar Pabel, 'Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?', *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014), pp. 373-399, p. 373.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 376. Viewing Canisius in this light had been a feature of nineteenth and early twentieth historiography: see Johannes Janssen, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, vol. 4 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1885), pp. 382-383; Peter Lippert, 'Petrus Canisius, der Heilige (Zu seiner Heiligsprechung 21. Mai 1925)', *Stimmen der Zeit* 109 (1925), pp. 161-172; Max Pribilla, 'Canisius und die Protestanten', *Stimmen der Zeit* 109 (1925), pp. 396-400. More recently, Julius Oswald has adopted a similar view of Canisius: see Julius Oswald, 'Ringen um die Einheit der Kirche: Petrus Canisius und Philipp Melanchthon', in Julius Oswald and Rita Haub (eds.), *Jesuitica: Forschungen zur frühen Geschichte des Jesuitenordens in Bayern bis zur Aufhebung 1773* (München, 2001), pp. 20-40, p. 37.

¹¹⁴ Pabel, 'Peter Canisius and the Protestants', p. 378.

Protestants. It was for these Catholics that Canisius sought to avoid detailed instruction on complex theological points, and for whom he avoided adopting a prescriptive tone in his small and smaller catechisms. Canisius' *Large Catechism* adopted a clearer position against Protestant doctrine, which, as I shall argue, was to provide the clergy with a means to refute Protestant challenges.

German scholarship has afforded more attention to Canisius. The nineteenth-century historian Otto Braunsberger compiled an extensive collection of Canisius' letters, wrote a biography of him, and investigated the origins and development of the catechisms.¹¹⁵ In this latter work, he concluded that the catechisms avoided 'abusive statements', instead adopting a more muted approach to discord than that seen in Luther's catechisms.¹¹⁶ More recently, Rita Haub's study on Canisius reinforces Braunsberger's view of Canisius. Haub argues that Canisius relied on 'objectivity, gentleness and understanding' and suggests that his catechisms were not polemical, although she does not analyse them in depth.¹¹⁷ The collection of essays on aspects of Canisius' life and career edited by Julius Oswald and Peter Rummels addresses briefly his pedagogical achievements, but the catechisms are not looked at in-depth, and are not compared to any other contemporary catechism.¹¹⁸ Wolfgang Nastainczyk's brief

¹¹⁵ Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung*; Otto Braunsberger, *Petrus Canisius: Ein Lebensbild* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1921). For more information on the edited collection of letters see Paul Beghey, 'The Editions of the Letters of Saint Peter Canisius by Otto Braunsberger SJ and the Vicissitudes of its Ninth Volume', in Rainer Berndt (ed.), *Petrus Canisius (1521-1597). Humanist und Europäer* (Berlin, 2000), pp. 303-311.

¹¹⁶ Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung*, p. 43.

¹¹⁷ Rita Haub, *Petrus Canisius. Botschafter Europas* (Limberg, 2004), p. 65, p. 49.

¹¹⁸ Julius Oswald, SJ and Peter Rummel (eds.), *Petrus Canisius - Reformator der Kirche. Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschland* (Augsburg, 1996).

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contribution to the volume of essays marking the 400th anniversary of Canisius' death looks at the evolution of Canisius' catechisms, describing the immediate context surrounding their composition, as well as offering a short description of their form and content, and concluding with a summary of their past, present and future meaning.¹¹⁹ The detailed analysis of Canisius' catechisms here not only will be important to the historiography of catechetical literature, but will add depth to the existing body of research on Canisius as an author, pedagogue and politician.

Having been active in Germany since the 1540s, Canisius had first-hand experience of its prevailing religious and social conditions. He attended sessions at the Council of Trent, where he addressed the assembled bishops on 23rd April and 6th May 1547 on matters pertaining to penance and the sacraments of extreme unction, ordination, and the marriage of priests.¹²⁰ In 1549, Canisius and two fellow Jesuits were sent to Ingolstadt to teach theology at the university. They went at the behest of Duke Albrecht of Bavaria, who persuaded Canisius to accept the post of vice-chancellor.¹²¹ Yet, despite his political connections, Haub comments that Canisius understood himself neither as a politician, nor a Church politician.¹²² However, Canisius' early recognition of the growing German sentiment and distinct nature of Catholicism in Germany suggests he had a very

¹¹⁹ Nastainczyk, 'Die Katechismen des Petrus Canisius', pp. 49-66.

¹²⁰ Klaus Schatz SJ, 'Petrus Canisius und das Trienter Konzil', in Julius Oswald SJ and Peter Rummel (eds.), *Petrus Canisius - Reformator der Kirche. Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschland* (Augsburg, 1996), pp. 67-96, pp. 68-69.

¹²¹ Figgis, 'Petrus Canisius', p. 21.

¹²² Haub, *Petrus Canisius*, p. 19.

adroit understanding of both politics and emerging German identity, despite his own Dutch roots.¹²³ Indeed, his non-German lineage possibly allowed his observations of the religious conditions in Germany to be more readily accepted by his superiors since he was not driven by any bias or natural inclination towards its people.

Robert Evans' exploration of the concept of 'aulic Catholicism' in the policies of the Austrian Habsburgs is relevant in helping to understand Canisius' political actions. According to Evans, this was a form of Catholicism that developed at a pace set by the Austrian authorities, rather than the Roman authorities.¹²⁴

Elements of this approach can be seen in the actions of Emperor Ferdinand, as well as those of the Bavarian Dukes, particularly under the reign of Duke Albrecht V, who implemented only certain aspects of Tridentine Catholicism: those that impacted on his own political ambitions were ignored or enforced weakly.

Canisius worked closely with Ferdinand and the Bavarian dukes, especially Albrecht and his son Wilhelm, and he was aware of their readiness to grant concessions to Protestants, or to ignore aspects of Catholic teachings and commands in order to achieve their political ambitions. For example, while Philipp Apian, a Protestant, was expelled from Ingolstadt in 1568 for refusing to

¹²³ Siegfried Hoffman has stated that Canisius 'played an outstanding role in church politics', in 'Petrus Canisius und die Politik', in Julius Oswald SJ and Peter Rummel (eds.), *Petrus Canisius - Reformator der Kirche. Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschland* (Augsburg, 1996), pp. 97-132, p. 97.

¹²⁴ R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarch 1550-1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 59-61. See also, Elaine Fulton, 'Wolves and Weathervanes: Confessional Moderation at the Habsburg Court of Vienna', in Luc Racaut and Alec Ryrie (eds.), *Moderate Voices in the European Reformation* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 145-161; Elaine Fulton, *Catholic Belief and Survival in Late Sixteenth Century Vienna: The Case of Georg Eder, 1523-87* (Aldershot, 2007).

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swear the *professio fidei tridentinum*, in other instances, the Bavarian dukes allowed dynastic ambitions to undermine the decrees promulgated at Trent.¹²⁵

For example, in 1564 and 1567, Albrecht saw his eleven and three year old sons installed as Bishops of Freising and Regensburg respectively, in direct defiance of Trent's efforts to outlaw the appointment of minors to ecclesiastical benefices.¹²⁶ Thus, in conditions similar to those of the Palatinate, Canisius produced his catechisms during a period of concession and persuasion.

Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that Canisius was guided by the Bavarian dukes' political outlook. For instance, in 1562, Canisius appealed to Trent for a relaxation of the Index for Germany, and in a letter written to the Italian Cardinal, Scipione Rebiba, in 1577 he declared:

since the Index of Prohibited Books has not been published in Germany, and since reading books on religious matters and using German Bibles is encouraged here, I have not taken any drastic measures. I thought it fit not to condemn books that have become familiar to Catholics here in their daily confrontations with heretics.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Jürgen Helm, 'Religion and Medicine: An Anatomical Education at Wittenberg and Ingolstadt', in Jürgen Helm and Annette Winkelmann (eds.), *Religious Confessions and the Sciences in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 51-70, p. 53.

¹²⁶ Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints*, p. 79. The Canons and Decrees stated 'Wherefore, no one shall henceforth be promoted to any dignities whatsoever, to which the cure of souls is attached, who has not attained at least to the twenty-fifth year of his age, and, having been exercised for some time in the clerical order, is recommended by the learning necessary for the discharge of his office, and by integrity of morals, conformably to the constitution of Alexander III., promulgated in the Council of Lateran ... But, to the other dignities or personates, to which no cure of souls is attached, clerics shall be promoted, who are in other respects qualified, and who are not less than twenty-two years of age': *ibid.*, p. 217.

¹²⁷ 'Deinde quoniam Index librorum prohibitorum in Germania non est publicatus, et ordinarii non modo permittunt, sed probant etiam a populo legi scriptos catholicorum libros de controversiis religionis et Germanica biblia, non mihi faciendum putavi ut ad vivum resecalem Omnia librosque damnarem, quorum usus catholicis hodie tam est familiaris, qui quotidianos cum haereticis congressus habere coguntur hoc loco et tempore': Cited in Paul Begheyn SJ and Vincent Hunink,

Yet, three years later, Canisius wrote to Duke Wilhelm, praising him for his decision to enforce the Index, and warning him of the dangers of the Frankfurt book fair, which facilitated the spread of Lutheran books in Germany.¹²⁸ These letters indicate that the Index was not enforced rigidly in Bavaria during the 1570s and that, unwilling to act against the policies of Duke, Albrecht Canisius had justified his non-conformity to the Italian authorities by stressing the difficulties German Catholics faced in their daily lives. When, however, in 1580, Wilhelm V enforced the Index, Canisius praised this change in policy. Canisius' responses to the religious policies adopted by the Bavarian dukes reflect his understanding of their growing independence from Rome, as well as demonstrate his efforts to accommodate their political objectives, whilst being seen to respect and protect their authority.

Canisius' concern for secular authority can be detected further in his advice to Emperor Ferdinand regarding the Council of Trent. In 1562, Ferdinand drew up a list of articles to discuss at Trent and Canisius was appointed to the advisory board tasked with answering the Emperor's queries. One question addressed the expediency of Ferdinand attending the council in person, to which Canisius responded:

'Two Unpublished Letters by Peter Canisius (1521-1597) to Cardinal Scipione Rebiba', *Lias* 34 (2007), pp. 1-10, p. 4.

¹²⁸ *Beati*, vol 8, pp. 550-555.

there is a danger of many people thinking and saying that the Emperor came in order to obtain certain concessions from the Fathers by the exercise of his authority ... [and] should the legates or Fathers refuse some request of his Majesty, the slight to his dignity would be the more serious for his presence in the Council.¹²⁹

Instead, Canisius suggested that the Emperor meet with the Pope, either in Bologna or Mantua, where they could discuss reforms in person and, potentially, in private.¹³⁰ Canisius' measured response protected the authority of the Pope by preventing a potential public attack on his office but, simultaneously, protected the reputation and authority of the Emperor. Canisius clearly was an adept politician, and could react prudently to challenges posed by the changing political climate.

These examples demonstrate Canisius' firm grasp of the political and religious conditions in Germany, as well as reflect the complex nature of Canisius' obligations. As a Jesuit, Canisius owed allegiance to the Pope and he was charged with protecting papal authority and interests. Concurrently, whilst in Germany, he owed allegiance to the Emperor and, whilst in Bavaria, the dukes. Each of these superiors required obedience from Canisius and his fellow Jesuits, but their individual policies and objectives were not always in alignment.

Canisius' catechisms provided him with an opportunity to tailor the material to suit the political agendas of both the Emperor and the Bavarian dukes, as well as

¹²⁹ 'Praeter haec omnia fieri facile posset, ut Caesarea Maiestas durius aut dicere aut quaedam cogere, si fortassis ex animi sententia non succederent conatus, quantumvis pie et sancte institute: Vnde grauiora deinde incommoda et certamina consequi posse viderentur': *Beati*, vol. 4, p. 83, trans. Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, p. 535.

¹³⁰ Schatz, 'Die Trienter Konzil', p. 78.

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recognise the distinct nature of German Catholicism in relation to the developing Tridentine Catholicism.

Canisius was aware of the distinct nature of German Catholicism fairly early in his career. In a letter of 1558 to Duke Albrecht, Canisius reiterated his intention to focus on Germany, stating 'we must forget Italians and Spaniards and devote ourselves only to Germany ... Here we must work with all [our] strength and with the greatest enthusiasm'.¹³¹ Canisius' *Testament* recalled that Emperor Ferdinand wanted him to 'write a catechism in his faith for endangered Austrians'; not for Catholics in a broad sense, but a catechism that was far more specific geographically and tailored accordingly.¹³² On his accession, Ferdinand found himself ruling over an empire that was also vulnerable to attack. The threat of the Ottoman Empire in the east necessitated an appropriate military response, which did not come cheaply. He was forced to ask for money and troops from his territorial princes, who used the opportunity to demand concessions in exchange for their help. Moreover, a devout Catholic, Ferdinand was faced with the reality of confessional disunity and discord between his subjects. His preface to Canisius' *Large Catechism* (1563) demonstrated his concern for the Catholic

¹³¹ 'Italians und Spaniens müssen wir vergessen und uns Deutschland allein hingeben, nicht auf einige Zeit, sondern für das ganze Leben. Hier müssen wir aus allen Kräften und mit dem größten Eifer arbeiten': Braunsberger, *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, p. 126.

¹³² 'Wollte, daß ich nicht nur durch das gesprochene Wort, sondern auch zur Feder greifen sollte und so seinen im Glauben gefährdeten Österreichern einen Katechismus verfassen': Canisius, *Das Testament*, p. 85.

faith, warning against the dangers of the 'cruellest enemies of the Christian Church'.¹³³

Yet, like the Bavarian Dukes and the Palatine Elector Frederick III, Ferdinand was prepared to make concessions, including granting the lay chalice. In 1563, a territorial diet in Bavaria had approved the granting of the lay chalice as part of a package of conciliatory measures designed to reconcile dissenters with the Catholic Church. Ferdinand pushed for a similar course of action to be permitted in the rest of Germany and, in 1564, Pope Pius IV allowed bishops in five German provinces to administer the sacrament in both kinds, should the laity wish it.¹³⁴ Canisius' 1563 edition of the *Large Catechism* appears to have predicted this papal concession because, in it, he did not expressly forbid the lay chalice, although it is evident that he disapproved of it.¹³⁵ Moreover, Pope Gregory retracted this concession in 1584, but it appears that Canisius did not revise the German edition of the *Large Catechism* to reflect this development.¹³⁶ This suggests that Canisius was operating somewhat independently from Rome, but acting in accordance with the agendas of his superiors in Germany. Further, it indicates that Canisius tailored his material to suit his audience. He did not approve of the lay chalice, but seemed to recognise that not all Catholics had the

¹³³ 'Darumben der Tausent künstler und grausamsist Feind der Christlichen Kirchen und aller außewelten / der leidig Sathan / diweil er sicht und weiss / das die Christenheit ime durch die war Christlich Religion dem grosten widerstandt thut': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 6.

¹³⁴ Michael A. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (London, 1999), p. 57.

¹³⁵ Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), pp. 180-181. More will be said on this in chapter five where the language of Canisius' catechism will be analysed in some depth.

¹³⁶ Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism*, p. 55. See the appendix of known publications of Canisius' catechisms in Begheyn, 'The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius', pp. 62-84.

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option or inclination to receive communion in one kind. As I shall argue, this is another example of Canisius appealing to those Catholics who lived on the fringes of acceptable orthodoxy. Rather than framing his catechisms in a manner that excluded such people – as the canons and decrees of Trent can be seen to have done – Canisius promoted a more inclusive approach. This did not extend to non-Catholics, but it permitted those who identified as Catholics to remain as Catholics.

Canisius' catechisms were the product of the political and social climate of Germany. While Canisius' other works have been described as polemical, Canisius removed theological contention from his catechisms and, in this, mirrored those of Luther. Canisius was operating in Germany at a time when Lutheranism was a legal alternative to the Catholic faith, and the Bavarian Dukes and the Emperor were making concessions to Lutherans. His catechisms reflect the policies of his political patrons, as well as recognise the realities of living in a confessionally divided society.

The Tridentine Catechism

The production of a catechism was touted at the Council of Trent in 1546, when a draft decree suggested a catechism be created for children and uneducated

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adults 'who are in need of milk rather than solid food'.¹³⁷ This idea was abandoned and the catechism that eventually was published in 1566 was intended as a manual for clergy, rather than a text to be memorised by ordinary people. The preface explained that 'the truths revealed by Almighty God are so many and so various that it is no easy task to acquire a knowledge of them, or, having done so, to remember them so well as to be able to explain them with ease and readiness when occasion requires'.¹³⁸ During the Middle Ages, the Church had been the patriarchal provider of both religious education and educational institutions.¹³⁹ The Council of Trent maintained this tradition, as the introduction to the catechism demonstrates:

[as] false prophets have gone forth in the world, to corrupt the minds of the faithful with various and strange doctrines ... the Fathers deemed it of the first importance that a work should appear sanctioned by the authority of the Council, from which pastors and all others on whom the duty of imparting instruction devolves, may be able to seek and find reliable matter for the edification of the faithful.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Elaine Fulton, 'Touching Theology with Unwashed Hands: The Preservation of Authority in Post-Tridentine Catholicism', in Helen Parish, Elaine Fulton and Peter Webster (eds.), *The Search for Authority in Reformation Europe* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 89-106, p. 91. Scholarship on the actual council is extensive. The most systematic work on its history remains Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, 3 vols., trans. Dom Ernest Graf (St. Louis, 1957). See also Robert E. McNally, 'The Council of Trent, the *Spiritual Exercises* and the Catholic Reform', *Church History* 34 (1965), pp. 36-49; T. Freudenberger, *Die Fürstbischöfe von Würzburg und das Konzil von Trient* (Münster, 1989); John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Harvard, 2002).

¹³⁸ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 9.

¹³⁹ Universities had been increasing in the century leading up to the Reformation and they often had strong links to religious orders. For instance, the pre-reformation university of Wittenberg was close to the Augustinian hermits who provided the fledging university with professors, students and a residence: Grendler, 'The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation', p. 10. Also, schools were also frequently linked to religious bodies, for example the Benedictine monastery of St. Giles in Nuremberg which had 230 pupils in 1465: Jacques Verger, 'Schools and Universities', p. 225.

¹⁴⁰ *Tridentine Catechism*, pp. 3-4.

The catechism was published initially in Latin without the question and answer format that other catechisms – including those of Canisius – had adopted. It condemned the ‘smaller books’, probably a reference to the catechisms of Luther, Calvin, and the Palatinate, amongst others, which, veiling ‘their errors under the semblance of piety, deceived with incredible facility the unsuspecting minds of simple folk’.¹⁴¹ The purpose of the *Tridentine Catechism* was to educate the clergy, to facilitate the learning of the laity, and to defend the Catholic Church’s control over doctrine, tradition, and the sources of authority for both.¹⁴² Indeed, the introductory matter stated that, despite the other Catholic catechisms in circulation, which have ‘earned the reputation of great piety and learning’, the gathered bishops ‘deemed it of the first importance that a work should appear, sanctioned by the authority of the council’.¹⁴³ Though the catechism was intended to be read and its contents taught by parish priests, it warned the clergy that ‘the instruction is to be so accommodated to the capacity and intelligence of the hearers, that, while the minds of the strong are filled with spiritual food, the little ones be not suffered to perish with hunger, asking for bread, while there is none to break it unto them’.¹⁴⁴ In so doing, the council expected the content of the catechism to be framed to suit the intellectual ability of the audience,

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴² Fulton, ‘Touching Theology with Unwashed Hands’, p. 93. The catechism was intended to protect the church from external attack and internal weakness: Robert J. Brancatelli, “Beset on Every Side”: Reimagining the Ideology of the *Roman Catechism* (1566)’, in Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parella (eds.), *From Trent To Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 283-300, p. 284.

¹⁴³ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

although little guidance on how to do so was offered in either the catechism, or in the canons and decrees.

As well as his own catechisms, Canisius saw the German translation of the *Tridentine Catechism* through the press, but it never gained the same level of popularity in Germany as his own texts enjoyed. The *Tridentine Catechism* is significant because of its stringently orthodox background, and because of the weight of the patronage that lay behind it: the Tridentine Fathers and the Pope. Moreover, the concept of authority was entrenched at the heart of the catechism: the council wanted total obedience to the Roman Church and the catechism embodied this aim. Yet, as the next chapter discusses, there was an increasing development of a specifically German religious identity in the sixteenth century, and its Catholic rulers did not want to be dictated to by the Roman court.¹⁴⁵ As a result, they did not endorse the use of the *Tridentine Catechism* straight away, instead choosing to authorise their own choice of catechism. Finally, the *Tridentine Catechism's* flowing text, akin to a book, was similar to pre-Reformation catechetical tracts. Considering this catechism was published in the mid-sixteenth century, and considering the sheer volume of other catechisms on offer in question and answer format, it is curious that the Tridentine Fathers chose to employ this traditional structure in the official educational offering of the Council of Trent.

¹⁴⁵ Public opinion of the Catholic Church and papacy was less than favourable in Germany: Haub, *Botschafter Europas*, p. 81.

Its comparison to Canisius' catechisms will offer rich insight into the tensions within the Catholic faith at a doctrinal level, and will demonstrate that Canisius embodied only partially the decrees of the council in his own catechisms.¹⁴⁶

Canisius wanted a catechism that was suitable for the Germans, an aim that was not shared by the Council of Trent, which sought a uniform Catholic orthodoxy to be applied across Christian Europe. Recognising the limits of this approach, Canisius wrote to Cardinal Morone in 1576 that 'it is not easy to understand the poor state and needs of Germany, except who see it with their eyes and learn from long experience'.¹⁴⁷ Canisius' sense of independence from the council, however limited, was not unusual: John O'Malley explains that individual Jesuits often 'had an agenda of their own, generally related to the agenda of the Council [of Trent] but specifically independent of it and different from it'.¹⁴⁸ Yet, despite the fundamentally different perspectives and objectives between Canisius and the council, somewhat surprisingly, the analysis of the *Tridentine Catechism* will reveal a sense of limited caution when framing Catholic sacramental doctrine. It is recognised that the Council of Trent was clear on its division from and hostility to Protestant doctrine but, at times, its catechism displays a degree of restraint on contested issues; chapter four, for instance, will discuss its imprecision on the merits of indulgences, which were controversial even amongst Catholics, and

¹⁴⁶ Forster credits the Jesuits as being agents of Tridentine reform in 'Elite and Popular Foundations', p. 317. This 'collective force' approach detracts from the individuality of its members and their agency.

¹⁴⁷ 'Non facile quiuis assequi uel compraehendere potest Germaniae miserum statum et necessitates, nisi qui eas suis oculis uidet et longa experiential didicit': *Beati*, vol. 7, p. 362.

¹⁴⁸ John W. O'Malley, 'Was Ignatius a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism', *Catholic Historical Review* 77 (1991), pp. 177-193, p. 177.

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challenges to them struck at the heart of the Catholic doctrine of justification.¹⁴⁹

In demonstrating this caution over divisive issues, there is a degree of similarity with not only Canisius' approach to sacramental division, but also with the Protestant catechisms of Luther, Osiander and Frederick III.

Structure

The structure of sixteenth-century catechisms, in particularly those of Luther, has been scrutinised by scholars seeking to understand the reason for the placement of individual aspects of the faith. Gordon Jensen has investigated the ways in which pre- and post-Reformation catechisms sought to shape piety through their structures, specifically focusing on the placement of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue.¹⁵⁰ He argues that their ordering was influenced by not only 'definite theological emphases', but that their placement is a representation of the author's aim to inculcate piety more effectively.¹⁵¹ Jensen suggests that Luther's rejection of the medieval focus on penance is reflected in the ordering of his catechisms: the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Our Father. This structure was intended to bring the individual to an understanding of their sinfulness and need for salvation through learning the Decalogue, before the Creed teaches the

¹⁴⁹ John O'Malley, *The Council of Trent: Myths, Misunderstandings and Unintended Consequences* (Rome, 2013), p. 7. For more on the division within Catholicism over the use of indulgences, see Elizabeth Tingle, *Indulgences after Luther: Pardons in Counter-Reformation France 1500-1700* (London, 2015).

¹⁵⁰ Jensen, 'Shaping Piety Through Catechetical Structures'.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

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individual where to look for grace, and the Our Father teaches the individual that grace can be received through regular and humble prayer.¹⁵²

Jensen's argument is persuasive, but a brief analysis of medieval and early-sixteenth century catechisms reveals that there was a great deal of variety regarding the structure of catechetical instruction. This suggests that there does not appear to have been a standard catechetical formula, based on Augustine's catechism, as Jensen has suggested.¹⁵³ Augustine's catechism was centred firmly on the three essential components needed for salvation: faith, hope, and love. The Creed introduced the individual to faith, the Lord's Prayer taught the catechumen how to pray, while the Decalogue taught them how to love.¹⁵⁴

Medieval catechists drew on these aspects for their own catechisms, although there were slight structural differences. One of the most popular medieval German catechisms was Dietrich Kolde's *A Fruitful Mirror or Small Handbook for Christians*, first published in 1470.¹⁵⁵ By 1500, nineteen editions had been published and a further twenty-eight were on the market by 1550.¹⁵⁶ The catechism was available in the vernacular, and Kolde intended it to be 'the beginning of a beautiful mirror for good Christians, which they should carry with

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 231-233.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁵⁴ Mary Jane Haemig, 'The Influence of the Genres of Exegetical Instruction, Preaching, and Catechesis on Luther', in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and Lubomír Batka (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 449-461, p. 456. See also, Arand, *The I may Be His Own*, pp. 29-39.

¹⁵⁵ Denis Janz has claimed it was 'probably the most widely used Catholic catechism before and during the early years of the Reformation': Denis Janz, *Three Reformation Catechisms: Catholic, Anabaptist, Lutheran* (New York, 1982), p. 8; For more see David C. Steinmetz, 'Luther and Formation in Faith', in John Van Engen (ed.), *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities* (Michigan, 2004), pp. 253-269, pp. 264-266.

¹⁵⁶ Jensen, 'Shaping Piety through Catechetical Structure', p. 227.

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them at all times as a handbook, since it contains everything that is necessary for the well-being and salvation of the soul'.¹⁵⁷ His catechism was divided into three parts: 'The first lesson: how one is to believe. The second: how one is to live. The third: how one is to die'.¹⁵⁸ Jensen's discussion of Kolde's structure suggests that it was intended to mirror that of Augustine's catechism.¹⁵⁹ However, this was not the case. Kolde's catechism began with chapters focusing on the Creed, including five chapters on 'Good Instruction on the Creed in General'; 'The Creed'; 'A Lesson Concerning the Other Points which One Must Believe if One is to be Saved'; and 'A Short Prayer Showing the Way One Should Ask God for a Strong Faith'.¹⁶⁰ Chapter six then turned to 'Instruction on How One Should Live According to the Will and the Commandments of God', and it is not until chapter 26 that the focus turns to the Lord's Prayer.¹⁶¹ Whilst Kolde included the same essential components that were found in Augustine's catechism, their placement was different.

In addition, *The Lay Folk's Catechism* of c. 1357 began with the Our Father, followed by the *Ave Maria* and the Creed, with the Commandments appearing before an exposition on the sacraments, the works of mercy, and the deadly sins.¹⁶² Christian Honnef, a Franciscan, produced a vernacular catechism in Bavaria during the early years of the sixteenth century, which was published

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.

¹⁶⁰ Janz, *Three Reformation Catechisms*, pp. 33-38.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁶² T.F. Simmons, *The Lay Folk's Catechism* (London, 1901).

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eventually in 1537.¹⁶³ This catechism began with the Our Father, followed by the Creed. The sacraments were placed after the teachings on the seven virtues of the Holy Spirit, and the Decalogue appeared at the end of the catechism.¹⁶⁴ The Catholic Thomas van Herenthal's (d. 1530) posthumously published catechism of 1532, like Luther's, began with the Decalogue, before moving onto the Lord's Prayer and the sacraments, while Georg Witzel's catechism of 1535 adopted Augustine's traditional structure of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue, before concluding with instruction on the sacraments.¹⁶⁵

The structural disparity between the catechisms continued throughout the sixteenth century, and the increasing inclusion of the sacraments further diversified the presentation of the core catechetical components. Luther placed his sacramental instruction at the end of the *Small* and *Large* catechisms. As the very first edition of his *Small Catechism* had not included a discrete section on the sacraments, Robert Bradley has suggested that they were supplements in later editions, although cautioned that 'being of divine institution, they cannot be ignored and are thus included in the basic catechesis but only for this 'positive' reason, not for any *intrinsic* connection they may have with the essential triad:

¹⁶³ Bert Roerst, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction before the Council of Trent* (Leiden, 2004), p. 254.

¹⁶⁴ Christian Honnef, *Eyn schone Christliche underrichtung uber die x. gebot / die vii. Artickel des Christlichen geloinen / mit dem Pater Noster un̄ der Englischer grözen / ouch aller Artikel der gemeiner bicht wie man ieckliche sunden onderscheiden sal. Alle punten bewystnut der hilger schrift* (Köln: Jaspar von Gennep, 1537).

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Herentals, *Den Spieghel des Christē leuens beslytende die verclaringe der thien gheboden Gods, ende der seven sacramenten* (Antwerp: Symon Cock, 1554); Georg Witzel, *Catechismus Ecclesiae. Lere und Handelunge des heiligen Christenhums / aus der warheit Göttliches worts / kurz un̄ lieblich beschrieben* (Leipzig: Michael Lotter, 1535), p. Biiia.

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'*Gebote, Glauben und Gebet*'.¹⁶⁶ Challenging this view, Jensen explains that Luther saw the sacraments as divine gifts enabling the faithful to live in the grace created by God. Therefore, the reason they are placed in the latter part of the catechism is because everyone had to understand the chief part of the catechism, which outlined God's actions in allowing mankind to live in grace.¹⁶⁷ Osiander followed Luther's example in the ordering of his catechism, although he added a sermon entitled 'On the Office of the Keys' between those on baptism and communion. This sermon will be addressed in much more depth in chapter four, but it is important to note that this chapter appeared between the two valid Lutheran sacraments, and in the position penance initially occupied in the early years of Lutheranism, reflecting his belief that penance remained a third sacrament.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* placed the sacraments in Part II along with the Creed. Part I dealt with suffering, Part II with redemption, and Part III with thankfulness, thus inverting more radically the *Gebote, Glauben und Gebet* formula. In a similar way to Luther's catechetical structure, the *Heidelberg Catechism* reacted to the medieval focus on penance. Scholars have attempted to trace the origin of the catechism's tripartite structure, and four different sources have been suggested: Martin Luther's *A short Form of the ten Commandments* (1520); Philip Melancthon's *Loci communes theologici* (1521); a Lutheran digest of Christian

¹⁶⁶ Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church: The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of the "Classic Catechesis"* (Lanham, 1990), p. 92.

¹⁶⁷ Jensen, 'Shaping Piety through Catechetical Structures', p. 236.

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doctrine entitled 'A Brief Orderly Summary of the Right True Doctrine of Our Holy Christian Faith' (1547); and Theodore Beza's two Reformed Confessions of 1560: the 'Confession of the Christian Faith', and 'A Second Brief Confession of Faith'.¹⁶⁸ In discussing the likelihood of each of these sources' influence on the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Bierma argues persuasively that the tripartite structure can find similarities in many theological tracts from the 1520s onwards, including Osiander's jointly authored *Brandenburg-Nuremberg Church Order* of 1533. Bierma concludes that the specific source is too difficult to trace, but suggests that its origin lies in the Lutheran tradition.¹⁶⁹ This is significant because, as the following chapters will consider in more detail, the *Heidelberg Catechism* sought to navigate a path between the Lutheran and Calvinist factions in the Heidelberg court and in the university. Its claim to a Lutheran tradition, therefore, possibly was intended to limit discord between the two groups. Without further evidence, including the minutes for the meetings regarding the production of the catechism, this remains speculative, although the analysis of the catechism's text may shed further light on this theory.

Canisius' discussion of the sacraments appeared in the fourth chapter of his catechisms. It was placed after the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue and, in this, it displayed a degree of similarity to the earlier catechisms of Luther and Osiander. Yet, Canisius' division of the catechisms into two main parts, wisdom and justice, struck at the heart of Luther's link between faith and

¹⁶⁸ Bierma, *The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

justification, and Canisius included far more doctrinal instruction throughout.¹⁷⁰

The first part of Canisius' catechisms focused on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Decalogue, and the sacraments. The second part emphasised the 'actions' of living godly lives, including instructions on avoiding sin, the cardinal virtues, the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, the beatitudes and the Evangelical councils (*Evangelische rhat*). Thus, the Catholic belief that an individual can contribute to their own salvation through good works is preserved. Nonetheless, Canisius avoided emphasising the link between good works and salvation in his catechisms, despite devoting a section to the practicalities of living a godly life. For example, in the *Small Catechism* (1574), Canisius taught that the avoidance of sin could be achieved by 'watching, praying, and in receiving the Holy Sacraments, penance and the Altar'.¹⁷¹ In this, Canisius can be seen to have followed the advice of Loyola to heart, who had counselled Canisius in 1549 to 'defend the Apostolic See and its authority and draw people to authentic obedience to it in such a way that they may not make themselves like papists [*tanquam papiste*], unworthy of credence by exaggerated defences'.¹⁷² Canisius employed a traditional structure in his catechism, but this did not translate into an overt defence of Roman doctrine.

¹⁷⁰ Donnelly, 'Peter Canisius', pp. 147-148.

¹⁷¹ 'In wachen/ in betten / und in empfahung der heyiligen Sacramenten / sonderlichen der Büß und des Altars': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), pp. 120-121.

¹⁷² O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 296. Quoted from *Monumenta Ignatiana. Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructions*, vol. 12 (Madrid, 1903-11), p. 244: 'Sic sedem apostolicam et eius auctoritatem defendant, et homines ad eius veram obedientiam trahant, vt ne per incautas defensiones, tanquam papiste, minus credantur'.

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Important to note regarding Canisius' ordering, however, is that he reflected some aspects of Lutheran thought in his structural placement. Luther had criticised the Catholic focus on penance, and reacted by structuring his catechisms in a way designed to offer hope to the individual. While Canisius' catechisms were ordered in a way that reflected the Catholic doctrine of salvation, he did seek to offer hope in them. For example, in the *Small Catechism* chapter two was entitled 'On hope and the Our Father', while chapter three's focus on the Commandments was tempered by discussing 'the love' of God.¹⁷³ Canisius framed the Decalogue as a positive gift, rather than a negative set of commands: 'Love is a graceful virtue poured (into us) by God ... we stay in the love of God when we keep his law'.¹⁷⁴ Though structured along Catholic lines, Canisius' catechisms offered comfort and hope and, in doing so, they responded to Lutheran concerns regarding the preoccupation with sin and confession in medieval Catholicism.

The *Tridentine Catechism* placed the sacraments in Part II, immediately after Part I on the Creed, and before Parts III and IV on the Decalogue and the Lord's Prayer respectively. It followed the ancient structure of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer: the 'four principal doctrinal headings' given to the Apostles directly from Jesus.¹⁷⁵ Immediately, there are

¹⁷³ 'Das dritt Capitel von der liebe unnd zehen gebotten Gottes': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 70.

¹⁷⁴ 'Die liebe ist ein gnaden reiche von Gott engegoßne tugendt ... darinn stehet die liebe Gottes / daß wir seine gebott halten': *ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

¹⁷⁵ Brancatelli, "Beset on Every Side", p. 289.

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differences between Canisius' structure and that of the *Tridentine Catechism*.¹⁷⁶

Brancatelli suggests that in mirroring this order – that pre-dated Augustine – the *Tridentine Catechism* was imbued with an authority that surpassed that of Protestant catechisms, which tended to begin with the Decalogue to highlight the wretchedness of man.¹⁷⁷ Both the *Tridentine Catechism* and Canisius' catechisms included material that is not found in the Protestant texts, including the remaining five sacraments, the Hail Mary, the cardinal sins and virtues, and charity. An individual, when exposed to these catechisms, undoubtedly was provided with Catholic instruction, just as individuals who were introduced to the Protestant texts were taught what to believe along specifically Lutheran or Reformed lines.

The structural differences between the catechisms are important because, as Jensen argues, they indicate how the catechists intended the individual to understand piety and the relationship between humankind and the divine.¹⁷⁸ Yet, even within confessions there was a good deal of variety in how sixteenth-century catechisms were structured. Moreover, the differences in structure did not translate necessarily into a difference in content regarding the actual instructions, particularly in the catechisms intended for children and the uneducated laity. For instance, each catechism is unified in discussing baptism first out of the sacraments, mirroring its position in the life-cycle of Christianity, and reflecting its spiritual importance in the life of a Christian. Moreover, both

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁷⁸ Jensen, 'Shaping Piety through Catechetical Structures', p. 224.

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Protestant and Catholic catechisms sought to use the dual aspects of penance – consolation and discipline – to aid the personal development of the individual’s relationship with God. Thus, while the structure of the catechisms remains an important consideration, the actual content of their sacramental instruction will be shown to be much more similar than the structure might suggest.

Woodcuts

Several editions of illustrated catechisms will be consulted throughout this thesis. Chapters three, four, and five seek to examine the relationship between those messages communicated visually and those conveyed textually. In order to comprehend more fully the implications of the similarities and differences between the visual and textual aspects of the catechisms, it is important to address the role of woodcuts in early-modern printed material, and to assess how far the catechists exercised influence over the choice of woodcuts in their catechisms.

German book illustration began in Bamberg in the 1460s. The demand for illustrated books grew rapidly, with approximately one third of books printed before 1500 containing images.¹⁷⁹ The use of woodcuts continued to grow, particularly after the onset of the Reformation. Lutheran propaganda utilised the printing press to great effect, producing illustrated pamphlets, broadsheets, and

¹⁷⁹ Daniela Laube, ‘The Stylistic Development of German Book Illustration, 1460-1511’, in Daniel De Simone (ed.), *A Heavenly Craft: The Woodcut in Early Printed Books* (New York, 2004), pp. 47-74, p. 49.

other tracts to emphasise the errors of the Catholic Church.¹⁸⁰ However, during the 1520s, images became an increasingly contentious issue, with Karlstadt arguing in 1522 that the laity 'learn nothing of salvation from them'.¹⁸¹ He declared that having images in the church 'is not right and against the first commandment', and that they are 'foreign Gods and full of shame'.¹⁸² Bridget Heal has charted Luther's response to Karlstadt's position on images, explaining that Karlstadt's attack forced Luther to confront the issue directly.¹⁸³ Luther wanted to distance himself from the radical views of Karlstadt, but, at the same time, he wanted to disassociate himself from the practice of the Catholics, and attempted to do so by emphasising the importance of the Word.¹⁸⁴ In 1545, for example, he asserted in a sermon delivered in Meresburg that 'Christ's kingdom is a hearing-kingdom, not a seeing-kingdom; for the eyes do not lead and guide us to where we know and find Christ, but rather the ears must do this'.¹⁸⁵ Nonetheless, in Luther's thought, images still played a vital role in the dissemination of belief and piety.¹⁸⁶ This is demonstrated by the incorporation of woodcuts into his translations of the New Testament, published throughout the 1520s.¹⁸⁷ Luther had learned a hard lesson in 1519 when his sermon on the Eucharist was illustrated with images of which he did not approve. Thereafter,

¹⁸⁰ See Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*.

¹⁸¹ 'Sie mogen kein seligkeit aus yhn lernē': Andreas Karlstadt, *Von abthung der Bylder / Und das keyn Betdler unther den Christen seyn soll* (Nickell Schyrlentz: Wittenberg, 1522), p. Ba.

¹⁸² 'Ist unrecht / und wider das erste gebot'; 'Sie seind got frembd / und voller schand': *ibid.*, pp. aii-aiia.

¹⁸³ Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, pp. 16-23.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁸⁵ 'Predigt, in Meresburg gehalten', *WA*, vol. 51, pp. 11-22, p. 11. Cited in Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, p. 22.

¹⁸⁶ Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁷ For more on this topic, see Carl Christensen, 'The Reformation of Bible Illustration: Genesis Woodcuts in Wittenberg, 1523-1534', *Archive for Reformation History* 90 (1990), pp. 103-129.

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Heal notes that Luther paid attention to the Bible illustrations printed in Wittenberg.¹⁸⁸ Luther's catechisms incorporated the use of woodcuts, although the extent to which this was Luther's choice is unknown. Heal suggests that their inclusion was at the behest of his publisher because the prefaces to the *Small* and *Large* catechisms do not explain their use, unlike the preface to Luther's prayer book in which he had intended to include woodcuts.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the catechetical woodcuts are not accompanied by any explanatory text, necessitating 'an extensive knowledge of the Bible' to understand their significance.¹⁹⁰

The sixteenth century boasted several great artists, some of whom lent their prodigious talents to creating woodcuts designed to accompany both Catholic and Protestant texts across Europe. Luther was associated most strongly with Lucas Cranach the Elder, although his bible translations incorporated images designed by Hans Holbein. Canisius' catechisms were illustrated with woodcuts presumably produced by a variety of artists, including Pieter van der Borcht for the 1589 edition of his *Institutions*. Canisius corresponded with Christopher Plantin, the publisher of this edition, and provided a brief text to appear above and below each image, inferring that Canisius must have seen or been given details of the woodcuts before the edition was printed.¹⁹¹ This catechism is an

¹⁸⁸ Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁹¹ Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, 2002), p. 19. For more, see Peter van Dael, 'Two Illustrated Catechisms from Antwerp by Petrus Canisius', in Koen Goudriaan, Jaap Moolenbroek and Ad

exception, though, because for the majority of Canisius' catechisms, often the printer is easily identifiable, but the woodcut artist is not.

A similar problem exists for Osiander's catechism, which was published by Johannes Petreius in Nuremberg in 1533. It included several woodcuts with a biblical theme, although the artist is not made clear. Chapter four discusses the woodcut used to mark the beginning of Osiander's sermon on the keys.

However, this woodcut is missing from an edition of his catechism published by Georg Rhau in Wittenberg in 1533, although the biblical theme is maintained in the other woodcuts.¹⁹² Given the disagreement between Luther and Osiander regarding clerical authority and the power of the keys, as well as the fact that Rhau published a number of Luther's catechisms, it is probably not a coincidence that this particular woodcut is not replicated in the Wittenberg edition. That Osiander, to some extent, was involved with the selection of woodcuts in his works can be seen in his 1527 book, *The Wondrous Prophecy of the Papacy*, which was based on a medieval prophecy that Osiander discovered in Nuremberg's library. Scribner has analysed the images in this book, and comments that, in order for the original woodcuts to suit Osiander's revised text, he had to 'reshape some of the pictures', indicating that Osiander had a degree

Tervoort (eds.), *Education and Learning in the Netherlands, 1400-1600: Essays in Honour of Hilde de Ridder-Symoens* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 277-296.

¹⁹² Andreas Osiander, *Catechismus odder Kinderpredigt / Wie die inn meiner gnedigen herrn/ Marggrauen zu Brandenburg/ vnd eins Erbarh Raths der Stat Nuernberg oberkeit vnd gepieten/ allenthalben gepredigt werden* (Georgen Rhaw: Wittemberg, 1533).

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of influence over the final result.¹⁹³ Unfortunately, the book's preface focused on its textual content, rather than provided any insight into the revision of the woodcuts.¹⁹⁴

The influence of the printer on the inclusion of woodcuts was not unusual, and it is recognised that printers were in control over the use of illustrations. However, at various times, Luther, Osiander, and Canisius were involved with the inclusion of woodcuts in their works – catechisms or otherwise. Regardless, for the vast majority of their illustrated editions, and especially those produced in areas across the Empire, their influence would have been negligible, instead left to the discretion of the printer. Printers and publishers knew their markets and produced books that they believed would sell.¹⁹⁵ The cost of publishing books was high, thus it was important to target the preferences of local markets.¹⁹⁶ Likewise, commissioning woodblocks to be cut was expensive, leading to images being designed to be versatile and re-useable.¹⁹⁷

While some artists, such as Cranach, produced images for the Reformation, and remained close to Luther, other artists lent their illustrations to both Catholic and

¹⁹³ R.W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 142-147.

¹⁹⁴ Andreas Osiander, *Ein wunderliche weissagung / von dem Bapstum / wie es yhm bis an das ende der Welt gehen sol / ynn figuren odder gemelde begriffen / gefunden zu Nürnberg, ym Cartheuser Kloster, und ist seher alt* (Zwickau, 1527), pp. aii-aiia.

¹⁹⁵ Printers produced books for local areas and issued revised editions for distant markets: Jan-Dirk Müller, 'An Information Revolution', in David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan et al (eds.), *A New History of German Literature* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 183-193, p. 190.

¹⁹⁶ John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, p. 90; Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, p. 138.

¹⁹⁷ Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, p. 121.

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Protestant publications. Hans Holbein, for instance, provided bible illustrations for Luther's German translation as well as Zwingli's edition. Moreover, he provided images for the Vulgate and Erasmus' Bible editions.¹⁹⁸ David Price comments that it is 'impossible to define Holbein's personal stance on the reform movements'. Instead, he suggests that Holbein's art was designed to transcend 'the textual and confessional heterogeneity of the Bible'.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, in his study of the visual arts and the church, John Dillinberger notes that images created by Cranach and Dürer – both associated with Luther – did not translate necessarily into artwork that 'really came to understand the central theological shift that created the Protestant Church'.²⁰⁰ Likewise, in his discussion of the religious position of Reformed artists in the sixteenth century, James Tanis has concluded that there is no 'guarantee of the religious orientation of a given artwork'.²⁰¹ Thus, when discussing woodcuts in later chapters, it cannot be assumed that the authors had choice over the included woodcuts, and nor is it certain that the artists commissioned to produce the images either comprehended fully the religious message, or shared the same religious outlook as the author.

¹⁹⁸ David H. Price, 'Hans Holbein the Younger and Reformation Bible Production', *Church History* 86 (2017), pp. 998-1040, p. 999.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 999-1000. It has proven difficult to quantify the religious position of the French artist, Jean Duvet, because his engravings drew on both Lutheran and Catholic sources: Frances Carey, *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come* (Toronto, 1999), p. 84.

²⁰⁰ John Dillinberger, *A Theology of Artistic Sensibilities: The Visual Arts and the Church* (Eugene, 1986), p. 54.

²⁰¹ James R. Tanis, 'Netherlandish Reformed Traditions in the Graphic Arts, 1550-1630', in Paul Corby Finney (ed.), *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition* (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 369-396, p. 374. Tanis suggests that the artist, Grolitz, created images that were influenced by the Catholic tradition, but were intended for Calvinist clients: *ibid.*, p. 379.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to place in context the catechisms that will be analysed in depth throughout this thesis. Each of the catechisms was published in a broader climate of concession and compromise between Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism. Moreover, each of the catechists were responding to issues that concerned them on a local level or that resulted from their daily experiences, such as Osiander's battle to retain clerical authority in Nuremberg, or Canisius' efforts to remain loyal to his secular patrons. Secondly, this chapter has sought to demonstrate the diversity regarding catechetical structure. While it is important to consider the structure of catechisms, there was not a universal order, even within the same confession. Finally, the discussion of the woodcuts has illustrated the need for caution when analysing catechetical images. Indeed, the point regarding the versatility of woodcuts will be raised in later chapters, when it will be suggested that the potential consequences arising from a lack of textual direction were compounded by the accompanying image, which possibly did not convey the message intended by the catechist. The immediate context of the catechisms remains an important consideration throughout this thesis, but, of equal import is the intended purpose of the catechetical genre more broadly, as the next chapter explores.

Chapter Two: ‘And what need is there of many words?’: The Purpose of Sixteenth-Century German Catechisms

Despite their centrality in the Christian faith, medieval catechetical literature designed for the laity rarely included detailed definitions or explanations of the sacraments.¹ Rather, for the laity, simply knowing which rites were sacraments was often deemed sufficient.² Further, it has been noted that theological proficiency was not necessarily required from medieval clergy either, with the duty of the priest being to ‘get people to heaven by practical pastoral care rather than intense doctrinal instruction’.³ Yet, in the sixteenth century, instruction on the sacraments came to be included in the majority of catechisms. No longer was it enough only to know what the sacraments were, but increased emphasis was placed on sacramental ‘knowledge’. This chapter seeks to understand the purpose of early-modern catechisms to support the fuller discussion of the sacraments that appears in the following chapters. The first part of this chapter will explore the religious educational programmes offered by the Church in the late Middle Ages, focusing firstly on religious education more generally and then on sacramental instruction specifically. The second part of the chapter will explore how sixteenth-century catechists responded to concerns regarding medieval educational techniques raised by religious and secular authorities and suggests that the relatively new format and increased scope of catechisms was intended to rectify these problems.

¹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 231.

² Arand, *That I may be His Own*, p. 40.

³ R.N. Swanson, ‘Before the Protestant Clergy: The Construction and Deconstruction of Medieval Priesthood’, in C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (eds.), *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe* (Houndsmill, 2003), pp. 39-59, p. 43.

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However, this chapter will also consider that, while the catechetical genre was undoubtedly designed to instruct and inform the laity, the content of that teaching was itself influenced by its target audience, particularly with regards to the sacraments. Moreover, though the catechisms had distinct aims and objectives, resulting from local and personal concerns, the way the sacraments were taught to their users was fairly consistent across and within the confessions.

The complaints voiced by both Protestants and Catholics on the calibre of the Christian education that had been provided in the Middle Ages often stemmed from the belief that religious education had been of poor quality with an ill-defined curriculum, and ignored the laity.⁴ However, research into medieval Christianity and its educational programmes has demonstrated the opposite.⁵ Whilst it is true that there were problems with accessibility to works of spirituality – both on an intellectual and a communicative level – there were concerted attempts to educate the common Christian. Kurt Ruh's examination of the vast array of 'spiritual prose' has highlighted the immense volume of vernacular religious literature designed for a secular audience.⁶ Bast has commented that attempts not dissimilar to techniques seen in the sixteenth-century catechisms were employed in the late medieval period. For instance, Johannes Wolff, chaplain of the St. Peterskappelle in Frankfurt from c.1452 to 1468, had encouraged the laity to repeat the Decalogue over and over again

⁴ Methuen, 'Education in the Reformation', pp. 483-503.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 484. See also Sheffler, *Schools and Schooling in Late Medieval Germany*.

⁶ Kurt Ruh, 'Geistliche Prosa', in Willi Erzgräber (ed.), *Europäisches Spätmittelalter* (Weisbaden, 1978), pp. 565-605. For more on spiritual literature in the Middle Ages see Werner Williams-Krapp, *Geistliche Literatur des späten Mittelalters: Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen, 2012).

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so that everyone could learn it 'whether they liked it or not'.⁷ Bast notes further that the *Staatsbibliothek* in Munich has 126 pre-Reformation manuscript texts, amounting to approximately 14000 pages of largely unexplored catechetical literature, sermons and primers dating from the later middle ages.⁸ The volume of this literature is significant: it demonstrates the vitality of medieval religious education and, moreover, shows that there was an audience for it.

Yet, this audience was restricted. Kolde's catechism, for instance, was intended for a broad readership but its format must have been problematic for the illiterate. Kolde's text was presented as a piece of continuous prose without the questions and answers that were to become a characteristic feature of sixteenth-century catechisms, making it difficult for non-readers to access or to memorise if it was read to them. Though Kolde's catechism was a popular medieval German catechism – in terms of the number of editions published – it was by no means the first to be produced.⁹ Examples of catechisms specifically aimed at the laity and pre-dating Kolde's publication by around a century include the anonymous *Grosse Seelentrost* of c.1350-60 and the *Doctrinal aux simples gens* by the French educator, Jean Gerson, which first appeared in c.1387. The preface to the *Grosse Seelentrost* indicated the author's desire for his work to be read by the laity or, indeed, be

⁷ Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, pp. 23-26. Wolff believed that, with patience, his method would work.

⁸ Robert J. Bast, 'The Political Dimension of Religious Catechisms in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe', *La Révolution française* (2009), pp. 1-8, p. 3.

⁹ Steinmetz has commented that it was the most popular catechism in pre-modern German speaking lands: Steinmetz, 'Luther and Formation in Faith', p. 264.

listened to by them.¹⁰ By way of contrast, in the introduction to his catechism, Gerson explained:

What is in this little book, priests are to teach their parishioners. [For the benefit of] uneducated priests who do not have theological training and for ordinary people, it is written in French with clarity and a great deal of deliberation.¹¹

The manner by which Gerson's catechism was intended to be communicated compared with that of Kolde and the anonymous *Grosse Seelentrost* is significant. For Gerson, the catechism was to be read by the clergy who were charged with the task of instructing the laity. In contrast, it was Kolde's intention that his text be read and absorbed by all 'good Christians', lay and ordained alike. In this way, the target audience of Kolde's catechism was more in keeping with those produced during the sixteenth century. However, unlike Kolde's text, Jean Gerson's catechism and the *Grosse Seelentrost* included expositions on the sacraments, thus making them, in terms of their content forerunners of the sixteenth-century catechisms.

Though the idea of seven sacraments was only fully established in the twelfth century, the concept of sacraments and the rituals associated with them were much older.¹² Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (c.1155) defined and listed the

¹⁰ Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, p. 9.

¹¹ Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (Pennsylvania, 2005), p. 37. Quotation taken from *Jean Gerson Oeuvres complètes*, Palemon Glorieux (ed.), 10 vols. (Paris, 1960-73), vol. 10, p. 296.

¹² Daniel Bornstein, 'Administering the Sacraments', in R.N. Swanson (ed.), *The Routledge History of Medieval Christianity: 1050-1500* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 133-146, p. 133. Peter Lombard's sacraments of the New Law differed from those of the Old Law 'because they are signs that actually confer the grace that they signify': Ian Christopher Levy, 'The Eucharist in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', in Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 235-248, p. 235.

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sacraments as baptism, confirmation, communion, penance, extreme unction, ordination and marriage.¹³ In 1439, the Council of Florence confirmed the number, order, 'matter', 'form', minister, and effect of the sacraments. These doctrinal statements provided the basis for pre-Tridentine Catholic sacramental theology.¹⁴ However, despite the prominence of the sacraments in Christian teaching and liturgy, with few exceptions, the majority of pre-Reformation catechetical literature and sermons tended only to include expositions on the Decalogue, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.¹⁵ These three features of Christianity were deemed the most crucial for the laity to know. However, though the sacraments rarely featured in such literature it does not mean that the laity were uneducated in sacramental knowledge: Evelyn Brige Vitz has argued persuasively that the medieval liturgy itself served as a form of education and, crucially, it was particularly suited to the illiterate who comprised the majority of the medieval Christian laity.¹⁶ She suggests that catechetical instruction was not the only method by which people received dogmatic and moral knowledge; they could also do so through attending church services where they assumed this knowledge through the senses, sights, sounds, smells and touch.¹⁷ Vitz's evaluation of non-printed methods employed by the Church to impart sacramental knowledge before the

¹³ Philip L. Reynolds, *How Marriage became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology of Marriage from its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 5. For more on the sacraments in the Middle Ages see Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*; Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, 2012); John H. Arnold (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity* (Oxford, 2014); Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology* (Oxford, 2015).

¹⁴ Peter Walter, 'Sacraments in the Council of Trent and Sixteenth-Century Catholic Theology', trans. David L. Augustine, in Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 313-328.

¹⁵ Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, pp. 14-20.

¹⁶ Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'Liturgy as Education in the Middle Ages', in Ronald B. Begley and Joseph W. Koterski, S.J. (eds.), *Medieval Education* (New York, 2005), pp. 20-34, p. 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

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Reformation relativises Luther's later polemical comment that 'every Christian should have a general, brief understanding [of the sacraments] because without the same [they] can be no Christians, though, unfortunately, [they] have not yet learned anything of it'.¹⁸

Palmer Wandel suggests that the sacraments came to be included in sixteenth-century catechisms because of the Reformation, arguing that 'the world of which they had been a part was no longer to be found in all places' and there were now vast differences in how the sacraments were understood and applied across Germany and wider Europe.¹⁹ The Reformation indeed wrought great changes in the understanding and administering of the sacraments. Most obviously, Luther reduced the number of sacraments from seven to two, baptism and communion – although Luther initially retained penance as a third sacrament and Osiander maintained that aspects of it were quasi-sacramental.²⁰ However, Palmer Wandel's explanation for the widespread appearance of the sacraments in the catechisms is logical but incomplete. If medieval society could learn about the sacraments through the senses in the liturgy, as argued by Vitz, then they would continue to learn about the sacraments in this fashion, albeit learning only two in Protestant churches. Whether the laity learned about two or seven made little difference to the way the sacraments were taught, in the sense that they were taught

¹⁸ 'Ein iglicher Christ zum wenigsten / ein gemeinen kurzen unterricht haben sol / wein on die selbigen kein Christe sein kan / wie wol man leider bisher nichts davon geleret hat': Martin Luther, *Deusch Catechismus Mit einer newen Vorrhede/ und vermanunge zu der Beicht* [hereafter, *Deusch Catechismus* (1535)] (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1535), p. 94.

¹⁹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 236.

²⁰ Ronald K. Rittgers, 'Luther on Private Confession', in Timothy J. Wengert (ed.), *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2009), pp. 211-230, p. 224.

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primarily through the liturgy and practice. Certainly, Lutheran and Reformed experiences of the liturgy changed fundamentally during the sixteenth century, including the introduction of a vernacular liturgy that removed many traditional elements including, for instance, speaking the canon of the mass *sotto voce* with the intention that congregations should understand what was happening. Nonetheless, in the same way that Christians had learned about the sacraments prior to the Reformation, Protestant parishioners would learn about the sacraments through liturgy and practice and associated sermons. What extra need was there for sacramental instruction in the catechisms? This question became more pertinent when recognizing that the Lutherans did not all teach a uniform understanding of the sacraments. For instance, as I shall argue in chapter four, Osiander's understanding of absolution was markedly different to that of Luther, but this difference was not explained or acknowledged in the catechism. In Nuremberg, where five editions of Luther's large and small catechisms were published between 1529 and 1533, there was a striking disconnect between Luther's teachings and those of Osiander. This suggests that education alone cannot have been the sole reason catechisms came to include sacramental knowledge and what follows is a discussion of the broader purpose of sixteenth-century German catechisms, including their contribution to pedagogy, the search for concord, and the protection of authority, either secular or ecclesiastical.

Education

Formal criticisms of medieval pedagogical institutions and curricula came from a number of avenues: religious reformers and popular preachers disagreed with the 'pointless subtleties of a too-theoretical theology'; princely counsellors were unhappy with the disorderly behaviour of students and the overly theoretical nature of the courses offered in schools and universities; and humanists complained about the indifference shown towards enhancing the moral codes of the students.²¹ Luther had declared in 1524 that 'schools are everywhere being left to go to wrack and ruin' and those that existed were the 'wrong kind' of school teaching the wrong kind of education.²² These complaints regarding the religious curricula can be broken down into two main categories: concerns over theological complexity; and anxieties regarding social order and morality. The sixteenth-century catechisms will be shown to have addressed both of these issues in varying degrees of depth. With regards to concerns over theological difficulty, the catechisms attempted to keep the theology brief and simple, particularly in the smaller editions. In his *Small Catechism*, for instance, Luther only briefly discussed the sacraments because 'it was enough for people to know which rites were sacraments'.²³ Canisius penned his shorter catechisms because he 'wanted the main points

²¹ Jaques Verger, 'Schools and Universities' in Christopher Allmand (ed.), *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. III c. 1415-c.1500 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 220-242, p. 231. Luther and Melancthon blamed the decline in schools during the 1520s on the 'know nothing ideology among the people' and felt the cycle could only be broken from above: Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, p. 7.

²² Martin Luther, 'To the councilmen of all cities in Germany that they establish and maintain Christian schools', in J.J. Pelikan, H.C. Oswald and H.T. Lehmann (eds.), *Luther's Works* [hereafter *LW*] (Philadelphia, 1955-1986), vol. 45, p. 347. Cited in Methuen, 'Education in the Reformation', p. 483.

²³ Arand, *That I may be His Own*, p. 40.

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of our true Catholic faith to be even shorter, clearer and presented better'.²⁴

Likewise, the secular *Heidelberg Catechism* criticised the 'rambling, unnecessary questions' prevalent in other catechisms and kept the theology as basic as possible.²⁵ More detailed theology could be found instead in Luther and Canisius' *Large Catechisms* or the *Heidelberg Church Order* (1563), which were all expressly aimed at the clergy. In keeping theological detail to a minimum, subtleties between the faiths were neither emphasised nor fully explained. Though the following chapters will suggest that the depth of doctrinal content offered in the catechisms was influenced by both the demands of the laity and the wider political climate, this does not undermine the fact that the avoidance of detail can be seen within the framework of a broader evolution in educational technique, which was designed to facilitate the absorption of the basics of the faith by illiterate lay folk and children.

A second category of complaint regarding medieval educational practices concerned the behaviour and moral code of students as well as wider society more broadly, and can be seen to have justified the increased secularisation of education. The late medieval and early modern period witnessed a rapid expansion of educational providers with universities and schools growing in number across Europe.²⁶ Most of these new institutions were financed by

²⁴ Petrus Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus Petri Canisij, der H. Schrifft Doctors für die gemeine Layen und junge Kinder beschrieben* [hereafter, *Kleiner Catechismus* (1596)] (Amberg, 1596), p. 1.

²⁵ *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht / wie der in Kirchen und Schulen der Churfürstlichen Pfalz getrieben wirdt* [hereafter, *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*] (Heidelberg: Johannes Meyer, 1563) p 7.

²⁶ For example, between 1400 and 1625, there were fourteen new universities in Germany: Grendler, 'The Universities of the Reformation and Renaissance', p. 2. For more on medieval education see William J. Courtenay and Jürgen Miethke (eds.), *Universities and Schooling in*

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territorial princes or by town councils, including the University of Wittenberg, which was founded in 1503 by Elector Frederick III of Saxony, where Luther taught theology from autumn 1513. The secularisation of educational institutions challenged the traditional power of the Church over educational affairs and secular bodies increasingly demonstrated a far keener interest in what was being taught to their subjects.²⁷ The increase in universities has been attributed to the growth of the territorial state: rulers and governments both needed and wanted educated and obedient officials and they believed society at large would benefit spiritually and morally from a sound religious education.²⁸ Erika Rummel has explained that in the late 1520s to early 1530s, Protestant school orders adopted humanist ideals by emphasising that education was a civic duty rather than a luxury. She argues that Protestant education aimed to create a citizenry who would and could serve the state effectively.²⁹ Luther had declared that the development of suitable schools would be beneficial to the community, for 'a city's best and greatest welfare, safety, and strength consists rather in its having many able, learned, wise, honourable, and well-educated citizens'.³⁰ Rummel further comments that Catholics also incorporated humanist ideals in their educational programmes and, like the Protestants, adapted them to suit their confessional goals.³¹ Humanists did not necessarily recognise these Catholic and Protestant

Medieval Society (Leiden, 2000); Sheffler, *Schools and Schooling*; Methuen, 'Securing the Reformation'.

²⁷ Gernot Heiss, 'Educational Politics in the Austrian Lands and the Foundation of the Jesuit University of Graz 1585', in Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (ed.), *European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (Dublin, 1998), pp. 169-186, p. 169.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169; Grendler, 'The Universities of the Reformation and Renaissance', p. 2.

²⁹ Erika Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 5-6. See also Sheffler, *Schools and Schooling*, pp. 10-11.

³⁰ *LW*, vol. 45, p. 356. Cited in Methuen, 'Education in the Reformation', p. 483.

³¹ Rummel, *Confessionalization of Humanism*, pp. 5-8.

educational programmes as being reflective of true humanist ideals but, in emphasising civic duty and increasing attention towards the education of children, there were definite links to the pedagogical ideals of a humanist education.³²

The creation of godly, well-educated citizens to serve the state was a by-product of a state-led policy designed to inculcate obedience to the secular ruler. This process is associated with the concept of 'social disciplining' with which catechisms have traditionally been linked. Indeed, sixteenth-century German catechisms were not only theological and ecclesiastical, but also political documents often published at the behest of a secular ruler or included in church and school orders by their direct command. Their incorporation into church and school orders suggests that conformity, at least within a given region, was an expected consequence of their use. Over the course of the century, individual territories 'borrowed' parts of catechisms that suited their religious preferences. For instance, a revised edition of Luther's *Small Catechism*, published in 1573, was amended to reflect more closely how the Church operated in Lower Austria.³³ The state remained in overall control of which catechism or catechisms were officially published, further reducing the influence that had traditionally been enjoyed by the Church over religious affairs, and denoting another way in which the catechisms represented an evolution in religious education. In attempting to moralise and correct

³² *Ibid.*, p. 129. Humanist emphasis on moral education was not centred solely on religious considerations. Rather, it was a personal piety that could be achieved by all – including pagans. For humanists, a moral education would see the fulfilment of human potential rather than influence loyalty to a specific state, in *ibid.*, p. 6.

³³ Philip Barbatus Gerlicus, *Catechismus Doctoris Martini Lutheri. Sampt ettlichen Fragstücken / wie die in der Christlichen Kirchen zu Sytendorff in Niderösterreich gehalten werden* (Regensburg: Hans Burger, 1573).

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oversights in medieval education, the new breed of sixteenth-century catechisms brought to the fore debates of the limits of temporal and ecclesiastical authority and highlighted pre-existing tensions over who had overall responsibility for the education of the laity.

Yet, sixteenth-century catechisms also changed the ways in which religious instruction was imparted, as well as altered the manner by which users engaged with their content. Donnelly has commented that medieval educators 'had failed to capitalise on the invention of printing by placing effective catechisms in children's hands'.³⁴ While there was not a great deal of time between the development of the printing press and the Reformation, there was indeed little published for the edification and religious instruction of children. However, the sixteenth-century catechetical transition from book-like tracts to those in question and answer format with teacher and student, or father and child, dialogues extended the target audience for catechisms to children who would not yet have the intellectual ability to absorb detailed and lengthy tracts. They also enabled illiterate adults to be incorporated into catechetical instruction. Indeed, as Canisius wrote in the *Shorter Catechism* (1596), 'you must find all sorts of ways in which the weak and small understand and flourish with wholesome food and medicine'.³⁵ Further, the subtle difference in the way the catechisms sought to convey their content signals a change in the purpose of sixteenth-century catechisms. Kolde's

³⁴ John Patrick Donnelly, 'Peter Canisius 1521-1597', in Jill Raitt (ed.), *Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland and Poland, 1560-1600* (New Haven, 1981), pp. 141-156, p. 145.

³⁵ 'Man muß aber auf allerlei Weeg versuchen / damit den Schwachen und Klein verstandigen mit heilsamer Speiß und Arzney gedievet werde': Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus* (1596), p. 1.

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medieval catechism sought to teach readers how to live godly lives: each of his three parts described how an individual should believe, live and die. Readers were told how to live in order to achieve salvation and the ideal human condition was described to them. In contrast, sixteenth-century German catechisms asked *what* questions: 'What is baptism?', 'What is the sacrament of the Altar?', for instance. The phrasing of the questions demanded a specific answer with less flexible parameters, whereas *how* invites a more descriptive response and passive acceptance. The sixteenth-century catechisms were not intended to act as guides for or descriptions of a moral and pious life, but rather had a precision that inculcated deeper engagement with the content and sought a more tangible degree of uniformity. Indeed, Cater notes that in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, bishops issued catechisms so that 'the truths of the Catholic religion would be taught with exactness'.³⁶ The early modern catechisms, therefore, were intended to provide specific knowledge that influenced the behaviour and belief of the reader.

The increased use of the vernacular is another distinctive feature of the sixteenth-century catechisms. Earlier catechisms were not published exclusively in Latin – far from it – but in the sixteenth century, the preference for German over Latin gradually became the norm. Luther and Canisius produced their *Large Catechisms* in Latin in 1529 and 1555 respectively before translating them into German, while the *Heidelberg Catechism* was first published in German in 1563 before a Latin translation appeared later that

³⁶ Karen E. Carter, 'The Science of Salvation: French Diocesan Catechisms and Catholic Reform (1650-1800)', *Catholic Historical Review* 96 (2010), pp. 234-261, p. 234.

year. Language is an important aspect of the catechisms: a German-language catechism can be seen to have promoted a shared faith amongst and between German people or, conversely, if the catechism was in Latin, this acted as a barrier to a shared faith because it was accessible only to those who understood it. On the other hand, however, Latin allowed that faith to be shared beyond the vernacular linguistic boundary. Indeed, the range of German languages spoken in the early sixteenth century resulted in problems of comprehension with texts that were written in early modern high German requiring translating into early modern low German.³⁷ For instance, Esther-Beate Körber's study on the reformation around the Baltic, notes that while theologians in the area could understand Luther's Latin works, early modern high German was spoken only in Königsberg, with early modern low German being the vernacular, necessitating the translation of high German works.³⁸ Thus, it cannot be assumed that the use of German in the catechisms resulted in a universal understanding across the German-speaking lands. Nonetheless, the use of the vernacular made teaching in a domestic setting far easier because it enabled parents were more likely to be able to teach their children in German than in Latin. Indeed, the increasing range of German religious literature printed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth

³⁷ Johannes Bugenhagen translated Luther's bible into Low German in 1534. For more on the translation see Heinz Bluhm, 'Martin Luther and the Pre-Lutheran Low German Bibles', *Modern Languages Review* 62 (1967), pp. 642-653. For an appraisal of the linguistic problems with translations of Luther's bible see Timothy A. Francis, 'The Linguistic Influence of Luther and the German Language on the Earliest Complete Lutheran Bibles in Low German, Dutch, Danish and Swedish', *Studia Neophilologica* 72 (2000), pp. 75-94.

³⁸ Esther-Beate Körber, 'Reformation als Kommunikationsund Verkehrserignis', in Ralph Tuchtenhagen (ed.), *Aspekte der Reformation im Ostseeraum* (Nordost-Archiv NF 13; Lüneburg, 2005), pp. 15-44, p. 20.

centuries is demonstrative of the growing preference and demand for non-Latin texts.³⁹

The use of the vernacular also reflects changes in the wider educational provision of early-modern Germany. During the Middle Ages, education had been largely the preserve of the ecclesiastical elite, although this began to change in the fifteenth century.⁴⁰ Education was varied across Germany and Europe and it has been difficult to quantify how much of it was offered in the vernacular.⁴¹ Equally difficult to quantify is the education provided to girls. Sheffler explains that scholarship on female education is under-developed mainly because there is a lack of evidence.⁴² Schools, both city and cathedral, tended to be barred to girls because most students were clerics and this was not a profession open to women. They could, however, attend private schools which tended to operate in the vernacular.⁴³ The catechisms built on this trend towards the vernacular throughout the sixteenth century and the growing use of German increased their effectiveness in teaching outside the classroom. This, combined with their different degrees of depth and intellectual demands, is a marked progression from the education provided in the later Middle Ages. Moreover, the catechisms were intended to be used both in schools and at home, meaning, theoretically, that children and adults of all social levels had access to a shared, universal understanding of their faith. Language, gender,

³⁹ See Richard A. Crofts, 'Printing, Reform, and the Catholic Reformation in Germany (1521-1545)', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (1985), pp. 369-381.

⁴⁰ Sheffler notes that by the mid-fifteenth century, children of Regensburg citizens were going to the various schools in significant numbers: *Schools and Schooling*, p. 154.

⁴¹ Verger, 'Schools and Universities', p. 226. Methuen suggests vernacular schools were more numerous than has usually been assumed, 'Education in the Reformation', p. 485.

⁴² Sheffler, *Schools and Schooling*, pp. 71-72.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73. This led to women being literate in German but not necessarily in Latin.

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and class were no longer potential barriers to a religious education and catechisms, whilst neither instigators nor sole champions of this endeavour, were crucial in its continued development.

Language also can be seen as an expression of local and national identity. In her study on medieval prophecies, Frances Kneupper suggests that the increasing evidence for Latinate individuals turning to vernacular texts may have been the result of their growing alignment to regional or political groups, rather than demarcating themselves according to clerical or educational status. She comments that the pro-German tone of the prophecies indicates that they had a 'specifically German message as well as a specifically German audience'.⁴⁴ Len Scales comments that 'medieval people themselves often ascribed to language high importance in defining collective ties'.⁴⁵ Julie K. Tanaka has examined the role of German humanists in 'composing works that expressed a collective identity for the many peoples of the German lands'.⁴⁶ Tanaka explores the historical writings of, amongst others, Sebastian Franck, whose *History of the German People* (1538) was written in the vernacular, standing in direct contrast to previous German historical writings. She suggests that Franck used the vernacular to prove the richness of the German language and to demonstrate that 'now Germania does not bow to Rome'.⁴⁷ From these studies, it is evident that there was a growing concept of

⁴⁴ Frances Courtney Kneupper, *The Empire at the End of Time: Identity and Reform in Late Medieval German Prophecy* (Oxford, 2016), p. 30.

⁴⁵ Len Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity: Authority and Crisis, 1245–1414* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 486.

⁴⁶ Julie K. Tanaka, 'Historical Writing and German Identity: Jacob Wimpheling and Sebastian Franck', in Christopher Ocker, Michael Printy, Peter Starckenko and Peter Wallace (eds.), *Politics and Reformations: Histories and Reformations* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 155-175, p. 155.

⁴⁷ '[D]as jetzt Germania auch den Romern kaum weicht': cited in *ibid.*, p. 174.

identity in early sixteenth-century Germany and the increasing use of the vernacular supported and encouraged this development, although the lack of mutual comprehension within German speaking areas remained an obstacle throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, albeit one that became less of a hindrance with the increasing shift towards and standardisation of New High German.⁴⁸

The emergence of a German identity fed into an increasing anti-papal sentiment felt in Germany, which was emphasised by the histories of German humanists whose works condemned the yoke of papal tyranny.⁴⁹ Luther tapped into these feelings in his early years as a reformer, appealing directly to German princes in his calls for ecclesiastical change. His 'Address to the German Nobility', published in 1520, was written in the vernacular and sought to separate the German princes from the Latin-speaking curia. It encouraged Luther's 'dear Germans' to 'wake up', to 'fear God more than men' and to 'not become part of all the poor souls that are miserably lost through the shameful devilish government of the Romanists'.⁵⁰ The vernacular catechisms can be seen as extending this trend towards seeing oneself as a specifically German Christian. More will be said on this below, but the catechisms, particularly those of Luther and Canisius and, to a lesser extent, Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate, addressed concerns of German Christians and tailored their

⁴⁸ Maria Barbara Lange, 'Bad Language in Germany's Past – the Birth of Linguistic Norms in the Seventeenth Century?', in Nils Langer and Winifred V. Davies (eds.), *Linguistic Purism in the Germanic Languages* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 62-84, p. 63.

⁴⁹ James D. Tracy, *Erasmus of the Low Countries* (Berkeley, 1996), p. 100.

⁵⁰ 'Darumb lassit uns auff wachen, lieben Deutschen, und got mehr den die menschen furchten, das wir nit teilhafftig werdenn aller armen seelen, die szo kleglich durch das schendlich, teuffelich regiment der Romer verloren werden': Martin Luther, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung* (1520), WA 6, pp. 381-469, p. 415.

material to their needs. Thus, the catechisms helped to unite their German users in a common identity that, through the use of the vernacular, transcended geographic boundaries and social class, but the resulting individual identity was incomplete if assessing these identities on confessional grounds. It is important to consider the role of ritual and the diversification of local identities that are sustained by a shared language. Ultimately, it is perhaps more accurate to consider that notion that the catechisms promoted a German Christianity. The increase in diocesan catechisms in the later sixteenth-century can be seen to have been a natural extension to the shift towards the development of both local and broader German identities.

This chapter has thus far argued that sixteenth-century catechisms were influenced by the inherent problems of medieval pedagogical techniques. Rather than 'rambling, unnecessary questions', the catechisms – especially those aimed at a lay audience – instead were intended to include brief theological detail.⁵¹ The accessible question and answer format was derived from medieval dialogic tracts and, according to Gerald Strauss, was a pedagogical technique that was 'uniquely suited to what was presumed to be the mental condition of the masses'.⁵² The increased use of the vernacular served as a tool for educating the masses, while the use of Latin was targeted towards the elites, both lay and clerical.⁵³ The language of the catechisms reacted to the sense of a growing German identity and encouraged an

⁵¹ 'Weitleufftigen unnotdürfftigen fragen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 7.

⁵² Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, p. 71.

⁵³ Gerald Strauss, 'Techniques of Indoctrination: The German Reformation', in Harvey J. Graff (ed.), *Literacy and Social Development in the West: A Reader* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 96-104, p. 96.

increasingly collective approach to faith that built on the foundations of the Middle Ages, but which still allowed local expressions of piety to continue. Certainly for Luther, catechesis was the most effective way to introduce the faith to children and adults in a structured and ordered fashion.⁵⁴ However, whether or not they were successful in their mission to educate and moralise the masses is much harder to ascertain, as will now be discussed.

One of the obvious pitfalls in trying to assess the viability, reception and potential impact of any early-modern educational technique lies in accurately quantifying degrees of literacy. Scholars have attempted to ascertain early modern literacy rates but, faced with scanty and indirect evidence, it has proven frustratingly difficult to calculate not only how many people could read and write, but also to determine what criteria contemporaries used to assess literacy.⁵⁵ R.A. Houston has summarised the various 'literacies' that historians have defined as demonstrating basic through to advanced literacy skills in the early modern period. They are 'looking', for instance viewing pictures or woodcuts, with or without accompanying text, in order to acquire knowledge of a given subject. Secondly, 'reading', either privately or out loud, with the latter being a way to transmit messages to those who could not read the text

⁵⁴ Gerhard Bode, 'Instruction of the Christian Faith by Lutherans after Luther', in Robert Kolb (ed.), *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550-1675* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 159-204, p. 163.

⁵⁵ Sheffler cautiously estimates a 14% literacy rate in Regensburg by the end of the fifteenth century, but this number did not take into account Jews, girls, those educated outside of schools, and male religious: *Schools and Schooling*, pp. 214-215. R. Engelsing has suggested that at the start of the sixteenth century, 3-4% of the German population could read (around 400,000 literate), cited in Flood, 'The Book in Reformation Germany', p. 85. These figures are almost impossible to corroborate and, as the authors are aware, are in large part based on speculation and educated guesswork. Nonetheless, Methuen has questioned Thomas More's claim that three-fifths of the English population could read, noting that it is more likely that one in five men and one in twenty women could read; 'Education in the Reformation', p. 485, figures taken from David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 44.

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themselves.⁵⁶ Finally, there is 'writing' beginning with being able to sign one's name and eventually advancing to reading and writing in another language.⁵⁷ The sixteenth-century catechisms embodied a range of these three indicators of literacy, especially the shorter editions aimed specifically at those with limited literacy skills. The inclusion of illustrations and woodcuts in a number of editions encapsulated some of the key points contained within the text. Further, being in question and answer format, catechisms allowed for reading privately, for reciting out loud 'from the pulpit to the common man', or for use in the home.⁵⁸ Indeed, Luther expressly declared that 'it is the duty of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning, and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it'.⁵⁹ Canisius' *Smaller Catechism* (1596) was deliberately 'divided from syllable to syllable, so that they [the dear youth ... may] with little difficulty learn to read quicker, which will then serve them well for writing'.⁶⁰ Clearly, then, catechisms could be well placed to serve the needs of both the literate in the modern sense of the word, as well as those who met the more basic criteria listed above. Furthermore, it may be

⁵⁶ Flood suggests this 'was a most important means of gathering information for a large proportion of the population' in 'The Book in Reformation Germany', pp. 85-86. Persuasive objections have been raised to this which argue that there is little concrete evidence to suggest that messages were conveyed by the literate to the illiterate through reading out loud – apart from the Bible: Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 120.

⁵⁷ R.A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 3-4.

⁵⁸ *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 10.

⁵⁹ 'Darumb auch ein jglicher hausvater schuldig ist / das er / zum wenigsten die wochen ein mal / seine Kinder und gesinde umbfrage und verhöre / was sie davon wissen oder lernen / Und wo sie es nicht können / mit Ernst dazu halte': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 6a.

⁶⁰ 'Der lieben Jug end zum Nu ßen ha be ich die-sen Ka te chis mum von Sil ben zu Sil ben ab getheilt ver fer ti get, da mit sie mit leich-ter Mü he de sto ge schwin der le sen ler nen, wel chet ih nen als dann zum Schrei ben be stens die nen wird': Petrus Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus* (Freyburg im Uchtland, 1596), p. 3a.

suggested that contemporaries deemed the successful recitation of text – verbal copying – as a fourth form of literacy. Luther instructed the clergy to stick to one, fixed manner of teaching the faith to the young and simple folk because having a permanent framework would allow the audience to ‘say [the catechism] after you and learn it by heart’.⁶¹

Yet, to view catechisms purely as a manifestation of educational evolution distorts their wider purpose and raises questions that cannot be answered if they are seen solely as pedagogical instruments. Strauss believed that catechisms were designed to educate their users in a given doctrine and inculcate true devotion to that faith. On both grounds, he suggested that Protestant reformers failed in effecting a real change in the attitudes towards the Church. Firstly, he suggested that the ambiguity of the catechisms undermined their effectiveness; secondly, that memorisation as a pedagogical technique did not encourage children to learn and understand catechetical content; and thirdly, that the constant battles between their authors detracted attention from their messages. Strauss concluded that, despite being aware of these issues, catechists did not know how to overcome them other than by increasing exposure to catechetical training.⁶² However, he rested his assessment of both catechetical aims and their lack of success on the assumption that true and complete devotion was anticipated from their users. This was certainly the ideal scenario: the *Tridentine Catechism* insisted that

⁶¹ ‘Und lere sie für das aller erst / dieser stück / nem-lich / die Zehen Gebott / Glauben / Vater unser / etc. nach dem text hin / von wort zu wort / das sie es auch so nach sagen können / und außwendig lernen’: Martin Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus für die gemeyne Pfarherr und Prediger* [hereafter, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529)] (Marburg, 1529), p. 8.

⁶² Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning*, pp. 224-225.

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the people 'be firmly convinced, and with the most heartfelt piety and devotion believe [in Jesus Christ and] Christian knowledge'.⁶³ However, with the exception of the *Tridentine Catechism*, the actual text of the German catechisms often did not impart detailed doctrine, especially in the use of the sacraments. Thus, the entire notion of catechisms being designed to confirm adherence to a given confession is not only an impossibility, but is also a distortion of their intended purpose. The reformer Johannes Oecolampadius reflected in a letter to William Farel in 1524 that 'it is easy to impress doctrines on your listeners, to drop them into their ears; but [it is] difficult to change their hearts, this is [the work] of God'.⁶⁴ Luther echoed this in the preface of his *Small Catechism*:

For though we cannot nor should not force any one to believe, yet we should insist and urge the crowds that they know what is right and wrong with those among whom they dwell and wish to make their living. For whoever wants to reside in a town must know and observe the town laws ... [whether] he believes, or is in [his] heart a joker or knave.⁶⁵

Luther was suggesting that obedience to the faith, regardless of depth of belief, is the objective of his catechism. Later, Ignatius Loyola, in a letter written to Canisius in August 1554, declared that 'it would be good to prepare a summary of theology dealing briefly with topics that are essential but not

⁶³ *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* trans. John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan (South Bend, 1976), pp. 5-6.

⁶⁴ 'Facile enim est aliquot dogmata auditorium instillare et inculcare auribus; *animum* autem *immutare, divinum opus est*': Aimé Louis Herminjard (ed.), *Correspondance des réformateurs dans les pays de langue française, recueillie et publiée avec d'autres lettres relatives à la réforme et des notes historique et biographiques* vol. 1, (Geneva, 1866) Letter 100, p. 254.

⁶⁵ 'Denn wiewol man niemant zwingē kan noch sol / zum glauben / So sol man doch den hauffen dahyn halten unñ treiben / das sie wissen was recht unnd unrecht ist / bey denen bey welchen sie wonen / sich neeren und leben woollen / Deñ wer ynn einer stad wonen wyl / des sol das Stadrecht wissen unnd halten ... er gleube odder sey ym herzen fur sich ein schalck odder bube': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529), p. 9.

controversial. In matters controversial there could be more detail, but it should be accommodated to the present needs of the people.⁶⁶ Therefore, based on the information included in the catechisms, it is more accurate to see them as being designed to guide people towards a given doctrine.⁶⁷

Carter argues persuasively that catechism classes in early-modern Catholic France were not designed to teach theology, but instead taught the laity how to engage with Catholic rites, 'a result that both the laity and the bishops found entirely acceptable'.⁶⁸ She has found that the 'science of salvation' taught children how to behave like Catholics, rather than imparted detailed doctrinal instruction.⁶⁹ Yet, it is precisely this compromise that exposes the paradox underpinning sixteenth-century catechetical instruction: unlike 'how' questions, as seen in medieval catechisms, 'what' questions demanded a precise answer, however, this precision could not be achieved if the detail regarding doctrine and rituals was omitted. Instead, rather than delineating along confessional lines, following chapters will consider whether the sacramental instruction provided in the catechisms promoted a degree of concord through emphasising shared beliefs and aims. Further, rather than churchmen treating 'deep-seated customs with contempt and intolerance', the analysis of sacramental instruction examines whether there is evidence to

⁶⁶ Joseph N. Tylenda (ed.), *Counsels for Jesuits: Selected Letters and Instructions of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 97-98.

⁶⁷ Bode refers to Luther's catechisms as guidebooks; Bode 'Instruction of the Christian Faith', p. 163

⁶⁸ Carter, 'Science of Salvation', p. 238. Carter argues that weekly catechism classes enabled bishops and the laity 'to develop a programme of religious education that would satisfy the needs of both parties': *ibid.*, p. 238.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

suggest that the catechisms acknowledged lay concerns, or permitted local practices to continue where possible.⁷⁰

Concord

The sacraments have been described as the most important parts of the catechisms because they denote outward signs of belief and are the stepping-stones to grace.⁷¹ Yet, in the sixteenth-century catechisms analysed here, neither doctrine nor ritual was overtly stressed. In avoiding detailed sacramental doctrine they can be seen to have emulated wider calls for religious peace. In 1523, Erasmus, for instance, had attempted to foster a reunion of Christendom by suggesting that the differing sides focus only on areas they could agree on and relegate everything else to the realm of adiaphora.⁷² In 1533, he again encouraged a more accommodating spirit and distinguished between those points of faith that simply could not change, those which had some room for manoeuvre, and human laws and customs which were subject to change and could be adapted to local circumstances.⁷³ He, along with other humanists, promoted the development of peaceable, well-ordered citizens, and embraced the concept of accommodation. Luther rejected attempts to reach a concord and, later, Canisius announced that

⁷⁰ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, p. 302.

⁷¹ Carter, 'Science of Salvation', p. 255.

⁷² Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 132.

⁷³ Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism*, p. 129. See also Bernd Moeller, 'German Humanists and the Beginnings of the Reformation', in *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H.C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Pennsylvania, 1972), pp. 19-38, p. 36.

‘conciliation brings forth the destruction of religion’.⁷⁴ However, secular authorities encouraged the idea of accommodation because they wanted a diplomatic end to religious discord in the Empire and in their own lands more particularly.⁷⁵ A key feature of the chapters that follow is the attempt to comprehend how these conflicting opinions regarding compromise were manifested in the catechisms, and to explore the extent to which, if any, Erasmus’ criteria were embodied. Of course, it would be difficult for catechists to attack the beliefs of opponents within their catechisms without imparting a degree of knowledge regarding these ‘false’ truths to their own readers. This was viewed as potentially dangerous, especially given the potential for children or less intelligent adults to become confused over ‘true’ and ‘false’ doctrine. The reasoning behind catechetical content will be explored in this light, alongside the ideals of concord.

There were areas of doctrine, of course, that were sharply divisive and could not be ignored. The different number of sacraments recognised by Protestants and Catholics, for instance, was not up for debate. Canisius’ *Small Catechism* (1574) declared that there are seven sacraments and ‘who [has] denied or scorned the same, they sin damnably against Christ himself and his Christian Church’.⁷⁶ His *Large Catechism* elaborated on this, stating that the sacraments were ‘received from Christ the Lord through his holy

⁷⁴ Rummel, *Confessionalization of Humanism*, p. 125. She cites Luther’s correspondence with Wolfgang Capito as evidence of his rejection of concord; ‘Conciliationes exitium adferunt religionij’: *Beati*, vol. 5, p. 410.

⁷⁵ Rummel, *Confessionalization of Humanism*, p. 128.

⁷⁶ ‘Welcher dieselbigen verlaugnet oder verachtet / der sündiget verdammblich wider Christum selbs unnd sein Christliche Kirchen’: Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 99.

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Apostles'.⁷⁷ However, Luther's catechisms did not mention why there are only two valid sacraments and Osiander, likewise, did not discuss the issue. The *Heidelberg Catechism*, in answer to the question on the number of sacraments, simply taught 'Two: holy baptism and the holy supper'.⁷⁸ At the same time, however, areas of agreement were especially emphasised as immovable and shared features of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist confessions, as will be discussed more fully below. In this, the catechisms can be seen to have been somewhat in accordance with debates regarding accommodation and concord in the sixteenth century. A forerunner to the later discussions can be seen in Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* of 1521, which presented his view of natural law. In this text, he concluded that natural law contained moral precepts which resembled the Ten Commandments in that it requires the individual to love God, to not harm anybody, and, if harm cannot be avoided, it should be as 'small as possible'.⁷⁹ These precepts could be understood by human reason and formed the basis for his view of social order.⁸⁰ He suggested that natural reason is inclined to seek the common good, regardless of whether the individual is good or sinful.⁸¹ The Gold Coin debate of the mid-sixteenth century developed more fully the idea of a 'common good'. Conceived of the Spaniard Sebastian Castellio in his 1554 work *Concerning Heretics*, this concept rested on the grounds that the warring

⁷⁷ 'Von Christo dem Herrn durch die heiligen Aposteln empfangen': Peter Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien Christlicher Lehr Inn frag un̄ anntwort / der Christlicher jugent / unnd allen einfaltigen zu nuz und heil gestalt* [hereafter, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563)] (Cologne: Maternus Cholinus, 1563), p. 133.

⁷⁸ 'Zwey: Den heiligen Tauff / und das heilig Abendmal': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, p. 46.

⁷⁹ Antti Raunio, 'Divine and Natural Law in Luther and Melanchthon', in Virpi Mäkinen (ed.), *Lutheran Reformation and the Law* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 21-62, p. 48.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

factions universally accepted the Ten Commandments and the Trinity. As such, these acknowledged truths can be understood as a universal currency.⁸² This concept will be applied to the analysis of sacramental instruction in the catechisms, to determine whether an approach similar to that taken by Castellio had any tangible pedagogical influence on their content.

There are early indications that the sacramental instruction in the catechisms was not intended to be divisive, as seen by how the catechists introduced the concept of sacraments. The meaning and purpose of the sacraments in Luther's thought departed significantly from that of the Catholics. If one of Luther's concerns was to prevent alienation from his faith, then it makes sense that the preface to the *Small Catechism* placed more emphasis on learning the Decalogue, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer than the sacraments, telling the pastors to teach these specific parts, 'following the text word for word, so that they can also repeat it back to you and learn it by heart'.⁸³ Moreover, unlike Canisius' catechisms and the *Tridentine Catechism*, Luther did not include in his catechism a question specifically defining the sacraments. He explains in both his expositions on baptism and communion that 'when the Word is added to the Element or natural substance, it becomes a sacrament, that is, a holy, godly thing and sign', but this clarification is imbedded within the main text, rather than separated from it.⁸⁴ In contrast, Canisius included a specific question devoted to the definition of a sacrament

⁸² Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 132.

⁸³ 'Unnd lere sie für das aller erst / diese stuck / nem-lich / die Zehen Gebott / Glauben / Vater unser / etct. nach dem text hin / von wort zu wort / das sie es auch so nach sagen können / und außwendig lernen': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529), p. 8.

⁸⁴ 'Wenn das wort zum Element oder natürlichem wesen kompt / so wird ein Sacrament daraus / das ist / ein Heilig / Gottlich ding und zeichen': Luther, *Deudsch Catechism* (1535), p. 97a.

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in both the *Large* and *Small* Catechisms, which explained that a sacrament is 'an outside, visible, unfailing sign that signifies to us the invisible grace of God'.⁸⁵ He also explained that the sacraments 'increase the present grace of the pious so that they become more pious and stronger in the holy way'.⁸⁶

At the time Luther penned his catechisms, the most significant differences between him and the Catholics were the number of sacraments and how they worked. He believed they generated and nurtured faith, while the Catholics saw them as capable of accruing merit.⁸⁷ For Luther to have defined a sacrament in a specific question, he would have had to grapple with these differences, an enterprise that might have alienated more conservative followers and undermined any claim to continuity. On the other hand, in the late 1520s, Luther was engaged in a fierce debate over the Eucharist between, amongst others, Zwingli and Karlstadt. As chapter five discusses in greater depth, the main source of disagreement rested on the doctrine of the real presence. Luther defended the doctrine, while Zwingli could accept a spiritual presence as late as 1523. In 1524, he came to believe that Christ's words of institution should be understood symbolically.⁸⁸ This was the position adopted also by Karlstadt, and the Anabaptists. Luther's preoccupation with this debate can be seen in his catechisms: in his *Large Catechism*, Luther devoted the first part of the instruction on communion to defending the

⁸⁵ 'Ein außwendigs sichtbarlichs trefftiges zeichen / das uns die unsichtbarlich genad Gottes bedeutet': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 97.

⁸⁶ 'Erhalten / mehren / und erweitern sie die gegenwertigen gnaden der frommen / damit sie desto frümmer / und auff dem weg des heils starker werden': *ibid.*, p. 100.

⁸⁷ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (third edition) (Oxford, 1999), pp. 177-178.

⁸⁸ Joel Van Amberg, *The Real Presence: Religious and Social Dynamics of the Eucharistic Conflicts in Early Modern Augsburg, 1520-1530* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 33-35.

doctrine of the real presence and, in the *Small Catechism*, the answer to the first question stated that the sacrament of the altar is 'the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus'.⁸⁹ The focus throughout his exposition on communion was the defence of the sacrament against challenges posed by Zwingli, Karlstadt and the Anabaptists. Similarly, Luther's sermons on the catechism (1528) included an exposition of baptism. In this, Luther declared that 'now, we shall omit those things which serve to argue and fight against the adversaries', although the remainder of the sermon was framed to refute radical doctrine.⁹⁰ For instance, in the sermon, Luther defended the divine institution of baptism, the impossibility of separating the Word from the water, and rebuffed challenges to infant baptism.⁹¹ On each of these points, there was agreement with the Catholics. Moreover, in recognising the intellectual abilities of his audience, Luther's sermons on the catechism defended Lutheran doctrine from challenges posed by the 'fanatics', whilst avoided focusing on differences between Lutherans and Catholics. This was probably done out of necessity, but the ultimate effect of minimising discord between Lutherans and Catholics was still the same.

Osiander also elected not to define a sacrament in his catechism, although, as will be suggested in the coming chapters, this was less to do with the preservation of continuity but was instead because he had very different views from Luther regarding the sacraments in general. For example, he still saw

⁸⁹ Luther, *Deutsch Catechism* (1535), pp. 107a-108a; 'Es ist der ware leib uñ blut unsers Heren Jesu Christi': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529), p. 30.

⁹⁰ 'Iam omittemus ea, quae zu straiten et kempffen contra adversaries dienen': Martin Luther, 'De Baptismo', *WA*, vol. 30, pp. 109-116, p. 110. Luther had suggested that the medieval church's understanding of baptism was correct in his 1520 treatise *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *WA* vol. 6, pp. 484-573.

⁹¹ Luther, 'De Baptismo', *WA*, vol. 30, pp. 109-116.

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penance as a sacrament, therefore to attempt to define the meaning of sacraments would have been to engage in discourse that detracted from his main aim of protecting clerical authority.⁹²

Authority

The question of authority, secular and spiritual, scriptural and traditional, can be detected in each of the catechisms. The conflict between secular and spiritual authority can be seen most readily in Osiander's catechism. Though this catechism did not seriously rival those of Luther, it was a popular work nonetheless; it was published 28 times in ten cities across the empire between 1533 and 1555.⁹³ Haemig, in her study of penance and confession in Lutheran catechisms, comments that its main theme focused on consolation, with discipline being a somewhat less important feature.⁹⁴ However, her suggestion that Osiander's main purpose was to console his listeners will be challenged in the coming chapters.⁹⁵ Rather, the circumstances surrounding the creation of Osiander's catechism indicate that consolation was both a secondary purpose and something that was ultimately used to bolster ecclesiastical authority. Throughout the catechism, Osiander stressed the vital role played by the clergy in teaching the laity in matters of religion and morals. His concise preface explained that his use of sermons, rather than the

⁹² Bryan D. Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices* (London, 2006), p. 16.

⁹³ Mary Jane Haemig, 'Community, Consolation and Discipline: Two Early Lutheran Preachers on Confession', in Katherine Jackson Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer (eds.), *Penitence in the Age of Reformations* (Farnham, 2000), pp. 30-48, p. 34. The catechism was published in Nuremberg, Wittenberg, Marburg, Frankfurk am Main, Berlin, Erfurt, Leipzig, Königsberg, Magdeburg and Rostock.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

currently fashionable question and answer format, stemmed from his belief that 'when one recites with now this, now that, now these, now other words, they do not retain anything from that, but only become [more] uncertain and careless in learning than they were before'.⁹⁶ He explained that his catechism was not 'written for the sake of pastors or preachers [but] ... so that the children may easier grasp and retain the start of Christian teaching *from us*'.⁹⁷ Moreover, while the *Nuremberg Church Order* exhorted priests to emphasise and condemn sins 'until the people both recognise their sins and ... fear God's wrath and sincerely seek to flee from it', Osiander's catechism taught that redemption can be found if one listens and obeys the words of the pastor.⁹⁸ The people can find consolation in the catechism, but can receive it only through ecclesiastical channels. In this, Osiander's catechism was in keeping with that of Jean Gerson, who had expected religious teachings to be communicated by the clergy.

The protection of clerical authority can most clearly be discerned in Osiander's chapter on the keys, but it is also apparent in a lesser degree in the sermons on baptism and communion. Klemens has commented on the correlations between Luther and Osiander's catechisms and, regarding

⁹⁶ 'Dann wañ man in yzo diß / yzo ihenes / yzo mit di-sen / yzo mit andern wortē fürsagt / so behalten sie nicht allein nichts darvon / sonder warden auch nur ungeschickter und unachtsamer zu lernen dañ sie vor warn': Andreas Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig / Wie die in meiner gnedigen herrn / Margraven zu Brandēburg / uñ ein Erbarñ Raths der stat Nürnberg oberkait uñ gepieten / allent halbē gepredigt werdē / Den Kindern uñ jungen leutē zu sonderm nuz also in Schriffte verfaßt* [hereafter, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*] (Nuremberg: Johann Petreium, 1533), p. a.

⁹⁷ 'Dieser Catechismus / oder Kinderpredigt / ist nicht umb der pfarhern oder prediger willen geschriben ... Auff das die kinder / den anfang Christlicher leer / von uns dester leichter mögen begreifen und behalten': *ibid.*, pp. a-a2. The italics are my own.

⁹⁸ 'Also soll man auch mit allen andern sünden und lastern thun so lang, biß die leut ir sünd erkennen und im gewissen empfinden, Gottes zorn forchten und demselben hertzlich begern zu empfliehen': Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebaß (eds.), *Andreas Osiander d.A., Gesamtausgabe* [hereafter, AOGA], vol. 5 (Gütersloh, 1975-1997), p. 75.

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baptism, for instance, she concludes that Osiander 'transferred Luther's explanations in the *Smaller Catechism* (with) minimal changes' into his own.⁹⁹ However, whilst there was a significant degree of agreement between Osiander and Luther, the Nuremberg preacher placed far more emphasis on the pivotal role of the clergy in administering the sacraments. Osiander's discussions of the sacraments were linked by this defence of clerical power, and were underpinned by his reluctance to accede any further authority to the city magistrates. In contrast, Luther, by virtue of his reliance on secular authorities, was prepared to be more flexible.

Whilst the concept of secular control over religious affairs was fraught from the very beginning of the evangelical movement, essentially the Protestant Reformation only formalised what had previously been a more cautious advancement. The gradual encroachment into Church affairs did not begin with Luther's revolution, and countless instances of secular expansion into areas traditionally the jurisdiction of the Church can be found throughout the Middle Ages. Princely efforts to organise territorial churches were boosted after the failure of the Conciliar Movement in the fifteenth century because, in order to consolidate its victory, the papacy had to concede ecclesiastical rights – including the administration of territorial churches – to individual territorial princes and the Holy Roman Emperor. These concessions served to strengthen their individual power and collective strength against the German Church and, by extension, the Roman curia.¹⁰⁰ What was different in the

⁹⁹ Klemens, *Die Nürnberger Kinderpredigten*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁰ James M. Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God: Secular Authority and the Church in The Thought of Luther and Melancthon, 1518-1559* (Leiden, 2005), p. 3.

sixteenth century, though, was that the Lutherans consciously asked for secular aid:

it would be the best, and [indeed], it is the only remaining, way, if kings, princes, nobles, cities, and communities themselves would make an inroad in this matter [of reform], so that the bishops and clergy (who are afraid) would have cause to follow.¹⁰¹

Luther believed secular authorities should take the initial steps in reform because the clergy had failed in their duty to do so. Once reform was started, responsibility for its continuation would revert to the clergy with secular authorities not being granted any regular jurisdiction in religious affairs.¹⁰² Yet, in analysing Luther's *Instructions for the Visitors of Saxony* (1528), Dixon observes that, while the Reformation in Saxony was an 'act of state', it was also a collaborative venture; theologians interpreted scripture and decided doctrinal 'truths', and the princes authorised this doctrine before it was published.¹⁰³ For Luther, reform, including teaching, ultimately rested with the spiritual authorities, and not temporal powers. Indeed, Roper suggests that Luther did not always seek permission before publishing his works, demonstrating his concern to protect spiritual works from secular influence.¹⁰⁴

Luther's concern regarding the limitations of temporal authority can be seen in his preface to the *Small Catechism*. It encouraged the clergy to 'urge ... magistrates to rule well'.¹⁰⁵ If anyone refuses to learn the catechism they

¹⁰¹ 'Sondern das were das best, unnd auch das einige ubirbleibend mittet, jzo Kunig, Fursten, adel, Stet und gemeine selb auftengen, der sach ein einbruch mechten, auff das die Bischoff unnd geistlichen (die sich izt furchten) ursach hetten zuzolgen': *WA*, vol 6, p. 258.

¹⁰² Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God*, p. 11.

¹⁰³ C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation in Germany* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 122-123.

¹⁰⁴ Roper, *Martin Luther*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁵ 'Unn sonderheit treibe auch dasselbst die Oberkeit ... das sie wol regirn': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529), p. aiva.

should be told 'that the prince will drive such crude people from the land'.¹⁰⁶

Luther continued to assign the responsibility of education to the clergy and to cast the pastor in the role of advisor to the magistrate. For their part, the magistrate was to support the work of the Church by removing obstinate parishioners from the land. In other words, the secular authority guarded the mission of the pastors. This echoed Luther's actions of 1524, when he had taken issue with the continued celebration of the Mass in Wittenberg's All Saints Collegiate Church by the Catholic canons. After unsuccessfully seeking to persuade Elector Frederick to end this 'abomination' in 1523, Luther argued that the Mass was blasphemous, and thus a crime in secular law, a move which enabled Luther to demand that secular authorities take action unless they wanted to invoke God's wrath.¹⁰⁷ Yet, although the secular authorities were acting on behalf of the Church, they were still held accountable for their own actions. Luther warned in the preface that if magistrates neglected their duty to govern well 'they overthrow and destroy both God's kingdom and [that of] the world'.¹⁰⁸ However, while Luther sought to limit the role of secular authorities in ecclesiastical affairs, he was dependent on political support for the survival of not just the evangelical faith but also his own life.¹⁰⁹ He had to tread cautiously: too much secular control would undermine the Church, while too little would fail to attract the political protection and support Luther needed.

¹⁰⁶ 'Unnd ihn anzeygen / das solche rohe Leute / der Furst aus dem lande ia-gen wolle': *ibid.*, p. aiiia. This is a development in Luther's thought: in 1520, he had suggested that faith was distinct from anything the government did or did not do, declaring secular power 'is but a very small matter in the sight of God' but, by 1529, he had enlarged the role and effect of secular authorities: see Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁸ 'Und wo sie es nicht tun / welche ein verflucht sunde sie thuen / Deñ sie storgen und verwusten / damit beide / Gots und der welt reich / als die ergestē feinde beide Gottes und der menschen': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus*, p. av.

¹⁰⁹ Estes points out that Luther was more uncomfortable than any of the other German reformers about the concept of governments being responsible for spiritual matters: *Peace, Order and the Glory of God*, pp. 5-6.

Osiander's preface, on the other hand, did not dwell on the matter of temporal authority, simply touching on the fact that the children who 'grasp ... from us the start of Christian teaching ... [end up] in all Christian estates and offices', effectively implying, although not emphasising, that the onus of ensuring both a pious ruler and wider society depended on the clergy, rather than on anything the secular authorities might do.¹¹⁰ This difference in emphasis reveals the influence wider political concerns had on the reformers' catechisms: Luther was reluctant to grant secular authorities full and unrestrained jurisdiction over the Church and religious education, but Osiander, in seeking to protect ecclesiastical authority from secular erosion, did not mention secular authority at all because it was not applicable to his model of church-state relations.

In comparison to both Luther and Osiander's catechisms, the *Heidelberg Catechism* was the most obviously and explicitly politically influenced. Bierma has cited three objectives of the *Heidelberg Catechism*: a catechetical tool to teach children; a preaching guide; and a form for confessional unity among Protestant factions without naming a distinct doctrine. Yet, this list is incomplete.¹¹¹ For a fourth objective of the catechism was to increase Frederick's own political authority. Bast argues that catechisms were used by the state to influence behaviour and popularise the concept of a prince as a

¹¹⁰ Auff das die kinder / den anfang Christlicher leer / von uns ... begreifen ... Dann wann das geschicht / warden sie nicht allein alle andre leer desterbaß verstehn / sonder auch feine / fromme / Chrislitche / geschickte und waise leut / zu allerlay Christlichen stenden un ambtern werden': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. a2.

¹¹¹ Bierma, 'The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism', p. 51.

father to his subjects, and Kaplan has suggested that a shared religion would bind subject and ruler more closely together, thus helping to cement the latter's authority.¹¹² Three specific aspects of the *Heidelberg Catechism* lend weight to these suggestions.

Firstly, the second version of the *Heidelberg Catechism* was revised to include a question on the difference between the Lutheran Lord's Supper and the Catholic Mass, with the final folio explaining that this had been added by the 'command of the Elector'.¹¹³ The third edition expanded the answer to this question and retained the explanatory note, indicating the elector's continued concern about maintaining control over the content and direction of the catechism. Secondly, Frederick's own name and status were clearly presented in the preface and, after introducing his lengthy titles, the preface went on to declare that 'we [and] our whole theological faculty here and all the superintendents and distinguished servants of the church' have composed the catechism.¹¹⁴ The preface indicated that it was a communal effort, but only Frederick's name was officially connected to it. Indeed, Frederick rebuffed external efforts to unmask the author and, in 1566, he rejected the suggestion that Heinrich Bullinger had written the catechism, announcing that he could show his own handwriting annotating areas that needed changing and that he had 'improved it in several places'.¹¹⁵ In associating only himself with the catechism's composition, attention was directed away from the actual authors

¹¹² Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, p. 52; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 102.

¹¹³ 'Was im ersten druck oversehen / also fürnemlich folio 55. Ist jezunder auß befelch Churfürstlicher Gnaden / addiert worden': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 96.

¹¹⁴ 'Und demnach mit rhat und zuthun Unsere ganzen Theologischen Facultet allhie / auch aller Superintendenten und fürnemsten Kirchendienern / einen Summarischen underricht od Catechismum unserer Christlichen Religion auß dem Wort Gottes ... verfassen': *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁵ Bierma, 'The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism', pp. 56-57.

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and instead focused on him. Thus, the catechism became political and was intended to be demonstrative of his authority in religious affairs.

Finally, the preface acknowledged that it was Frederick's responsibility by virtue of his office:

not only to prepare for a peaceful, calm existence, but to maintain discipline and to employ righteous and virtuous changes in the lives of our subjects ... but principally to bring the same to perfect fear and knowledge of the Almighty and increasingly to instruct his sanctifying word as the only foundation of virtue and obedience ... [and] to promote their eternal and temporal welfare.¹¹⁶

However, despite his profession of duty towards his subjects, clearly defined doctrine was abandoned in favour of achieving 'unity' and, in so doing, the 'eternal welfare' of his subjects was surely risked. Ultimately, Frederick could not be seen to have a lack of political control over the court, the university, and the wider electorate. The catechism effectively was an effort to showcase this authority but, in shelving his religious convictions and teaching a negotiated confession, the catechism should also be seen as an attempt to paper over diversity on the levels of both theology and practice.

The catechism of Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate can be seen to extend Dixon's conclusion that Protestant princes used symbolism and anti-Catholic

¹¹⁶ 'Und endlich fürgenommen / Unser von Gott befohlen Ampt / beruff und regierung / nicht alien zu friedlichē / rüigem wesen / auch zu erhaltung züchtigen aufrichtigen und Tugentsamen wandels und lebens Unserer underthanen / zurichten und anzustellen: Sonder auch und fürnemlich dieselbige zu rechtschaffener erkañtnuß und forcht des Almechtigen / und seines seligmachenden Worts / als dem einigē fundament aller Turgenten uñ gehorsams / je lenger je mehr anzuweisen uñ zu bringen. Auch also sie zur ewigen und zeitlichē wolfart ungespart vleiß von grund unsers herzens gern befürdern / uñ so viel an uns / darbey erhalten helffen wolten': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, pp. 4-5.

imagery to define themselves against the Catholic Empire.¹¹⁷ The connection of Frederick to the catechism was a deliberate act of symbolism intended to inform the Catholics, his subjects, and other Protestant princes that he alone was in charge of the religion in the Upper Palatinate. This can be seen also in the *Tridentine Catechism* and Canisius' first catechisms of the 1550s. None of these catechisms mentioned their true authors, but instead referred to the Council Fathers and Emperor Ferdinand respectively. Similarly to Elector Frederick, Emperor Ferdinand was keen to show concern for the welfare of his subjects. In a letter written to Canisius in March 1554, Ferdinand expressed his hope that Canisius' catechisms would 'bring help to many thousands of souls'.¹¹⁸ Further, Ferdinand's preface to a 1556 edition of Canisius' *Small Catechism* declared that the text comprises 'undoubtedly good knowledge and pure teaching' to combat the teachings of the sects, which have already persuaded some into error, while the remaining part that is 'obedient to the Church and are good Christians, are led away and become apostates'.¹¹⁹ This indicates Ferdinand's public concern for the welfare of his subjects. In this way, both the first editions of Canisius' catechism and the *Heidelberg Catechism* can be seen as political contracts. In exchange for overseeing the salvation of their subjects, Emperor Ferdinand and Elector Frederick sought unchallenged authority as rulers.

¹¹⁷ C. Scott Dixon, 'The Politics of Law and Gospel: The Protestant Prince and the Holy Roman Empire', in Bridget Heal and Ole Peter Grell (eds.), *The Impact of the European Reformation: Princes, Clergy and People* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 37-62, pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁸ 'Sie wird vielen Tausenden von Seelen hilfen bringen': Braunsberger, *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ 'Ungezweifelich guets gewissens uñ rainer ler anhengig sein'; 'ains tails / so noch in gerhorsam der Kirchen unnd guete Christen sein / davon abgefürt und abtrinnig werden': Petrus Canisius, *Frag und antwort Christlicher Leer in den haubtstucken / yez neulich auß bevelch der Römischen zu Hungern und Behaim ic. Khü. Mai. Unsers alleredigsten Herr / der Christlichen Jugend unnd allen einfaltigen zu nuß inn Fruckh außgangen* (Wien: Michael Zimerman, 1556), p. ava-avi; p. aiia.

A Catechism for the Germans versus Universal Catholicism

Current historiography surrounding the conception and development of Canisius' catechisms largely focuses on four main factors. Firstly, the catechisms, especially the *Large Catechism*, were designed primarily to be the 'preeminent Catholic response' to Luther's catechisms.¹²⁰ Haub suggests that the attacks of Luther and Calvin on the worship of Mary and the Saints 'forced [Canisius] to write his lives of the Saints and catechism'.¹²¹ Indeed, Braunsberger had earlier referred to a letter written by Canisius to Ferdinand's chancellor in which the Jesuit reported that that the threat of Lutheranism and further hesitation in responding to it 'brings great danger; so many souls have perished'.¹²² A second purpose of his catechisms was to increase lay piety. Peter van Dael suggests that Canisius intended his catechisms to fill the void left by medieval religious education regarding the practice of confession and prayer, and John Donnelly argues that Canisius' 'real goal was leading [catechumens] to prayerfulness, to the frequent use of the Sacraments, and to moral living based on intelligent religious convictions'.¹²³ Indeed, Canisius' *Testament* encourages this assessment, explaining that the *Small* and *Smaller Catechisms* were 'published ... for the less educated' and could be

¹²⁰ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 123. Hilmar M. Pabel, 'Augustine's Confessions and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, SJ', *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007), pp. 453-475, p. 455; Forster agrees arguing that Canisius realized how useful Protestant catechisms were and so published his as a counter-weight: Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (New York, 2007), p. 76; Palmer Wandel, 'Catechisms', p. 62.

¹²¹ Haub, *Petrus Canisius*, p. 28. Indeed, a letter Canisius penned on 22 February 1556 would seem to substantiate this reasoning declaring 'one must defend the truth with vigour and rationality': cited in *ibid.*, p. 35.

¹²² 'Das Zögern bringe schwere Gefahr: so viele Seelen gingen zu Grunde': Braunsberger, *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, p. 21.

¹²³ Dael, 'Two Illustrated Catechisms', p. 284; Donnelly, 'Peter Canisius', p. 147.

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used 'in the schools for the first instruction of the children and also in the churches so that from them the faithful can be brought closer to the rudiments of Catholic piety'.¹²⁴

The catechisms were designed to engage with all Catholics, irrespective of age and learning.¹²⁵ J. Neville Figgis suggested that the catechisms were a by-product of Canisius' awareness that something more subtle and popular than pure doctrine was needed if Catholicism was to prevail against Lutheranism.¹²⁶ This, again, draws support from the *Testament*, which reflected that the *Large Catechism* was the result of King Ferdinand's request for a text to 'lead the Apostates and the erring, with God's mercy, back on the right path'.¹²⁷ Braunsberger raised the possibility that the catechisms were a result of the confusion caused by the existence of multiple Catholic catechisms.¹²⁸ However, two additional purposes of the catechisms can be discerned from Canisius' own comments: firstly, they were a response to the necessity of a 'catechism for the Germans'; and, secondly, they were envisioned as a tool to help bring about an end to the discord between the confessions.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ 'Diese beiden Bücher habe ich für die weniger Gebildeten veröffentlicht. Jedes von den beiden war den Katholiken so willkommen, daß sie fast in der Hand aller Katecheten sind; und man benützt sie in den Schulen für die erste Unterweisung der Kinder und auch in den Kirchen, damit die Anfangsgründe der katholischen Frömmigkeit von da aus besser den Gläubigen nahegebracht werden können': Oswald SJ and Haub, *Das Testament des Petrus Canisius*, pp. 86-87.

¹²⁵ Silvia Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581-1615)*, trans. Clare Copeland (Farnham, 2014), p. 50.

¹²⁶ J. Neville Figgis, 'Petrus Canisius and the German Counter-Reformation', *English Historical Review* 24 (1909), pp. 18-43, p. 26.

¹²⁷ Oswald and Haub, *Das Testament des Petrus Canisius*, p. 85.

¹²⁸ Braunsberger, *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁹ 'Un Catechismo per li Todeschi': *Beati*, vol. 1, p. 313. Canisius was keen to reach out to the Germans, writing to Duke Albrecht of Bavaria in 1558 that 'there are no people on earth

In his *Testament*, Canisius reflected that he wanted an end to the religious discord, with both friends and enemies coming together to understand and believe the Word of God.¹³⁰ The preface to his *Prayer Book and Catechism* of 1575 highlighted this aim:

I pray to the father of all light [that] he will bring forth the sun of true wisdom in our hearts so that the thick darkness of the factions and sects will be taken away ... enlighten and renew our hearts, indeed both of the believers and unbelievers, [so that they] go on the straight, narrow path to eternal salvation.¹³¹

Whilst keen to eradicate heresy in Germany – whether or not that be through compromise – Canisius did not view the ordinary laity as directly responsible for their errors. He explained ‘most Germans, [who] are by nature straightforward, simple and good-natured, go astray [because they are] born and educated in the heresy of Lutheranism, they imbibe what they have learned partly in school, partly in church and partly in heretical writings’.¹³² At the same time, however, he counselled Albrecht to ‘act boldly in the interests of religion, nowhere and at no time permitting wolves to rage in either the

who lie closer to the hearts of Jesuits than the Germans’, cited in Braunsberger, *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, p. 126.

¹³⁰ Haub, *Petrus Canisius*, p. 94.

¹³¹ ‘Ich bitte den Vatter aller liechter / er wolle die Sonnen der wahren Weyßheit in unseren herzen auffgehen lassen/ damit die dicke finsternuß der Rotten uñ Secten einmal hingenommen werde / der helle glanz aber der Christlichen Catholischen wahrheit nicht allein uns / sonder auch land und leut durch scheine / alle herzē erleuchte und ernewere / ja auch bayed / die glaubigen und ungläubigen / auff dem rechten schmalen Wege zum ewigen hail füre’: Petrus Canisius, *Betbuch und Catechismus. Nach rechter Catholischer form unnd weiß / jetzt zum sechßten mal in Truck außgangen* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1575), pp. aiii-aiii.

¹³² ‘Errant ut plaerique Germani, natura simplices, rudes, faciles ad ea imbibenda, quae in haeresi Luterana nati et educati, partim in scholis, partim in templis, partim in scriptis haereticis didicerunt’: *Beati*, vol. 8, p. 131.

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churches or in the schools'.¹³³ As will be explored in more depth later, while Canisius did not offer a compromised version of Catholic sacramental doctrine, it was crafted in such a way as to allow for degrees of interpretation so that Catholics living in Protestant towns or cities did not need to be excluded from the Catholic confession even if they were not able to maintain strictly orthodox practices. Indeed, Braunsberger commented that Canisius' avoidance of scholastic theologians in the catechisms, such as Peter of Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, stemmed from his understanding that 'he must be weak with the weak ... the fever should not be heated further'.¹³⁴ Further, the tone of his catechisms lacked the vehemence and aggression shown in the *Tridentine Catechism* and, unlike the French Jesuit Edmund Auger, he did not mention any Protestants by name.¹³⁵ It is evident that Canisius wanted to offer tailored educational material to German Catholics. Canisius' catechisms reveal his determination to protect German Catholicism, but also indicate his recognition that German Catholicism was distinct from the evolving Tridentine Catholicism. This meant that accommodating the essence of that faith, rather than its inflexible dogma, was the most judicious policy.

The Council of Trent had been called in order to discuss the dual issues of reform and heresy. Emperor Charles V was desperate to reach a concord between the Protestants and Catholics and, after the failure of the Diet of

¹³³ 'Et oro, ut Christi gratia fauente pietas tua confidenter agat in negotio Religionis, nec sinat usquam grassari lupos [siue in] templis, siue in scholis': *Beati*, vol. 2, p. 284, cited in Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, p. 367.

¹³⁴ Braunsberger, *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, p. 40.

¹³⁵ Carter, 'The Science of Salvation', p. 240.

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Regensburg in 1541, he believed a general church council was the only way to instigate a reform of the church that would bring the Protestants back into the fold.¹³⁶ For his part, Pope Paul III was more interested in defining and combatting heresy, being greatly disturbed by the 'encroachments of the new doctrines on Italian territory'.¹³⁷ The divide between those who saw reform as the priority of the council and those who believed defining doctrine was the most crucial purpose led the council to decree that its intention was 'for the increase and exaltation of the Christian faith and religions; for the extirpation of heresies; for the peace and union of the Church; for the Reformation of the clergy and Christian people; for the depression and extinction of the enemies of the Christian name'.¹³⁸

The defence of the Catholic Church's authority is particularly apparent in the *Tridentine Catechism's* treatment of the sacraments. In repeating their divinely instituted nature, the catechism justified the claim that Protestants have turned away from the truth.¹³⁹ Further, in emphasising the theological context

¹³⁶ R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (second edition) (Cambridge, 2011), p. 12.

¹³⁷ Jedin, *History of Trent*, p. 446.

¹³⁸ Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees*, p. 12. The historiography regarding the purpose and aims of the council is extensive. Paolo Sarpi, an early historian of the Council, argued that the secular powers wanted a council only in the hope of obtaining power over ecclesiastical affairs and reducing papal authority: see *The Historie of the Council of Trent*, trans. Nathaniel Brent (London, 1620). H. De Luzancy argued it was never the intention of the Council 'to fix a true and uniform sense, which all people might rely upon', *Reflections on the Council of Trent* (1679), p. 3. Jedin suggested that a council was only proposed in order to prevent Germany calling a national council in *A History of the Council of Trent*, p. 446. More recently, Hsia has argued that the papacy was at pains to ensure its authority was not attacked by 'reform in disguise' in *The World of Catholic Renewal*, p. 12. Mullett believes reform was the aim of the Council: Trent 'was able to address the problems of the Church as a whole and, indeed, constructed measures which resulted in Catholic recoveries in the German lands': Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*, p. 31.

¹³⁹ Brancatelli, "Beset on Every Side", p. 290.

of the sacraments, the catechism also reinforced the authority of the council and individual priest teaching:

since the ministers of the Sacraments represent in the discharge of their sacred functions, not their own, but the person of Christ, be they good or bad, they validly perform and confer the Sacraments, provided they make use of the matter and form always observed in the Catholic Church according to the institution of Christ, and provided they intend to do what the Church does in their administration.¹⁴⁰

This justified the authority of the Catholic Church, separated the Church as an institution from the potential unworthy actions of its individual priests, as well as defended their ability to administer the sacraments worthily in spite of their own unworthiness. In defending the authority of the minister on the grounds that the sacraments are divinely instituted, parallels can be drawn with Osiander's catechism. In like manner, he connected his defence of clerical authority with the command of God, insisting in his catechetical sermon on penance, for instance, that Jesus 'has commanded [pastors] to preach, confess and forgive sins in his name'.¹⁴¹

Though the catechisms had distinct aims and objectives, resulting from local and personal concerns, the way they were taught and presented to their users was much more linear. The shorter catechisms of Luther and Canisius, as well as the *Heidelberg Catechism*, were to be memorised by their audiences word for word, while *Large Catechisms* were intended as manuals or reference works for priests and educated lay folk and it was expected that

¹⁴⁰ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 155.

¹⁴¹ 'Er hat ihn aber beuolhen zu predigen / buß und vergebung der sunden in seinem namen': Osiander, *Katechismus oder Kinderpredigt*, p. 271.

they would be regularly consulted. There is no doubt that catechisms were to be used as educational tools; Jesuit schools devoted at least half an hour each week to the study of the catechism and they put on frequent public performances at weekends in front of family and friends.¹⁴² Likewise, Luther's catechisms featured on many school orders promulgated in Lutheran lands across the Empire. The use of catechisms in churches and homes was encouraged as well. Luther's *Small Catechism* was published as a wall chart enabling individual pages to be hung up around the home thus encouraging regular engagement.¹⁴³ Osiander's catechism was different to those of Luther, Canisius and Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate in that it was a collection of sermons to be expounded in the church, rather than learned in schools or at home. The method of delivery meant pastors were keepers of catechetical knowledge which mirrored Osiander's determination to preserve the role of ministers in the lives of parishioners.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the various aims and purposes of the catechisms, both broadly and more specifically. It is clear that the sixteenth century saw a marked development in the methods by which education was tailored for and provided to society. Those aspects of late medieval education deemed useful were refined and concerns over its shortcomings were addressed. The sacraments of baptism, penance, and communion afforded the catechists a relatively new way to promote individual agendas, whether

¹⁴² Chipps Smith, 'Art of Salvation', p. 573.

¹⁴³ Beutel, 'Luther's Life', p. 17.

that be to create godly parishioners, to increase secular or ecclesiastical authority, or to nurture the growing sense of identity prevalent in Germany. While the catechisms shared a similar purpose regarding the education of clergy and laity, each of the German texts can be seen to have been shaped by local politics and lay demands. The analysis of the presentation of the sacraments in the catechisms that follows will seek to determine how far these concerns influenced the level of doctrine offered in the catechisms, altered the emphases on clerical and secular authority, and left open the practical administration of the sacraments to suit the local laity.

Despite the structural and contextual differences between the catechisms, there are similarities that suggest that catechists and their secular patrons sought to impress concord rather than division in their teachings, at least between Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists: radical doctrines were rejected unanimously. The concept of unity is complex and, as Stefan Ehrenpreis notes, it should not be assumed that doctrinal unity translated into a uniform view of morality and a Christian life. Instead, this view was influenced by social and cultural experiences that differed from town to town and city to city.¹⁴⁴ As Heal recognises, the terms 'culture' and 'identity' 'lack conceptual clarity', and they 'imply a spatial or temporal homogeneity that never in fact existed'.¹⁴⁵ The following three chapters will analyse the catechisms' presentations of the sacraments of baptism, penance and communion in depth. This discussion will draw on the context of catechetical objectives

¹⁴⁴ Stefan Ehrenpreis, 'Teaching Religion in Early Modern Europe: Catechisms, Emblems and Local Traditions', in Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (eds.), *Religion and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe 1400-1700*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 256-273, p. 260.

¹⁴⁵ Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, p. 4.

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offered in this chapter to investigate how far the content of the catechisms demonstrates shared religious, political and social concerns that transcended confessional differences.

Chapter Three: 'Who believes and is baptised is saved': Catechisms and the Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism is the first sacrament of the life-cycle and, unlike penance and communion, it could not ordinarily be repeated.¹ Its administration enabled the individual's soul to be 'cleansed, [made] holy, justified, reborn in Christ, accepted as God's child, and inscribed to an inheritance of the heavenly life'.² Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists all agreed that baptism was a fundamental part of one's relationship with God, although the exact nature of that bond was disputed. There existed deep divisions between Catholic and Protestant theology over the spiritual aspects of baptism, including what being baptised actually meant, its relationship to the remission of sins and achievement of salvation, when the benefits of baptism would become apparent, and at what age baptism should be administered. As well as its theological role, baptism brought the community together to welcome a newborn into the Church; it acted as a form of protection, taking its place in a broader framework of rituals thought to protect a mother and her baby; and it provided parishioners with the consolation of knowing they were free from the taint of original sin.³ Yet, the Reformation attacked the traditional comforts associated with baptism and there was disagreement over how the service itself was to be performed; the number of exorcisms, if any, to be retained; the

¹ There was some debate on this and exceptions were made in instances such as emergency baptism for infants during delivery. For more, see Karen E. Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536–1564* (Aldershot, 2005), especially chapter three.

² 'Und wirdt dardurch an seiner Seel gewaschen / geheiligt / gerechtfertiget / in Christo widergeboren / zů Gottes Kind angenommen / und zů einem erben des Himlischen lebens eingeschriben': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 102.

³ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 101; Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, p. 28.

number of permissible sponsors; their role in the life of the baptised; the role of the parents in the service; and the use of emergency baptism.⁴

Despite the very different theological leanings of the catechists and their patrons, when viewed synoptically there is evidence of a sense of unspoken harmony in their desire to protect the sacrament of baptism from those who sought to alter more profoundly its administration. Uniformity in the theology and structure of teachings on baptism has been noted, with Bryan Spinks identifying similarities between Zwingli, Bullinger, Calvin and Ursinus' respective emphases on the covenant concept of baptism.⁵ Further, Bierma argues that the *Heidelberg Catechism* only discussed aspects of sacramental theology that the 'Philippists, Calvinists and – later – Zwinglians of the day could confess with one voice', and there is a 'critical silence' on issues that could be the catalysts for discord.⁶ The cross-confessional approach employed in this thesis extends the observations of both Spinks and Bierma to encompass both the Protestant and Catholic confessions to suggest that this can be seen across the confessions as well as within them.

As a research topic, baptism during the Reformation period has received considerable attention from scholars. In particular, the developing theologies and practices regarding the sacrament in the years leading up to and during

⁴ Useful studies outlining these differences, particularly amongst the Protestants, are J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: The Reformation Period* (London, 1970); Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*.

⁵ Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, p. 63.

⁶ Bierma, *The Doctrine of the Sacraments*, p. 7, p. 21.

the Reformation have been examined at length.⁷ More recently, the social aspects of baptism have begun to receive increasing attention. Karant-Nunn has considered how the Reformation sought to update baptism and to impose a degree of morality on congregations.⁸ She focuses on how services were carried out, examines the changing roles of godparents, and notes how the rite became increasingly communal, especially in Reformed areas. This chapter complements the work of Karant-Nunn in that it seeks to examine how baptism was taught to Christian men and women, and to explore whether catechetical instruction can be seen to have had a bearing on how the rite was performed and how it was expected to be performed. Whilst Karant-Nunn's methodology, including the analysis of church orders, sermons and the works of the reformers themselves, indicates the degree of change that can be detected in Reformation Germany, this chapter will demonstrate that, when catechisms are considered alongside these other sources, the disconnect between instruction and practice is made apparent. Rather than promoting change, the catechisms encouraged continuity and, crucially, a degree of concord in the understanding of baptismal doctrine. Halvorson's study on baptismal ritual and court culture in the later sixteenth century has recognised the need to situate the analysis of ritual 'in a precise societal framework that accounts for the theology and innovation of competing reformers as well as an understanding of the distractions and cultural forces

⁷ See Fisher, *Christian Initiation*; Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*; Hermann Josef Spital, *Der Taufritus in den deutschen Ritualien von den ersten Drucken bis zur Einführung des Rituale Romanum* (Münster, 1968); Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, 1992).

⁸ Susan Karant-Nunn, "'Suffer the Little Children to Come unto Me, and Forbid them Not': The Social Location of Baptism in Early Modern Germany", in Andrew C. Gow and Robert J. Bast (eds.), *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History: Studies in Honor of Heiko A. Oberman on his Seventieth Birthday* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 359-378, p. 359; Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*.

that make individual communities and celebrations unique'.⁹ The lack of ritual direction in the catechisms can be seen to support his point. In his article, Halvorson compares three baptisms that occurred in different Lutheran courts between 1572 and 1600. He argues that the needs of the princes were different than the lower classes regarding the display of ritual.¹⁰ Catechisms were designed with a broad user-base in mind and, by not including ritual instruction, both Catholic and Protestant texts could allow for the rite to be conducted in a manner befitting the status of the baptisand. Further, the challenges to the traditional Catholic doctrine of baptism raised difficult questions regarding the social role of the sacrament, the relationship between the body and soul, and that between humanity and God. Much of this transcended the boundaries of educated theology and popular culture. Catechisms were not the place to attempt to engage too deeply with these issues, not only because of their complexity but, being geographically mobile, they could not address each local variance in custom and doctrine. The following analysis of how baptismal ritual was addressed in the catechisms will argue that, far from a top-down imposition of faith, the texts' seeming lack of direction regarding local practices, and the catechisms' equivocation on contentious issues, supports the notion that, collectively, they reflect the growing influence of the laity over the direction of popular piety.

⁹ Michael J. Halvorson, 'Baptismal Ritual and Court Culture during the Late Reformation', *Lutheran Quarterly* 18 (2004), pp. 406-434, p. 406.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

The history of baptism is embedded deeply within the Christian faith, yet scholars have struggled to trace accurately its development as a rite from its earliest years until the mid-sixth century.¹¹ For the centuries following, there is a clearer understanding of the development and administration of the rite, partly due to the extant copies of the *Missale Gothicum*, a collection of three missals, which, Fisher suggests, probably describe the baptismal rite as it was developing in Germany and Gaul.¹² Fisher's analysis of these missals reveals a number of discrepancies compared to the *Ordo XXIII*, a work produced in the first half of the eighth century which described the ceremonies conducted in Rome.¹³ Between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, there was no single text that could claim authority over the administration of baptism. Moreover each area across Germany and Europe more broadly had developed local traditions, meaning that the administration of the sacrament remained in a state of flux on the eve of the Reformation. Despite the wide-ranging interpretations and diversity in the administration of baptism, by the early sixteenth century, it had evolved from being a process of initiation for adults, who had converted to Christianity from paganism, to a sacrament confirming the admittance of a newly born infant into the Christian fold. Though its formula was different to that performed in the early Church, late-medieval baptism occupied a vital position in the life-cycle and, as research has

¹¹ Useful studies on baptism include J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West* (London, 1965); Old, *Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite*; Reinhart Weber, *Reformation der Taufe* (Ichthys-Selbstverlag, 1983).

¹² Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 47. For a full discussion see pp. 47-77. See also Lothar Heiser, *Die Taufe in der Orthodoxen Kirche. Geschichte, Spendung und Symbolik nach der Lehre der Väter* (Trier, 1987), which charts the development of baptism until the fifth century.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.p. 48-52, p. 16.

demonstrated, the actual liturgy was largely resistant to change and remained true to the early Church.¹⁴

This chapter begins with an analysis of the theological understanding of baptism as taught in the catechisms. In particular, it will focus on the ways in which the catechisms sought to defend against the challenges of the Anabaptist movement, particularly the divine institution of baptism, the separation of the Word and water, the relationship between the water and sin, and infant baptism. The second part of the chapter will discuss the use of ritual, before concluding with an analysis of how customs and theology clashed, with particular emphasis on the use of exorcisms, full or part immersions, and the use and purpose of godparents. Its findings and conclusions will support this thesis' broader argument that confessional division was downplayed, indicating that the objective of sacramental instruction in the catechisms was to preserve peace. However, this peacekeeping venture had clear limits: the baptismal beliefs of the Anabaptists and other radical sects were universally rejected in the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist catechisms.

Doctrine

The burgeoning evangelical faith had been rocked by the development of more extreme groups keen for a faster-paced and more radical reform than Luther was prepared to undertake. One sect was the Anabaptists, whose

¹⁴ Peter Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages, c. 200-c. 1150* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 2.

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development began in the 1520s when, in 1521, a small group called the Zwickau Prophets rejected the practice of infant baptism. On account of this, by 1522 Lutherans began referring to these radicals as Anabaptists.¹⁵

Scholarship on the Anabaptists has tended to focus on the movement more broadly and, consequently, there are few local case studies that address how the sect developed in a given area during the sixteenth century.¹⁶ Roth and Stayer's recent edited volume goes some way to addressing this lacuna in research with a chronological span of almost 180 years (1521-1700), although it remains geographically diverse.¹⁷ Kat Hill's study on the Anabaptists in Germany frames a consideration of the sect in terms of how they maintained an identity despite their geographic diversity, and how Lutheranism impacted their development.¹⁸ As an inversion of this latter point, this chapter will look at how Anabaptists impacted Lutheranism, as well as Catholicism and Calvinism in the empire. The fluidity of the Anabaptist movement has presented historians with difficult methodological problems: not only was it theologically heterogeneous, but also its clandestine nature has left the historical record wanting when attempting to develop local case studies. Moreover, the movement had various branches and theological interpretations across Europe, and much remains to be done regarding later manifestations of the sect.

¹⁵ Michael J. Halvorson, 'Theology, Ritual, and Confessionalization: The Making and Meaning of Lutheran Baptism in Reformation Germany, 1520-1618', DPhil dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, WA (2001) p. 76. The Zwickau Prophets consisted of Nicholas Storch, Thomas Drechsel and Marcus Stübner: Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 107.

¹⁶ Useful studies on the Anabaptists include John S. Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists: Luther, Melancthon and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1964); Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, trans. Trevor Johnson (London, 1996).

¹⁷ John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (eds), *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* (Leiden, 2007).

¹⁸ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*.

The following analysis will focus on points of doctrine that were at the forefront of debates between Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, and those perceived as fanatical, including the Anabaptists, Zwingli and Wittenberg's own Andreas Karlstadt. This section will discuss beliefs around why baptism ought to be administered, particularly focusing on the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist argument that the sacrament was divinely instituted. There was clear cross-confessional agreement between the catechisms regarding the divine institution of baptism, and they all defended it. Following on from this will be an analysis of how the catechisms conveyed the unity of the Word and water. This was a fiercely debated aspect of baptism, going straight to the core of broader sacramental theology. Both of these points were particularly close to Luther's heart and, out of all the Protestant catechisms consulted here, he rejected rival radical doctrines more emphatically than the others. The discussions regarding the divine establishment of baptism and the unity of the Word and water provide the context for the final part of this section: the contentious matter of infant baptism. This, in particular, greatly impacted the laity because even the most doctrinally ignorant person would notice the change should infants no longer be baptised. Anabaptists rejected the validity of infant baptism outright, forcing Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed theologians to offer a rigorous defence of its continued practice. Significantly, this discussion of theology and the consideration of infant baptism, in particular, will suggest that Osiander's catechetical treatment of infant baptism can be seen to indicate an earlier doctrinal dissent than has been suggested in other studies. It will suggest also that key aspects of doctrine advocated by

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the catechisms promoted those shared by each confession, especially in the small catechisms. This questions, once again, the viability of seeing catechisms as methods that were used to shape the development of identity. More specifically, it suggests that what it meant to be an ordinary Catholic or Protestant was a rejection of fanatical doctrines, rather than requiring detailed knowledge of the theological differences between Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism.

In 1528, Luther confessed that his knowledge of Anabaptist theology was limited.¹⁹ Despite his restricted understanding, he believed that Anabaptists saw infant baptism as a human construct rather than a divine command, and he sought to defend its divine institution in his *Large Catechism* (1535), teaching:

herein lies God's commandment and institution, [do] not doubt that baptism is a godly thing, not devised or invented by man ... no person has spun [it] out of their head but [it is] revealed and given by God himself. So I can boast also that baptism is no human frippery but instituted by God himself.²⁰

A substantial portion of his discussion of baptism in the *Large Catechism* aimed to defend its divine institution more broadly, although this particular

¹⁹ Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals*, p. 70.

²⁰ 'Martin Luther's *Von der Wiedertaufe* (1528)', in Fernando Enns and Jonathan Seiling (eds), *Mennonites in Dialogue: Official Reports from International and National Ecumenical Encounters, 1975-2012* (Eugene, 2015), pp. 229-231, p. 230. In October 1525, George Blaurock had declared 'infant baptism is an invention of men, and whatever is from men is from the devil: cited in Henry S. Burrage, *A History of Anabaptists in Switzerland* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 52; 'hie stehet Gottes gebot und einsezung / das man nich zweifel / die Tauffe sey ein Göttlich ding / nicht von menschen erdacht noch erfunden ... hat kein mensch aus seinem kopff gesponnen / sondern sind von Gott selbs offenbaret und gegeben. So kan isch auch rhümen / as die Tauffe kein menschen tand sey / sondern von Gott selbs eingesezt': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 96.

extract is a direct attack on the Anabaptists. For Luther, the Anabaptist challenge was personal. He wanted to distance himself from the movement, especially as he suspected certain influential members had tried to link themselves to him and his theology.²¹ He also harboured ill-feelings towards his old colleague, Karlstadt, whose tenure in Wittenberg in the early 1520s was marked by frequent clashes after his impatience for reform resulted in actions Luther believed were both dangerous and ill-judged.²² Luther's personal troubles with radical Protestants help to explain his urgency in refuting extreme doctrines in his catechisms. The catechism's focus was different to that of his 1519 sermon on baptism, in which he had sought to challenge the Catholic system of indulgences and doctrine of salvation. In this sermon, Luther concluded that 'we have been led astray in our own anxious works, afterwards in indulgences and such like false comforts, and have thought that we are not to trust God until we are righteous and have made satisfaction for our sin'.²³ In 1519, Luther was responding to errors he perceived within the Catholic faith, and sought to defend and to justify his views in the face of Roman opposition. In 1529, he was responding to the doctrines of the radicals; the focus of his catechetical exposition of baptism changed accordingly.

²¹ Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, p. 118. Balthasar Hubmaier's work on re-baptism inferred that Luther agreed with him on the matter, an assertion that horrified Luther.

²² Mark U. Edwards Jr., 'Luther's Polemical Controversies', in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 192-208; p. 197. Karlstadt was a radical but not an Anabaptist: see C. Arnold Snyder, 'Swiss Anabaptism: The Beginnings, 1523-1525', in John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (eds.), *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 45-82, pp. 47-48.

²³ 'Wir aber / ynn die engstlichen eygene werck / darnach ynß ablaß und der gleychen falsche troste vorfuret seyn / vormeynt got nit eer zutrawen / wie weren danñ frum uñ gnug gescheen fur die sund': Martin Luther, *Eyn Sermon von dem heyligen hochwirdigen Sacrament der Tauffe* (Wittenberg: Joannē Grunenber, 1519), pp. b3a. WA vol. 2, pp. 727-737, pp. 736-737.

By way of contrast, Osiander's defence of the divine institution of baptism was less emphatic, with his catechetical sermon beginning with the caution that 'the Lord Christ said ... unless someone is born new out of the water and spirit, he cannot come in [to] the Kingdom of God'.²⁴ He drew on Matthew 28:19 to defend the divine institution of baptism, which expressed Jesus' command to his disciples to 'go forth and teach all people and baptise them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the holy Spirit', and repeated this verse again later in the chapter, but he did not engage directly with those with dissenting opinions.²⁵ In contrast, Luther referred to his opponents as 'know-it-alls', 'blind guides', 'presumptuous, stupid minds', 'fanatical spirits', and, finally, described them as a 'secret, seditious Devil, who would like to take the crown from the magistracy, that they stand on it with the feet, and with it, pervert all of God's work and orders'.²⁶

The woodcut depicting baptism included in Luther's 1540 edition of the *Large Catechism* was similar to that included in Osiander's catechism [figs. 1 and 2]. They both associated the sacrament of baptism with ancient, biblical practices, and both woodcuts depicted an adult man (Jesus) being baptised in the river by a man kneeling on the banks of the river (John). The water in both instances is being poured over the recipient's head, although Luther's image showed a receptacle being used to pour the water, while in Osiander's

²⁴ 'Es spricht der Herr Christus im Evangelio / Es sey dann / das yemand new geporn werd aus dem wasser unnd Gaist / so kan er in das reich Gottis nicht kommen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 247.

²⁵ 'Geht hin und lere alle volcker und taufft sie im namen des Vaters / und des Sons / und des heiligen Gaists': *ibid.*, p. 249, p. 255.

²⁶ 'Kluglinge', 'blinden leite', 'vermessene / tolpische gesiter', 'schwermer geister', heimlicher / auffrührischer Teuffel / der gerne die krone von der oberkeit reissen wolt / das man sie darnach mit füssen treten / dazu aller Gottes werck und ordnung uns veerkeren und zu nichte machen': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 98a, p. 103, p. 103a.

woodcut, John was depicted using his hand. Above both scenes is the symbol of the Holy Spirit and, in Osiander's catechism, a benevolent God looks down on the ceremony, clearly endorsing the ritual. These woodcuts, despite their minor differences, both aimed to depict the biblical and ancient practice of baptism. They served to dispel accusations that baptism is a human construct and confirmed that it is, in fact, blessed and ordained by God.



Figure 1: Martin Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1540), p. CXLIIIa.



Figure 2: Andreas Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig* (1533), p. 247.

Osiander, therefore, certainly did not deny that baptism was a divinely ordered sacrament. However, his catechism sought to empower the role of the clergy in relation to the laity, and certain aspects of the baptism service were emphasised in order to elevate the status of the clergy. He reminded the audience of the power invested in the pastor when dispensing the sacraments, teaching 'now, baptism is instituted by God and who baptised me

has had his command from God'.²⁷ He also explained that the sacrament is 'bound to God's Word, therefore it also effected in us all that God has instituted [it] to do'.²⁸ The audience was constantly reminded that baptism is done at God's command, but that this command is directly linked to the work of the pastor in carrying it out. It is the pastor who follows God's ordinances in dispensing the sacrament, and it is the pastor who baptises 'as though God has baptised us himself'.²⁹ The audience, through hearing the repeated connection between the power of God and the practical application of his Word by the pastor, were being readied by Osiander for the far more overt defence of clerical authority that was to come in the sermon on the keys. Osiander remained within the boundaries of Lutheran orthodoxy in his defence of the divine institution of baptism, but his aim was to reinforce ecclesiastical authority, rather than to criticise radical interpretations. Luther's *Small Catechism* taught a similar message, urging the penitent to recognize the pastor's forgiveness as 'God's forgiveness' in the first question on confession.³⁰ The difference between the reformers was one of emphasis, related to their broader objectives and reflecting the social and political concerns of their local contexts.

While Luther and Osiander taught that baptism was necessary for salvation, Calvin's understanding of the covenant between God and man led him to

²⁷ 'Nun ist die tauff von Gott eingesezt / und der mich getaufft hat / der hat sein beuelh von Got gehabt': *ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁸ 'Sonder sie ist ein wasser in Gottis gepot gefasst / unnd mit Gottis wort verpunden / darumb würckt sie auch an unns / alles das / darzu sie Gott hat eingesezt': *ibid.*, p. 254.

²⁹ 'Das ist dann eben als vil / als tauffet uns Gott selbs': *ibid.*, pp. 254-255.

³⁰ 'Das man die Absolutio odder vergebung vom Beichtiger empfahe / als von Gott selbs': Martin Luther, *Enchiridion, der kleine Katechismus für die gemeine Pfarrherr und Prediger* [hereafter, *Enchiridion* (1537)] (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1537), p. 65.

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reject the absolute necessity of baptism for salvation: it was certainly important in reducing parents' fears, but it was not vital in achieving salvation.³¹ Reformed theologians maintained that baptism should be performed not on account of any perceived salvific benefit – which it did not possess – but because it was divinely instituted.³² The *Heidelberg Catechism*, like Osiander's, referred to Matthew 28:19 in which Jesus commanded his disciples to baptise all nations; it also included the declaration in Mark 16:16 that 'whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned'.³³ Yet the catechism did not repeat Calvin's view that baptism was not absolutely necessary to salvation. The strong Lutheran presence in the Palatinate may be one reason why the *Heidelberg Catechism* did not advocate Calvin's reasoning. However, a second reason is that the catechism was responding to Anabaptist threats. According to Clasen, the Upper Palatinate was 'hardly ... touched by Anabaptism at all'.³⁴ However, William Estep has challenged this assertion, referring to 350 executions of Anabaptists in Heidelberg during the sixteenth century, and Werner Packull notes that from 1527, persecuted Anabaptists fled from the Palatinate to Moravia.³⁵ Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate had to defend himself against both internal and external charges of religious fanaticism so, like Luther, it

³¹ Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva*, p. 34.

³² John Vissers, 'Baptism in the Reformed Tradition', in Gordon L. Heath and James D. Dvorak (eds.), *Baptism: Historical, Theological and Pastoral Perspectives* (Eugene, 2011), pp. 76-110, p. 94.

³³ 'Wer da glaubet und getauffet wird / der wird selig warden: wer aber nicht glaubt / der wird verdampt werden: *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 48.

³⁴ Claus-Peter Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History 1525-1618: Switzerland, Austria, Moravia, South and Central German* (Ithaca, 1972), p. 304.

³⁵ William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (third edition) (Grand Rapids, 1996), p. 75. Gunnoe also mentions these 350 executions, but suggests that this figure may have been exaggerated: 'The Reformation of the Palatinate', p. 23; Werner O. Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings: Communitarian Experiments during the Reformation* (Baltimore, 1995), p. 54.

was important that he disassociated himself from doctrines that had radical elements, or those that could be perceived as such.

Canisius, though less defensive than Luther had been, also addressed the institution of baptism in his catechisms. The first question on baptism in his *Large Catechism* taught that 'it is the new law [of] the first and most necessary sacrament'.³⁶ In Catholic theology, the sacraments of the Old Law did not bestow grace, but they prepared the way for those of the New Law, which did confer it.³⁷ The New Law was established through Christ's Sermon on the Mount, in which he taught what was needed for the reception of grace and in which the sacraments were established.³⁸ The *Small Catechism* reiterated the divine institution of the sacraments, teaching that they 'are instituted by Christ our Lord and God ... to be used to console and save us'.³⁹ Canisius' defence of the divine institution was clear, but the *Tridentine Catechism* was far more repetitive and detailed. It taught that the sacraments 'are signs instituted not by man but by God, which we firmly believe have in themselves the power of producing the sacred effects of which they are the signs'.⁴⁰ The catechism exhorted priests to remind their parishioners that baptism was 'instituted by Christ the Lord'.⁴¹ With their intention to deny the veracity and assumed truth of the Protestant faith, the canons and decrees anathematised those who

³⁶ 'Es ist des neuen gesez das erst und allernotwendigst Sacrament': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 144.

³⁷ Susan K. Wood, *One Baptism: Ecumenical Dimensions of the Doctrine of Baptism* (Collegeville, 2009), p. 85.

³⁸ Antti Raunio, 'Divine and Natural Law in Luther and Melanchthon', in Virpi Mäkinen (ed.), *Lutheran Reformation and the Law* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 21-61, p. 31.

³⁹ 'Welliche siben Sacrament von Christo unserm Herrn eingesezt / von den lieben Aposteln uns ubergeben / in der Catholischen Kirchen für unnd für gebraucht und erhalten': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 98.

⁴⁰ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 146.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

disagreed with the divine institution of baptism. In the same canon, those who denied any of the seven sacraments were also anathematised.⁴² This serves to demonstrate that the council perceived the Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, and other Protestant sects to be one body, rather than discrete confessions of which some could, and did, share some of the characteristics and doctrines of the Catholic Church.

A second area of contention between the rival confessions was the separation of the Word and water. The branch of Swiss Anabaptists led by Konrad Grebel (1498-1526) believed that God alone granted faith through 'inner baptism', an understanding that necessitated the separation of the outer (water) and inner (spiritual) baptism.⁴³ This was based on Zwingli's interpretation of baptism:

water baptism is a ceremonial sign, to which salvation is tied ... None save God can give [the inward baptism of the spirit]. And nobody can be saved without it. But it is quite possible to be saved without the other baptism of external teaching and immersion in water.⁴⁴

Balthasar Hubmaier also emphasised inner baptism, separating it from the outward washing, which was a 'symbol of duty'.⁴⁵ Hans-Jürgen Goertz has outlined these various interpretations amongst offshoots of the Anabaptist movement, but explained that, despite the separation of the Word and water, they all agreed in the unity of the baptismal sacrament; inner and outer baptism were to occur both at the same event, with the public water baptism

⁴² Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees*, p. 107.

⁴³ Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, p. 71.

⁴⁴ Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Leiden, 1994), p. 212.

⁴⁵ Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, p. 76.

acting as a form of confession that results in the church opening 'its doors to all believers who confess their faith verbally before her and accepts them into her bosom'.⁴⁶ There was much theological debate over the issue amongst the early Anabaptists and other reformers, which can explain why Luther's defence of his own theology was so forceful: he wanted to remove any element of doubt created by the numerous, often confusing, theologies developed by the radicals. The same anger that Luther displayed regarding attacks on the concept of the divine institution of baptism can be seen in his insistence that the Word and water cannot be separated. He exclaimed:

[it] is a piece of pure wickedness and ridicule of the Devil that now let our new spirits blaspheme baptism, God's Word and order, and do not see it as other than the water that you draw from a fountain and then revile [*geiffern*] ... How dare you interfere in God's order and snatch the best gem that God has connected and instituted and does not want to have separated?⁴⁷

During the 1520s, Luther's foe, Karlstadt, had moved away from a doctrine of baptism that rested on the theology of Aquinas and Augustine to one that believed in spirit baptism, and he came to view the water itself as having no effect on faith.⁴⁸ This extract from Luther's catechism was a specific attack against Karlstadt, and it was his old colleague's actions that contributed to his furious response to the separation of the Word and water. In contrast, while Osiander agreed with the unity of the Word and water, he did not dwell so

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁷ 'Darumb ist ein lauter buben stuck und des teuffels gespötte / das izt unsere neue geister / die Tauffe zulestern / Gottes wort und ordnung davon lassen / und nicht anders ansehen / denn gas wasser / das man aus dem brunnen schepffet / und darnach daher geiffern ... Wie tharstu aber so inn Gottes ordnung greiffen / und das beste kleinod davon reiffen / damit es Gott verbunden und eingefasset hat / und nicht wil getrennet haben?': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 97.

⁴⁸ Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, p. 7.

extensively on it in his catechism and was far milder in his exhortation, teaching:

baptism is not only simple water. But it is a water collected at God's command ... Therefore, we should not look at the water, but at God who has instituted the water baptism and has commanded it to be done in his name ... Baptism is not only mere water, but instead it is amassed in God's command and is bound to God's Word, and that is the Word of God, that our Lord Jesus spoke to Matthew.⁴⁹

Osiander rejected Karlstadt's claim that water without faith was simple water, but he did so in a less emphatic manner than had Luther. However, he sought once more to draw connections between the Word of God and the actions of the pastor. He did not seek to suggest that the pastor's actions were at the heart of the sacrament, explaining that 'water of course does nothing, but the Word of God is with and in the water'.⁵⁰ Yet, he made the association between the Word of God and the act of baptism very clear, thus conveying the importance of the clerical office. Luther and Osiander were agreed in their defence of the unity of the Word and water, but for different purposes.

The *Heidelberg Catechism's* questions on baptism focused on emphasising the Reformed understanding that baptism serves first to forgive sins and, secondly, to confer spiritual renewal. Concurrently, the catechism stressed the area of agreement between Lutherans and Calvinists regarding the nature of

⁴⁹ 'Die tauff ist nicht allein ein schlechtes wasser / Sonder sie ist ein wasser in Gottis gepot gefasst ... Darumb sollen wir nicht auff's wasser sehen / sonder auff Gott / der die wasser tauff eingesezt / und in seinem namen zu thun beuolhen hat ... Die tauffe ist nicht allein schlecht wasser / sonder sie ist das wasser in Gottis gepot gefasset / und mit Gottis wort verpunden / und das sein die wort Gottis / da unser Herr Christu spricht Matthei': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, pp. 254-261.

⁵⁰ 'Wasser thuts freylich nicht / sonder das wort Gottis / so mit und bey dem wasser ist': *ibid.*, p. 262.

a sacrament. Both Luther and Calvin had accepted that the sacraments were visible signs and seals through which God acted, and the *Heidelberg Catechism* taught that God 'wants to assure us by this divine pledge and true sign that we are truly cleansed of our sins'.⁵¹ Where Luther and Calvin disagreed on baptism is 'related to Calvin's distinction between the external sign and interior reality signified'.⁵² Luther did not accept such a separation and maintained that the Holy Spirit is inseparably connected to the external Word and sacrament. The *Heidelberg Catechism* did not delve too deeply into this area of disagreement, and Bierma has suggested that its question and answer adopted a similar approach to baptism to that of Melancthon and Calvin.⁵³ This allowed Lutherans and Calvinists alike to accept the catechism, whilst still holding to their different understandings of 'sign and signified'.⁵⁴ This, in turn, allowed Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate to appeal to both Lutherans and Calvinists, and reinforces the suggestion that the catechism was deliberately evasive in order to preserve a sense of unity and to minimise outbreaks of public displays of division and animosity.

The Catholic catechisms, likewise, promoted the unity of inner and outer baptism. Canisius' *Small Catechism* (1574) described the sacrament's nature as an 'externally visible, powerful sign ... For when the child is washed with

⁵¹ 'Dz er uns durch diß Gottlich pfand und war zeichē wil versichern / dz wir so warhafftif von unsern sundē geistlich gewaschē sind': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 49.

⁵² Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (second edition) (Minnesota, 2007), p. 338.

⁵³ Bierma, *The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism*, pp. 80-81. Melancthon's *Loci Communes* (1521) 'characterizes post-Pentecost baptism as a sign of grace "already bestowed" (*iam donatae*), a pledge and seal of grace "already conferred" (*iam collatae*), a testimony of "bestowed grace" (*donatae gratiae*), and an assurance of grace "already conferred" (*iam collatum*): *ibid.*, p. 80. In the 'Zurich Consensus' (1549), Calvin conceded that the apostle Paul had been granted remission of sins before his baptism: *ibid.*, p. 80.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

water in holy Baptism, it is a powerful, certain sign that the child is inwardly washed, that is [it] becomes sacred and cleansed from sin through Christ'.⁵⁵

The *Tridentine Catechism* instructed pastors to inform the faithful that 'this Sacrament consists of ablution, accompanied necessarily, according to the institution of our Lord, by certain solemn words ... The word is joined to the element, and it becomes a Sacrament'.⁵⁶ Thus, there is a degree of agreement between and within the faiths, at least, superficially. While sacramental theology differed substantially on a deeper level, the mainstream Christian faiths had a broadly similar starting place, which was acknowledged in the catechisms. However, the German catechisms did not probe too deeply into the differences between their respective sacramental theologies, thereby adding weight to the suggestion that a degree of uniformity in their respective religious instruction can be discerned. This is unlike the *Tridentine Catechism* and the Council of Trent's canons, which perceived the Protestants as a collective force, and tended to overlook the divisions that existed. For the authors of the *Tridentine Catechism*, Protestant theology was unilaterally rejected and there was no need to recognise individual points of departure within it.

⁵⁵ 'Es ist ... ein außwendiges sichtbarlichs krefftiges zeichen ... Als wann das Kind im heiligen Tauff / mit Wasser gewaschen wirdt / ist dasselb ein krafftigs gewiß zaichen / daß des kinds seel innerlich abgewaschē / das ist / von sünden durch Christum gerainiget unnd gehailiget wirdt': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), pp. 97-98.

⁵⁶ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 163.

Infant Baptism

Understandings of the relationship between inner and outer baptism laid the foundations for the conflict over infant baptism that served to distinguish the Anabaptists most radically from Lutheranism and Calvinism. Though all Anabaptists ultimately rejected infant baptism, they did so for different reasons. Konrad Grebel and his supporters rejected Luther's understanding of the water's purpose by arguing 'the water does not strengthen and increase the faith'.⁵⁷ Grebel claimed instead that baptism signified the forgiveness of sins through faith and Jesus' death; salvation comes through faith, not the water, which an infant could neither comprehend nor confess.⁵⁸ Hubmaier reasoned that inner baptism preceded outer baptism; therefore, faith had to come before the water baptism.⁵⁹ As both inner and outer baptism had to occur at a single event, infant baptism had no place in Hubmaier's theology. Hans Hut, another Anabaptist, adhered to the biblical sequence of faith followed by baptism to reject infant baptism, which was a different way of reaching the same conclusion as Hubmaier.⁶⁰ In 1537, Jakob Storger, whilst waiting to be drowned as punishment for his Anabaptist views, called out to the gathered crowd 'abstain from the dog's bath, the swine's bath and disgusting filthy bath of child baptism'.⁶¹ He denounced the practice of baptising children as hazardous to their health, and warned it had the potential of making them filthy rather than clean. The confusing disputes over

⁵⁷ Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, p. 70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁶¹ 'Stehet abe von dem hundebade, sawbade und sodelbade der kinder taufe': Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, pp. 99-100.

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baptism perplexed the laity: Barbara Adams, upon her arrest in 1533, exclaimed that she 'did not know whether she was a heathen or a Christian and simply did not know which was wrong out of child baptism and re-baptism'.⁶² Thus, in varying degrees, each of the catechisms sought to defend and to clarify the necessity of infant baptism and to refute the various Anabaptist understandings.

The Anabaptists' conclusion that sin only had an impact on the individual once they reached an age where they were aware they had committed a transgression challenged the concept of infant baptism on both theological and social levels.⁶³ Authorities across the empire sought to repress the movement, and even other reformers considered extreme by some – Zwingli and Karlstadt, for instance – were keen to disassociate themselves from the Anabaptists. Their dismissal of infant baptism was an assault on the sacrament that Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed theologians could not tolerate, and there was clear cross-confessional agreement between the catechisms that a rejection of infant baptism was not only heretical, but posed a dangerous threat to society. Infant baptism was a relatively recent innovation in the administration of the sacrament. In the very early years of the Church, baptisms almost exclusively were carried out on adults because missionaries predominantly were focused on converting adult pagans to Christianity. It was not until the seventh century, when much of Western Europe was Christianised, that baptismal candidates became to be children

⁶² 'Sie wuste nicht, ob sie ein heyde oder Christ getaufft were vnd wust gar von keener kinder oder widdertawff, welchs recht oder unrecht were': *ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

rather than adults.⁶⁴ Catholic justification of infant baptism rested on the concept of original sin and the need to be freed from this through baptism as soon as possible after birth in order to be sure of salvation in the event of death. Medieval theologians taught that should a child die without having been baptised, they would be unable to achieve salvation, thus, Catholic baptism not only washed away original sin, it emphasised salvation, which gave parents great comfort in the knowledge that their child was reconciled with God.⁶⁵ Lutheran theology also confirmed that baptising children was crucial in attaining salvation, although Luther's theology changed over time. Riggs notes that between 1518 and 1520, he believed that a child was baptised into 'the faith of others'.⁶⁶ Popular in the medieval Church, this understanding validated baptism, but the spiritual future of the child was left open. By 1528, and no doubt as a result of the Anabaptist challenge to infant baptism, Luther had come to believe that infant baptism was grounded in God's promise, which remained valid even if the child's faith was not maintained in the future.⁶⁷ In his 1528 open letter *Concerning Rebaptism*, Luther defended infant baptism on a number of grounds. Firstly, he argued it was steeped in tradition, having been practised since the earliest days of Christianity. Secondly, he emphasised the divine commandment of God to baptise all heathens. He challenged Anabaptists to prove the faith of those they were re-baptising, arguing that faith can waver from day to day, but that God's command to baptise remains, as does the efficacy of the first

⁶⁴ Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112; Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva*, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁶ John W. Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: An Historical and Practical Theology* (Louisville, 2010), p. 28.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

baptism.⁶⁸ Luther also drew comparisons between the New Law practice of baptism and the Old Law's use of circumcision by which children were received into Christ's covenant.⁶⁹ Calvin likewise defended infant baptism, but had to admit that at the exact moment of baptism a child could not grasp God's promise of grace.⁷⁰ In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin clarified that children are 'baptised into future repentance and faith – which although they are not yet formed in them, the seed of both is concealed in them through the secret operation of the spirit', and this secret planting performed by the Holy Spirit was what occurred at the moment of baptism.⁷¹

Both Catholic catechisms taught that infant baptism was necessary for salvation. Reinforcing traditional Catholic doctrine, the *Tridentine Catechism* asserted that the necessity of baptism 'extends not only to adults but also to infants and children, and that the Church has received this from Apostolic tradition, is confirmed by the unanimous teaching and authority of the fathers'.⁷² Secondly, the catechism referred to Matthew 19:14; 'suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me', and reasoned that Paul's baptism of an entire family must have included the children.⁷³ A third reason in support of infant baptism was because of the inheritance of original sin:

⁶⁸ Luther, 'Von der Wiedertaufe', *WA*, vol. 26, pp. 137-174.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

⁷⁰ Calvin was compelled to justify infant baptism because of his first-hand experience of Anabaptists: McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, p. 193.

⁷¹ 'Denique nullo negotio solvi potest obiection haec, baptizari in futuram poenitentiam et fidem: quae etsi nondum in illis formatae sunt, arcana tamen spiritus operatione utriusque semen in illis latet': Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition*, pp. 67-68.

⁷² *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 177.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

If, then, through the transgression of Adam, children inherit original sin, with still stronger reason can they attain through Christ our Lord grace and justice that they might reign in life. This, however, cannot be effected otherwise than by baptism.⁷⁴

Finally, the catechism explained the link between circumcision practised in the time of the Old Law, and baptism of the New Law, teaching that the former 'was a figure of baptism' in ancient times.⁷⁵ This argument was used also in the *Heidelberg Catechism* and Canisius' *Large Catechism* (1563).⁷⁶ The theology surrounding the New Law was challenged by some reformers, including Calvin, who saw the circumcision of the Old Law as performing the same function as baptism in the New Law.⁷⁷ Anabaptists rejected links between circumcision and baptism: Rink saw circumcision as a symbol of repression, while baptism is one of freedom and thereby free from coercion.⁷⁸ More will be said on these challenges and their impact on the validity and necessity of infant baptism later in the chapter. However, while Canisius touched on it briefly, he did not dwell on the New Law in his *Large Catechism*, and did not mention it at all in the *Small Catechism*. He defended infant baptism, though, confirming that '[it] is not only adults, but also underage children [who are] very much in need [of] and strongly [need] to acquire eternal bliss ... it ruins the little ones if they are not baptised'.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁶ 'Und von der ungläubigen kinder unterscheiden werden / wie im alten Testament durch die beschneidung geschehen ist / an welcher stat im newen Testament der Tauff ist engesetzt': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, p. 50; 'wie in dem alten Testament die unbeschnitten / und dieweil ein einige Tauff der Christglaubigen ist': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 145.

⁷⁷ Wood, *One Baptism*, p. 85.

⁷⁸ Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, p. 79.

⁷⁹ 'Ist aber nit allein den alten / sonder auch den unmündigen Kindern sehr hoch von noten / uñ krefftig die ewig seligkeit zuerlangen ... Es verdurben aber die kleinen / wo sy nit getaufft wurden': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 144.

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The 1569 edition of Canisius' *Large Catechism* emphasised further the importance of infant baptism, adding that 'it is necessary that underage children are purified of their sin, and are born again as children of God, which may not happen without this sacrament'.⁸⁰ In a rare outburst of hostility in his catechism (he is frequently highly polemic in other contexts) Canisius goes on to exclaim 'may the long-since- damned Anabaptists apply what they want'.⁸¹ In this, Canisius' attitude towards the Anabaptists is made explicit: unlike the *Tridentine Catechism*, he here recognised divisions within the Protestant movement, emphasising the erroneous doctrine of the Anabaptists, rather than that of the Lutherans.

Luther's catechisms and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, being Protestant and therefore more sensitive to the need to divorce themselves from Anabaptist associations, both took a far more robust approach in emphasising the importance of infant baptism. Luther insisted on the necessity of infant baptism, which he dealt with in the latter part of his catechetical exposition on baptism, the first part primarily being concerned with defending the institution and purpose of baptism. Again, his defence was directed towards attacks posed by the Anabaptists. Refuting the sect's concern that faith needed to precede outer baptism – undermining the practice of infant baptism – Luther

⁸⁰ 'Auch dē unmundigen kindern notig / daß sie von irer sun gereinigt / und kinder Gottes wider geboren werden / welches doch ohn diß Sacrament nicht geschehen mag': Peter Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien Christlicher Lehr / in Frag unnd Antwort / der Christlicher Jugendt / unnd allen Einfeltigen zu nuz und heil gestellt* (Cologne: Maternus Cholinus, 1569), pp. 178-179.

⁸¹ 'Mogen sonst die vorlangsst verdampfte widertdufter furwenden / was sie wollen': *ibid.*, p. 179.

responded that 'my faith does not make Baptism, but receives Baptism'.⁸² He angrily declared:

How dare we [think] that God's word and order is invalid and does not count if we use it invalidly? Therefore, I say if you have not believed, believe now and say Baptism has been valid, but I have unfortunately not received it correctly ... we bear the child to [God] in the opinion and hope that it believes and pray that God gives him faith, but we do not baptise on that but only because God has commanded it. Why so? Because we know that God does not lie.⁸³

Luther accused the radical sects of calling God a liar by questioning the efficacy of baptism. He portrayed the Anabaptists as suggesting that human will and actions outweigh those of God and he insisted that the baptism is, and always will remain, valid even if the person does not believe: 'for gold remains no less than gold, whether it is worn by a scoundrel in sin and shame'.⁸⁴ In this way, he rejected Anabaptist concerns that infant baptism was invalid on account of the fact that children could not understand the sacrament. Rather, he maintained that the faith of the receiver was irrelevant because the efficacy of baptism rested entirely on the grace of God.⁸⁵ Going on the offensive, Luther branded the 'fanatical spirits' as a 'secret, seditious Devil' whom we must not allow to turn us from the Word.⁸⁶ In his letter

Concerning Rebaptism, Luther had associated the Anabaptists with the pope,

⁸² 'Mein glaube machete nicht die Tauffe / sondern empfehet die Tauffe': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, p. 102.

⁸³ 'Wie kernen wir dazu / das Gottes wort und ordnung darumb solt unrecht sein und nichts gelten / das wirs unrecht brauchen? Darumb sage ich / hastu nicht gegleubt / so glaube noch und sprich also / Die Tauffe ist wol recht gewesen / ich hab sie aber leider nicht recht empfangen ... das kind tragen wir er zu / der meinung und hoffnung / das er glaube / und bitten / das im Gott dem glauben gebe / aber darauff teuffen wirs nicht / sondern allein darauff / das Gott befohlen hat / Warumb das? Darumb / das wir wissen / das Gott nicht leugt': *ibid.*, pp. 102a-3.

⁸⁴ 'Denn golt bleibt nichts deste weniger golt / ob es gleich ein bübeln mit sunden und schanden tregt': *ibid.*, p. 103.

⁸⁵ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 106.

⁸⁶ 'Ein heimlicher / auffrürischer Teuffel': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 103a.

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stating that he was their master (even though the pontiff did not condone the practice of re-baptism), connecting the Anabaptists with the dangers done to Christendom under the papacy.⁸⁷ However, no such connection between the Anabaptists and the Roman faith was made explicit in his catechisms.

Like Luther, Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate was concerned about potential Anabaptist threats in his territory. This is recognised by scholars of the *Heidelberg Catechism* but, equally, it is recognised that secondary literature discussing the connection between Anabaptism and the *Heidelberg Catechism* is virtually non-existent.⁸⁸ Whilst baptism was but one area of contention between Anabaptists, and Lutheranism and Calvinism, it is an area that was explicitly challenged in the official documents of Frederick III. Upon his accession to the Palatinate Electorate, there were fears amongst his Lutheran subjects that Frederick was aligned with Zwinglianism.⁸⁹ Though Zwingli had defended infant baptism, he was still associated with radical doctrines and Elector Frederick found himself having to reassure other dukes that he was not aligned with fanatical groups. For instance, in 1564, Frederick wrote to John William, then the younger Duke of Saxony, reassuring him that baptism in the Palatinate was not delayed until the age of reason was reached 'as unfortunately happens with the dreadful Anabaptists'.⁹⁰ In the face of both these internal and external fears, Frederick needed to ensure that his official

⁸⁷ Luther, 'Von der Wiedertaufe', *WA*, vol. 26, pp. 146-147.

⁸⁸ Henk van den Belt, 'Anabaptist Spirituality in the Heidelberg Catechism' in Arnold Huijgen (ed.), *The Spirituality of the Heidelberg Catechism: Papers of the International Conference on the Heidelberg Catechism Held in Apeldoorn 2013* (Göttingen, 2015), pp. 50-61, p. 50; Bierma, 'The Sources and Theological Orientation', p. 79.

⁸⁹ Wolgast, *Reformierte Konfession*, p. 38.

⁹⁰ 'Wie leyder von den dollen widertauffern geschicht': A. Kluckhohn (ed.), *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen Kurfürsten von der Pfalz* (Braunschweig, 1868), Letter 291, pp. 530-533, p. 531.

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documents promoted and emphasised those areas of agreement with Lutherans, such as infant baptism, even whilst he attempted to establish his own Calvinist beliefs in the Palatinate.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* had a specific question directed to infant baptism, asking:

‘Should one also baptise young infants?’

Yes: for because they, as well as the old, belong in the covenant of God ... so that also through baptism as the sign of the covenant [they] are incorporated in the Christian Church and are separated from the unbelieving children, as happened in the Old Testament through circumcision, in whose place baptism is established in the New Testament.⁹¹

The catechism reflected clearly the Calvinist understanding of baptism, as well as reinforced the requirement for children to be baptised. Frederick’s 1564 letter to John William repeated the connection between infant baptism and the practice of circumcision, stating that ‘in the place of circumcision is holy baptism’.⁹² Further, the importance of infant baptism was echoed in the church order, which began its explanation of the sacrament with a paragraph establishing why it is necessary to baptise children. Pastors were taught that it ‘is certain that children as well as elders receive the Holy Spirit, which plants the faith in their hearts ... it is clear [from Scripture] that young children should

⁹¹ ‘Frag. Sol man auch die jungē kinder tauffen? Antowrt. Ja: Denn dieweil sie so wol also die alten in den Bundt Gottes und seine gemein gehören ... so sole sich auch durch den tauff / als des Bunds zeichē / der Christlichen Kirchen eingeleibt / und von dern ungläubigen kinder unterscheiden warden / wie im alten Testament durch die beschneidung geschehen ist / am welcher stat im neuen Testament der Tauff ist eingesezt’: *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, pp. 49-50.

⁹² ‘An statt des beschneydung die haylige tauff kommen ist’: *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen Kurfürsten von der Pfalz*, Letter 291, p. 532.

in no way be excluded from baptism'.⁹³ The exhortation, intended to be read aloud to the assembled congregation, explained that:

although our little children do not yet understand these causes and the mystery [of baptism] we have described, and still less can confess them, they shall in no way be excluded from holy Baptism. Because they are called by God to the covenant which God has made with Abraham, the father of all faith, and his seed and also with us and our children.⁹⁴

Slightly later on, the pastor was to tell his parishioners that:

the Lord Christ himself commanded that infant children [be] brought to him ... as is written in Mark 10 ... baptism shall [be] received as a seal of the covenant, whether they do not know the mystery of Baptism for reasons of age, just as the little children are blessed by Jesus Christ himself with words and actions, and in the old church [they] were circumcised on the eighth day, although they did not understand the blessing of the Lord or the mystery of circumcision⁹⁵

The exhortation drew attention to both the requirement and necessity of infant baptism a number of times. Its correlation to and connection with the covenant understanding of baptism also was made strongly apparent, teaching that

⁹³ 'Es ist auch gewiß / daß die Kinder so wol als die alten / den heiligen Geist empfangen / der den Glauben in die Herzen pflanzt ... [es] ist klar / daß die jungen Kinder keins Wegs vom Tauff sollen außgeschlossen werden': *Kirchenordnung / Wie es mit der Christlichen Lehre / heiligen Sacramenten / und Ceremonien / inn des Durchleuchtigsten Hochgebornen Fürsten unnd Herren / Herrn Friderichs Pfalzgrauen bei Rhein / des heilgē Römischen Reichs Erzdruhsessen unnd Churfürsten / Herzogen inn Bairn ic. Churfürstenthumb bei Rhein / gehalten wirdt* [hereafter, Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*] (Heidelberg: Johann Mayer, 1563), pp. 1a-2.

⁹⁴ 'Wiewol aber unsere kindlein dise gemeldten Ursachen und Geheimnus noch nicht verstehen / vil weniger können bekennen / so sollen sie doch vom heiligen Tauff keins Weg außgeschlossen werden: Dieweil sie von Gott zu seinem Bund beruffen sind / den Gott mit Abraham dem Vatter aller glaubigen und seinem Samen / und also auch mit uns unnd unsern Kindern gemacht hat': *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁵ 'Darzu heisset auch der Herr Christus selbst die unmündige kindlein zu sich bringen ... wie Marci am 10. geschriben stehet ... den Tauff als das Sigil des Bundes empfangen sollen / ob sie schon die Geheimnuß des Tauffs / alters halbē noch nicht verstehen / gleich wie die kindlein von Jesu Christo selbst mit Worten und Werkē gesegnet sind / und in der alten Kirchen am achten Tag beschnitten wurden / wiewol sie den Segen des Herrn / wie auch die Geheimnuß der Beschneidung noch nit verstundē': *ibid.*, pp. 5a-6.

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Jesus' command to 'let the little children come to me' means that 'our children are also included in the kingdom and in the covenant of God, and should, therefore, receive baptism as a seal of the covenant'.⁹⁶ This served two purposes: to emphasise the Reformed theology of baptism, in conjunction with demonstrating the importance of baptising children – this latter part also appealing to Lutherans – but, critically, it served to distinguish the Reformed faith in the Palatinate from the radical aspects of the Protestant faith associated with Zwingli and the Anabaptists. This was vital in helping to defend Frederick from charges of radicalism, but also demonstrated his allegiance with Lutheranism in protecting the German lands from dangerous sects such as Anabaptism.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* made explicit the comparison between circumcision and baptism, which took the place of circumcision in the New Testament. Calvin saw the two as performing the same function. Luther did not discuss the issue of baptism and circumcision in his catechisms, but he did recognise it in other works. In his 1535 lectures on Genesis, Luther taught that both baptism and circumcision rested on the same covenantal principle: both were signs of the covenant.⁹⁷ These lectures were taken down in note form by Luther's students and were later edited and published in four volumes from 1544. As John Maxfield comments, it is difficult to determine what Luther actually said in his lectures from what was eventually published.⁹⁸ However,

⁹⁶ 'Lasset die kindlein zu mir kommen'; 'unsere kinder im Reich / unnd im bund Gottes seind / und derhalben auch den Tauff als das Sigil des bunds empfangen sollen': *ibid.*, p. 5a.

⁹⁷ Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture* (Louisville, 2002), p. 18.

⁹⁸ John A. Maxfield, *Luther's Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity* (Kirkville, 2008), pp. 1-2.

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Luther had drawn connections between baptism and circumcision in his 1528 open letter against the Anabaptists. He wrote that just as 'the old covenant and the sign of circumcision made Abraham's children believers ... so must this new covenant and sign [of baptism] be far more powerful and make those who accept it God's people'.⁹⁹ Zwingli had drawn connections between the two practices to distinguish himself from both the Anabaptists but, in his catechisms, Luther sought to disassociate himself from the Anabaptists and Zwingli. It is plausible that this covenantal connection between baptism and circumcision was left out of Luther's catechisms because of the parallel with Zwingli's doctrines. Yet, it could be included in the *Heidelberg Catechism* without causing offence to Lutherans or Calvinists because Luther did connect the two in later lectures and other works. Therefore, though Luther and the catechists of the *Heidelberg Catechism* employed different understandings in their respective defences of infant baptism, the agreement between them is clear: children need to be baptised. In fact, the *Heidelberg Catechism* and church order, and Luther's catechisms were far more explicit in their denunciation of radical doctrines than Osiander was in his catechism.

George Williams has briefly related Osiander's changing policy towards Anabaptists in a footnote of his study on the radical reformation. In 1525, Osiander demanded the death penalty for convicted Anabaptists on account of their rejection of the Doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Yet, by 1531, Osiander had softened his approach and suggested that Anabaptists be

⁹⁹ 'Hat nu der alte bundt und das zeychen der beschneydung Abrahams kinder glaubig gemacht ... so muß vil mehr diser newe bundt uñ zeychen so krefftig seyn und zu Gottes volck machen / die / so es annemen': Martin Luther, *Von der Widertauffe an zwei Pfarhern / Eyn Brieff* (Wittenberg, 1528), p. 37; *WA*, vol. 26, p. 169.

given instruction or, as a last resort, be banished.¹⁰⁰ According to Jason Vliet, despite his initial opposition to Anabaptists, Osiander ended up with a brand of theology that not only was in line with Hans Denck, an Anabaptist he met in Nuremberg, but also that had Catholic connotations, particularly regarding his doctrine of justification.¹⁰¹ While Vliet suggests it was during his time in Königsberg from 1549 to his death in 1552 that Osiander fully established his radical and unorthodox views, his catechetical treatment of baptism indicates early signs of this dissent. Osiander's earlier baptismal rubric of 1524 had retained many features of the traditional Catholic rite, although later he overrode his own manual in favour of Luther's 1526 baptismal order. However, while in the 1520s, Osiander frequently mentioned baptising infants, by the time his catechism appeared in 1533, this aspect of baptism was emphasised less. This is not to say that Osiander was against infant baptism but, rather, his priorities primarily lay with his battle against the city magistrates. Nonetheless, his own religious convictions can be seen to be changing, and these had an impact on the later controversy in which he became involved while at Königsberg.

There was no real defence of infant baptism in Osiander's catechism. In fact, he mentioned it only in passing, stating 'no Jew or Turkish child who is not baptised has the holy Spirit ... Therefore, you should thank God from [your] heart that he has let you be brought to baptism by your parents'.¹⁰² Other than

¹⁰⁰ George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (third edition) (Kirkville, 1992), p. 486fn.

¹⁰¹ Vliet, *Children of God*, pp. 211-212.

¹⁰² 'Keins Juden oder Türcken kindt / das nicht getaufft wirt / den heyligē Gaist hat ... Darumb solt ihr Gott von herzen dancken / das er euch durch ewere eltern zur tauff hat lassen bringen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 257.

this, Osiander used 'person' or 'man' in reference to the baptisand. We know that by 1531, Osiander had spoken with Denck and had softened in his attitude towards the Anabaptists, although he remained outspoken in rejecting their understanding of the Mass and the Trinity. We know also that Osiander was concerned with protecting clerical authority in Nuremberg; therefore, his attention was not necessarily on the question of infant baptism, but focused elsewhere. However, there is an edition Osiander's catechism, published in Magdeburg in 1534, which raises a number of questions and challenges our understanding of Osiander's theological development, particularly in terms of timing. Though the 1533 edition of his catechism included a woodcut defending the biblical tradition of baptism, this later edition depicted an altogether different scene. Rather than a biblical defence of baptism, or an image of a baby being held by the pastor over the font, this woodcut showed an adult standing up in a barrel of water (fig. 3).¹⁰³ Magdeburg was connected to Luther, who had attended school there in his youth, and the town later became an important publishing centre for Gnesio-Lutherans in their pamphlet wars against the Interim and the Empire.¹⁰⁴ In 1528, Nicholas Amsdorf refused to host the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman whilst he was en-route to Wittenberg.¹⁰⁵ A few year later, in 1535, Amsdorf determined to write against sectarian groups because the 'sectarians from Münster are near and come

¹⁰³ Andreas Osiander, *Catechismus edder kinder lere / wo de tho Nörenberg geprediget wert* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1534), p. 176.

¹⁰⁴ For an in-depth study of the pamphlet war in Magdeburg see Nathan Rein, *The Chancery of God: Protestant Print, Polemic and Propaganda against the Empire, Magdeburg 1546-1551* (Aldershot, 2008); Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 45. For the spread of the Reformation in Magdeburg, see Thomas Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation: Magdeburgs "Herrgotts Kanzlei" (1548 - 1551/2)* (Tübingen, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Kat Hill, 'Anabaptism and the World of Printing in Sixteenth-Century Germany', *Past and Present* 226 (2015), pp. 79-114, p. 107.

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closer daily'.¹⁰⁶ The hostility towards Anabaptists in the city makes the appearance of this unusual image of baptism in the 1534 edition of Osiander's catechism confusing. Moreover, it is unclear if this was an authorised re-print, and it is not immediately evident who undertook the translation into Low German. The appropriation and unauthorised revision of texts during the sixteenth century was a problem that plagued authors and efforts to protect their works began to be implemented. Indeed, Luther arranged for 'two marks of quality' to be printed on authorized copies of his works, including a lamb with a chalice, a flag depicting the cross, as well as the Luther Rose.¹⁰⁷ Though Osiander may not have authorized the Magdeburg edition, or had a say in the choice of woodcuts, the publication of his catechism in Magdeburg with this woodcut suggests that an exploration of the reception of Anabaptists and their teachings in Magdeburg during the 1520s and early 1530s would be fruitful.

¹⁰⁶ Niclas Amsdorf, *Widder die Widderteuffer und Sacramentirer / Etliche sprüche / odder schlussrede* (Hans Walther: Magdeburg, 1535), p. ai.

¹⁰⁷ Flood, 'The Book in Reformation Germany', p. 53. Hill notes that the front page of Melchior Hoffman's 1528 work against Amsdorff included a vignette which looked similar to the Lutheran rose, indicating that Hoffman had either acquired an engraving used by Luther's printers or he had found someone to design the images. This suggests that attempts to 'copyright' material were by no means infallible: Hill, 'Anabaptism and the World of Printing', pp. 107-108.

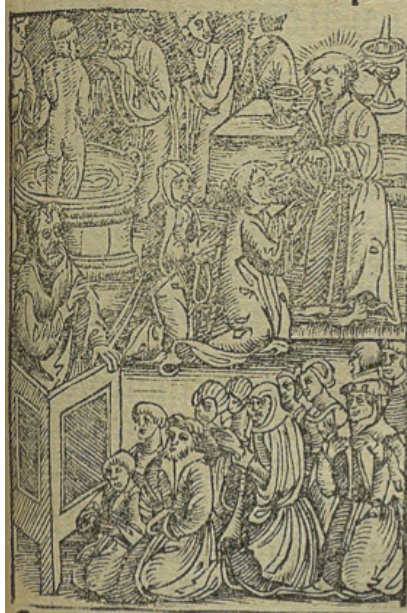


Figure 3. Andreas Osiander, *Catechismus edder kinder lere*, p. 176. Reproduced with kind permission of Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Pred.723/1.

Magdeburg was a Lutheran stronghold, but there were concerns that it might be susceptible to Anabaptist influences, as evidenced by Amsdorff's warnings. Whilst it is clear that Osiander was not a clandestine Anabaptist, the use of this unusual woodcut in this edition of his catechism does raise some questions.¹⁰⁸ Michael Lotter was the book's printer in Magdeburg. Between 1532 and 1536 he tended to use woodcuts designed by Georg Lemberger.¹⁰⁹ However, thus far, I have not discovered a similar depiction of baptism in Lemberger's other woodcuts. The text of the catechism itself is largely unchanged from Osiander's original, but the language is different: it is in Low German rather than High German. Moreover, the image clearly depicts baptism and communion, but the bottom scene can be interpreted as either preaching or, perhaps, general confession. The text of Osiander's sermon on

¹⁰⁸ E. Belfort Bax, *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists* (London, 1903, reprinted 2001), p. 280.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Parshall, 'The Vision of the Apocalypse in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Frances Carey (ed.), *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 99-207, p. 153.

the keys promotes private confession, leading to a disconnect between the textual and visual messages. Moreover, the sympathetic reception of Luther's teachings in Magdeburg raises the question of why Osiander's catechism was published in Magdeburg at all, especially as several editions of Luther's catechisms were already available in low and high German.¹¹⁰

Whilst the catechisms all agreed with infant baptism, catechists still faced the challenge of explaining how baptism can work when the child clearly has no concept of what the sacrament signifies and bestows. Anabaptists themselves were divided over the theological preservation of inner and outer baptism, but they agreed, by and large, with the notion of a faith baptism.¹¹¹ The catechisms attempted to challenge Anabaptist arguments against the merits of waiting to reach the age of discretion before being baptised. The *Tridentine Catechism* asserted that, clearly, the infant has no knowledge of what is happening when being baptised, but the belief of others is sufficient; 'they are established in the faith of their parents'.¹¹² Luther agreed with this to an extent, although he taught that it was most important to recognise that baptism rested on the command and promise of God.¹¹³ The *Heidelberg Catechism* did not directly address the problem of comprehension. Calvin's theory of the covenant had led him to maintain that baptism is confirmation of

¹¹⁰ The Universal Short Title Catalogue indicates that between 1529 and 1534 Magdeburg printers published Luther's *Large Catechism* three times and the *Small Catechism* once.

¹¹¹ For a full discussion see Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, pp. 68-84.

¹¹² *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 178;

¹¹³ 'Ich kom̄ her inn meinem glauben / und auch der andern / noch kan ich nicht drauff bawen / das ich gelube / und viel leute fur mich bitten / sondern darauff bawe ich / das er sein befehl ist / glech wie es zum Sacrament gehe / nicht auff meinen glauben / sondern auff Christus wort': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 102a.

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God's promise that he will be a God to believing parents and their children.¹¹⁴

The *Heidelberg Catechism* taught that baptism, being a sign of the covenant, enables infants to be 'incorporated into the Christian Church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers'.¹¹⁵ It did not state explicitly how grace is conferred, perhaps because this was a point of contention between Lutherans and Calvinists. Calvin had initially agreed with Luther that baptism was based on the assumed faith of the child but, after 1536, he became more aligned with Zwingli's view that children of believing parents share in the salvation promised by the covenant. Both Lutherans and Catholics attacked Calvin's doctrine on the grounds that it negated the importance of original sin, accusing him of Pelagianism.¹¹⁶ The *Heidelberg Catechism* included Calvin's belief that baptism is a confirmation of God's promise of salvation, but did not develop this further. In this lack of precision, the *Heidelberg Catechism* was similar to the catechisms of Canisius and Osiander which were both hesitant about explaining how a child's baptism bestows grace on the infant.

In his *Large Catechism* (1563), Canisius taught that:

through baptism our sins are forgiven and the Holy Spirit [is] given and poured, so the old person is laid in the holy fountain and a new creature is born again in Christ. Then truly, as long as the baptism is well and correctly received, it brings us not only this use, that we are completely forgiven and removed from our sin, but also the baptised

¹¹⁴ Barbara Pitkin, "'The Heritage of the Lord': Children in the Theology of John Calvin", in Marcia J. Bunge (ed.), *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, 2001), pp. 160-193, p. 185.

¹¹⁵ 'Der tauff / als des Bunds zeichē / der Christlichen Kirchen eingeleibt / und von der ungläubigen kinder unterscheiden werden': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 50.

¹¹⁶ Wim Janse, 'The Sacraments', trans. Gerrit W. Sheeres, in Herman J. Selderhuis (ed.), *The Calvin Handbook* (Grand Rapids, 2009), pp. 344-355, p. 350.

are renewed and made entirely innocent, righteous, holy and worthy of heavenly glory in Christ.¹¹⁷

The benefits of baptism were made apparent in this answer, and it resonated with the definition of baptism in the *Tridentine Catechism*. However, the answer to Canisius' question on '[W]hat is required from us to have the benefit we receive through this sacrament?' was less clear. He exhorted his audience:

Every Christian should remember that he has been [transformed] from a child of wrath and the Devil's servant [into] a child of God and member of Christ ... Remember, now, how you have been asked [and in] the first [question] that you answered, you have repudiated the Devil and his works, the world and its impure character and its lusts; commit to memory what you spoke and promised, and do not forget your agreement.¹¹⁸

In this answer, Canisius did not explicitly engage with the question of how infant baptism conveys grace. Instead, he was inclined to emphasise the pact between the believer and God. In return for the benefit bestowed by baptism, the Christian must be thankful, and they must remember both their confession and their agreement to renounce the Devil.¹¹⁹ In this, there were similarities

¹¹⁷ 'Durch die Tauff uns die sünden vergeben / uñ der heilig Geist gegeben / und eingegossen wirt / auff das in dem heilsamen Brunnen / der alt mensch abgelegt / und ein neue Creatur in Christo widergeboren werde / Dann warlich so die Tauff wol und recht empfangē wirt / bringt sie uns nit allein diesen nuß / das uns unsere sünd volkommentlich verzigen und weckgenommē warden / sonder das auch der getaufft gar vernewert uñ ganz unsculdig / gerecht / heilig / und der Himmelischen glory wirdig in Christo gemacht wirt': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 147.

¹¹⁸ 'Daruñ gedenck ein jeder Christi / das er da auß einem Kind des zorns und des Teuffels knecht / ein kind Gottes und Christi glid und miterb ... Gedenck nun wie du gefragt bist worden / ersten was du geantwortet hast / du hast widersagt dem Teufel und seinen wercken / der welt und seinem unzuchtigen wesen / und wollusten / füre zu gedechtnuß was du geredt und verheissen / und vergiß nit deiner zusag': *ibid.*, p. 150.

¹¹⁹ Canisius believed that 'it demands from us a constant high gratitude in the heart that we praise, love and honour' God ('fordert es von uns ein state hohe danckbarkeit des herzens / das wir preisen / lieben und ehren': *ibid.*, p. 149.

with Osiander's catechism, which inferred that baptism is a pact made between the individual and God, for:

In God sins are surely forgiven, accordingly he will surely help him with his sin as a doctor helps a patient with his illness, but he must then assent and agree that he will act against sin with all his power and will suffer willingly all the suffering that God imposes on him ... such thoughts, and such an understanding, my dear children, should all those have, whom the receiving of benefits should benefit. Therefore, because you are all baptised, think also that you remain in such knowledge and intent, and confess to God that you are a poor sinner, let yourself be sorry, and beg him that He will remedy your sins. And you will not [return] again to evil and enjoy your sinfulness, and wilfully sin, but be pious and suffer gladly that suffering God sends to you. If you do that, baptism will be of more use to you and God will complete in you everything that he started within you in baptism.¹²⁰

This has two implications. Firstly, faith alone is not enough to receive the benefits of baptism. This is not too far removed from Luther's teachings that the Christian must turn towards and strive for good. Indeed, while Luther's *Large Catechism* (1535) declared that faith alone results in salvation, 'which

¹²⁰ 'Das im Gott die sund wol vergeben / darnach / das er im der sund auch woll abhelffen / wie ein arzt einem krancken seiner kranckhait abhilfft / dargegen mus er dann bewilligen und zusagē / das er der sunde mit all seinen krefftē widerstandt thun / und gern leydē woll affes das / das ihm Gott zu leyden aufflegt ... Solche gedancken / und ein solchen syn / meine liebe kindlein / müssen alle die haben / denen die empfangen tauff zu nuz kommen sol / Darumb weyl yhr alle getaufft seydt / so gedenckt auch / das yhr in slchem bekantnus und fürsaz bleybt / und bekennt Gott / das yhr arme sunder seydt / last eeuch dasselbig layd sein / unnd bitt ihn / das er euch der sunde woll abhelffen / Und werd nicht wider boß / das yhr euch die sund wol gefallen liest / und mutwilligklich sundiget / sonder seydt from / unnd leydet gern / was euch Gott zu leyden zu schickt / Dann wann ir das thut / so wirt euch die tauff nuz sein / und wirdt Gott alles an euch vollendedn / was er in der tauff mit uch angefangen hat': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 253; Spinks includes a modernized quotation from Cranmer's translation of Osiander's catechism to support the notion of a pact: *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, p. 16. Cranmer's original text reads 'And therefore he commeth to bapisme, and there seeketh for helpe and remedy, and desyreth God, first to forgyue him his synnes, and at length to delivuer him clerely from all synne, and perfectly to heale his soule from the sykenes of synne, as the physitian doth perfectly heale his patient from bodily diseases. And for his parte he promyseth to God againe, and solemnly boweth, that he wyll fight againste synne with all his strength and power, and that he wyl gladly beare the crosse, and all such afflictions, as it shal please God to lay upn him ... And of this minde must they all be, whiche shall haue any fruite by bapisme': Thomas Cranmer, *Catechismvs, that is to say a shorte instruction into Christian religion for the synguler commoditie and profyte of childre and yong people* (Gualterus Lynne: London, 1548), pp. 241-242.

otherwise no life, no work on earth, can attain', it taught further that 'if we would be Christians, we must practise the work through which we are Christians', in that we strive to 'suppress the old person and grow up in the new'.¹²¹ Similarly Osiander's catechism inferred that the benefits of the sacrament are not received without doing something in recognition of God's grace. However, while Luther in his catechisms emphasised the power of faith, explaining that 'you see clearly that there is no work done by us, but a treasure which He gives us, and which faith apprehends', Osiander taught that the benefits of baptism are only fully received if the individual confesses, repents, begs forgiveness and actively seeks to avoid sinning in the future.¹²² The difference is subtle: Osiander agreed that saving grace comes from God and that an individual 'cannot become pious by themselves', but he was far more specific than Luther on what an individual needs to do for these benefits to be realised.¹²³

Like Canisius, Osiander did not dwell on how infants receive faith through their parents, simply stating in passing that 'God has let you be brought to baptism by your parents'.¹²⁴ He agreed with Luther regarding the spiritual benefits that baptism confers, teaching that baptism is 'an inward transformation and renewal of [the] soul by the Holy Spirit and that a person gains an entirely new, good Christianity which, by nature, he has not had

¹²¹ 'Welchs sonst kein leben / kein werck auff erden erlangen kan'; 'denn wöllen wir Christen sein / so müssen wir das werck treiben / davon wir Christen sind'; 'den alten menschen dempffe und im newen erwachse': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 101, p. 105a.

¹²² 'Also sihestu klar / das da kein werck ist von uns gethan / sondern ein schaz den er uns gibt / und der glaube ergreiffet': *ibid.*, p. 100.

¹²³ 'Konnen von ihn selbs nicht from werden': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 252.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

before'.¹²⁵ Yet, he placed more onus on the believer's faith and connected actions, explaining that 'if you believe in Christ and listen well to his word, it is certain that you have received the Holy Spirit through baptism'.¹²⁶ Indeed, faith itself can be seen as a work as Luther himself had taught in his 1520 treatise *On Good Works*. In this, Luther taught that 'the first and highest, the most precious of all good works is faith in Christ'.¹²⁷ Luther believed that good works, such as fasting, did not contribute to salvation, but they revealed instead that God had already moved the believing Christian to do good.¹²⁸ Here he argued that the highest good work was faith, and the works of a true believer are an act of obedience: the introduction to *On Good Works* explained that those 'who want to know and do good works, they may do nothing other than know God's commandments'.¹²⁹ In the section on the Decalogue in his *Large Catechism*, Luther explained 'that [the Decalogue] is God's commandment, who demands of you how you have heard, learned, and honoured His Word'.¹³⁰ However, this exhortation to hear was not repeated in Luther's catechetical discussion of baptism.

Moreover, in opposition to Erasmus' defence of free will, Luther argued in his 1525 work *On the Bondage of the Will* that faith is a gift from God, and it is not

¹²⁵ 'Dz ist / ein inwändige verēderung uñ vernewerūg des gemuts / durch dē heyligen gaist / also / dz ein mensch / ein ganz newē guten Christlichē syn gewinne / den er vor von natur nit gehabt hat': *ibid.*, p. 248.

¹²⁶ 'Dañ wañ ihr an Christum glaubt / und sein wort gern hort / so ist es gewiß / das ihr durch die tauff den heyligen Gaist habt empfangen': *ibid.*, p. 257.

¹²⁷ 'Das erste und hochste, aller edelst gut werck ist der glaube in Christū': Martin Luther, *Von den guten Wercken* (Melchoir Lotter: 1520, Wittenberg), p. aiii.

¹²⁸ Noble, *Lucas Cranach the Elder*, p. 35.

¹²⁹ 'Wer gute werck wissen und thun wil / der darff nichts anders dā gottes gebet wissen': Luther, *Von den guten Wercken*, p. aiii.

¹³⁰ 'Das Gottes gepot ist / der es fodder wird / wie du sein wort gehort / gelernet / und geehret habst': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 25.

the result of an individual's free will.¹³¹ In his catechism, Luther continued to teach that faith was not the work of the individual. He taught 'who believes and is baptised will be saved. That is, faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water'.¹³² Luther reasserted that 'our work, of course, does nothing for salvation, but Baptism is not ours but God's work'.¹³³ In contrast, Osiander indicated that a person must 'listen well to his Word' to be sure baptism has been received fruitfully, suggesting that a person actively has to do something to be certain of their salvation. In focusing on obedience to the command to listen to God's word, Osiander echoed Luther's earlier teachings.¹³⁴ Osiander did not advocate a Catholic understanding of righteousness, whereby works such as fasting or pilgrimages contribute to salvation. However, his emphasis on the need for people to 'listen well' – an active process – reinforced the power pastors had in helping people to achieve salvation, and is a reference to Osiander's fight to retain ecclesiastical authority in Nuremberg. The connection between the action of obeying God's command to hear the words as spoken by the pastors, and the knowledge that baptism was received fruitfully served to buttress Osiander's argument for clerical authority. This case was made far more overtly in his chapter on the keys, but glimmers of his theological and political understanding of the role of pastor can be seen in his treatment of baptism. Moreover, this simple phrase can be linked to the Anabaptist

¹³¹ Martin Luther, 'Die servo arbitro' (1525), *WA*, vol 18, pp. 551-787, p. 675.

¹³² 'Wer da gleubt und getaufft wird / der wird selig / der glaube machet die person allein wirdig / das heilsame Gottliche wasser nützlich zu empfachen': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 99a.

¹³³ 'Ja / unsere werck thun fretlich nichts zur seligkeit / die Tauffe aber ist nicht unser / sondern Gottes werck': *ibid.*, p. 99a.

¹³⁴ In his treatise *On Good Works*, Luther taught that we are 'to serve God by praying, to hear preaching...' ('Gottes dienst uben mit beten / predig horen...'): *Von den guten Wercken*, p. ri.

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understanding of faith which, they asserted, came from 'hearing the Word of God'.¹³⁵ Given his later dissent, this can be seen as another early indicator of his evolving theological unorthodoxy.

Original Sin

According to medieval Christian thought, original sin is an inherited trait that stems from Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. As a result of original sin, the human condition is one of unrighteousness and is deserving of eternal punishment. However, medieval theologians agreed that baptism frees the individual from this punishment through an act of divine grace. Yet, while the relationship between the individual and God is altered through baptism, the desire to sin – concupiscence – remains, and this explains why people are inclined to do evil after baptism.¹³⁶

Both Catholics and Lutherans recognised baptism as altering the individual's relationship with God. Indeed, this is one of the reasons that infant baptism was emphasised so emphatically: in an age of tragically high infant mortality rates, it was vital that a newborn child be reconciled with God as soon as possible in case they should die. Yet, there were key differences between Catholic understandings of baptismal change regarding sin and the human condition, and Luther's – and, later, Calvin's – understandings. While Catholics believed that baptism made the individual righteous before God,

¹³⁵ Clasen, *Anabaptism*, p. 96.

¹³⁶ Christopher Ocker, 'Explaining Evil and Grace' in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 23-46, pp. 25-26. See also, Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (third edition) (Oxford, 2017), p. 402.

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Luther argued that original sin creates a fatal weakness in the human condition that prevents people from being or becoming righteous. Instead, baptism is a public testament to God's promise to free the individual from sin. For Luther, concupiscence is original sin: baptism has not washed this away. His *Large Catechism* taught that baptism is 'the death of the old Adam, after which is the resurrection of the new person', and 'a Christian life is nothing more than a daily Baptism, once begun and always to continue'.¹³⁷ In effect, baptism does not remove original sin from the individual, but it is a new birth that can be repeated daily.¹³⁸ Luther developed this idea early in his career: his sermon on the Immaculate Conception in 1514 equated concupiscence with original sin, and his 1519 sermon on baptism explained:

the thing it signifies, the spiritual birth and the increase of grace and righteousness, though it begins in baptism, lasts until death, indeed, until the Last Day. Only then will that be accomplished which the raising out of baptism signifies.¹³⁹

The *Large Catechism* taught that the power of baptism prevents the 'old man' from growing ever more evil, 'unchecked in his nature'.¹⁴⁰ Baptism provides a daily rebirth, although Luther cautioned his readers that 'we must not pour

¹³⁷ 'Nichts anders ist / denn die tödtung des alten Adame / darnach die aufferstehung des newes menschen'; 'ein Christlich leben nichts anders ist / denn eine tegliche Tauffe / ain mal angefangen und inder darin gegangen': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), pp. 103a-104.

¹³⁸ Jonathan Trigg, 'Luther on Baptism and Penance', in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and Lubomír Batka (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 310-321, p. 315. For more on Luther's thought, see Lubomír Batka, 'Luther's Teachings on Sin and Evil', in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and Lubomír Batka (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 233-253,

¹³⁹ Martin Luther, 'Sermo in Die Conceptionis Mariae', *WA*, vol. 1, pp. 106-107, p. 107; 'Aber die bedeutung / die geystlich geburt / die mehrung der gnaden uñ gerechtigkeit / hebt woll an / yn der tauff / weret aber auch / biß / yn den tod / ya biß an iumgstē tag / da wirt aller erst volbracht / das die tauff hebung bedeut': Martin Luther, *Eyn Sermon von dem heyligen hochwirdigen Sacrament der Tauffe* (Wittenberg: Joannē Grunenbergh, 1519), pp. a2a-a3. *WA* vol. 2, pp. 727-738, p. 728.

¹⁴⁰ 'Der alte mensch'; 'inn seiner natur unauffgehalten': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 104a.

water on ourselves again'.¹⁴¹ The power of baptism is on-going and 'a Christian life is nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever to be continued'.¹⁴² The sins of the old Adam decrease daily, and 'the longer we live the more gentle, patient, meek, and distant from miserliness, hatred, envy, pride we become'.¹⁴³ Calvin agreed with Luther that Christians struggle to overcome sin in their life. To him, baptism represented a regeneration of the individual, but a daily battle against the temptations and sins of the world remained and was complete only at death.¹⁴⁴ The *Heidelberg Catechism* taught that baptism represents a sign of God's promise to forgive sin. Baptism was a renewal of the soul that enabled the individual to become 'ever longer more dead to sin and to lead a holy and blameless life'.¹⁴⁵

This was a significant departure from Catholic thought, and the Council of Trent rejected Luther's views categorically. Regarding concupiscence, the Council declared that it inclines the individual to sin but is not sin in itself. The *Tridentine Catechism* explained that baptism

remits original sin and actual guilt, however unthinkable its enormity may seem ... To remove all further doubt on the subject, the Council of Trent [pronounces] anathema against those who should presume to think otherwise, or should dare to assert that although sin is forgiven in Baptism, it is not entirely removed or totally eradicated, but is cut away in such a manner as to leave its roots still fixed in the soul.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ 'Nicht anders ist / denn die Tauffe'; 'Aber mitwasser darff man uns nicht mehr begissen': *ibid.*, p. 104a.

¹⁴² 'Ein Christlich leben nicht anders ist / denn eine tegliche Tauffe / ein mal angefangen und iñner darin gegangen': *ibid.*, pp. 103a-104.

¹⁴³ 'Das wir je lenger je milder / sanfftmütiger werden / dem geiz / hass / neid / hoffart je mehr abbrechen': *ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁴⁴ David C. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (second edition) (Oxford, 2010), pp. 114-115.

¹⁴⁵ 'Je lenger je mehr der sünden absterben / uñ in einem Gottseligen / unstreflichen leben wandeln': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁶ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 183.

This was a clear denunciation of Luther's views on concupiscence. Canisius echoed this view in his *Large Catechism* (1563), teaching that 'the baptised are renewed and made entirely innocent, righteous, holy and worthy of heavenly glory in Christ ... concupiscence and desire do not harm us'.¹⁴⁷ The 1569 edition of the *Large Catechism* elaborated: 'concupiscence, evil desire and lust, which remains after baptism is not in itself sin'.¹⁴⁸

Canisius' *Small Catechism* was also clear on this question. In his answer regarding the meaning of baptism, Canisius taught that through baptism the individual's 'soul shall be cleansed, made holy, justified, reborn in Christ, accepted as God's child and added to the list of those who will inherit the heavenly life'.¹⁴⁹ Here, Canisius taught that the baptised person is made holy, not merely treated as holy, a clear affirmation of imparted righteousness, rather than imputed righteousness. Canisius' answer was brief and contained the necessary information needed to convey the importance of baptism. Similarly, Luther's *Small Catechism* also was fairly brief, explaining in four questions the purpose and benefits of baptism. Regarding sin, Luther taught that baptism 'signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts. And, against him, a new man comes forth and arises daily, who lives eternally before God in

¹⁴⁷ 'Der getaufft gar vernewert uñ ganz unschuldig / gerecht / heilig / und der Himmelschen glory wirdig in Christo gemacht wirt ... das uns jezo die Concupiscenz und begierd nit schadet': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), pp. 147-148.

¹⁴⁸ Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien Christlicher Lehr* (1569), p. 183.

¹⁴⁹ 'Seiner seel gewachsen / geheiligt / gerechtfertiget / in Christo widergeboren / zu Gottes kind angenommen / und zu einem erben des himlischen lebens eingeschriben': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 102.

righteousness and purity'.¹⁵⁰ This answer conveyed Luther's understanding that penance is a daily return to baptism, but did not clarify in detail his belief regarding concupiscence. Moreover, Luther did not emphasise here the imputed nature of righteousness, although it is evident that he saw post-baptismal life as a daily struggle against sin. Canisius' questions on baptism did not refer to the struggles against sin after baptism, but he did make this clear in his following chapter on Christian righteousness, in which he explained that the individual must 'flee' from sin throughout their life. In describing how the individual can avoid sin, Canisius taught 'on his own he can not, but a Christian can do it through the almighty grace of Christ his Lord and with the assistance of the Holy Ghost'.¹⁵¹ Further, in this same chapter, Canisius clarified his position regarding original sin, teaching that 'such sin will be forgiven of each and every person through the Sacrament of Baptism in [the] power and merit of Christ'.¹⁵² It is evident that Canisius was teaching an orthodox Catholic position on both sin and baptism. However, both he and Luther taught their audiences in a clear and simple manner, avoiding detail and overt animosity towards Catholic or Lutheran doctrine. Unlike other tracts, these *Small Catechisms*, directed towards a general audience that included children and uneducated adults, taught the basics of the confession and did not draw unnecessary attention to questioned areas of doctrine.

¹⁵⁰ 'Es bedeut / das der alte Adam y nuns durch tegeliche rew uñ busse sol erseufft werden / uñ sterben mit allen sünden uñ bosen lüsten. Und widerumb teglich era us komen und aufferstehen / ein newer mensch / der ynn gerechtigkeit uñ reinigkeit für Gott ewiglich lebe': Luther, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1529), p. 29.

¹⁵¹ 'Auß ihm selbs kan er ja solchs nit / ein Christenmensch aber kan es durch die allmechtige genad Christi seines herren / unnd auß beystand des heiligen Geistes': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 114.

¹⁵² 'Solche sünd aber wirdt durch das Sacrament des Tauffs / inn krafft unnd verdienst Christi / allen unnd jeden menschen vergeben': *ibid.*, p. 115.

Osiander's views on sin and justification diverged from those of Luther.

Osiander was accused by fellow reformers of having Catholic elements in his understanding of sin and justification. Matthias Flacius charged Osiander with minimising the importance of 'original sin, which still remains in us', an accusation that draws some limited support from Osiander's discussion of baptism.¹⁵³ As discussed above, Osiander taught that baptism brings about an inward transformation of the individual's nature. This implies that the transformation that occurs through baptism results in a change in the human condition. While Luther believed original sin remained after baptism, and that it caused a fatal weakness in the human condition, this was not echoed in Osiander's catechism. Rather, Osiander explained:

For as Adam has sinned and is become corrupt by sin, he can no longer be pious and righteous by himself, also all his children are born sinners and cannot become pious by themselves, but are inclined to evil all the time ... But, because we are baptised and born anew through baptism, so is our sin forgiven and the Holy Spirit is poured into us, which makes us pious again.¹⁵⁴

This was slightly closer to Luther's understanding of sin, but it also resonated with Canisius' teaching that the Holy Spirit is poured into the individual and makes them holy. Moreover, Osiander affirmed that through baptism the individual 'becomes free from sin ... we are born new in baptism and wholly

¹⁵³ Luka Ilić, *Theologian of Sin and Grace: The Process of Radicalization in the Theology of Matthias Flacius Illyricus* (Göttingen, 2014), p. 112.

¹⁵⁴ 'Dañ wie der Adam gesundigt hat / unnd durch die sund verderbt wordist ist / das er von ihm selbs nicht mehr from und gerecht werden kont / also sein auch seine kinder aller sunder geporn / unnd können von ihn selbs nicht from werden / sonder sein zun bosen genaigt zu aller zeit ... Diweil wir aber getaufft sein / und durch die tauff new geporn / so ist uns die sund vergeben / und der heylig Gaist eingegossen / der uns wider from macht': *ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

changed', a marked difference to Luther's teaching.¹⁵⁵ While Osiander did not mention concupiscence here, he indicated that becoming pious is a continuing transformation that is complete only at death: 'through suffering and death [God] takes away and obliterates' sin.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Luther explained that baptism bestows grace on the individual, a 'power to suppress the old man, so that the new may come forth and become strong'.¹⁵⁷ Osiander taught in his catechism that baptism makes the individual 'free of the force of sin and helps him that he fights against sin and he can resist'.¹⁵⁸ 'Resist' implies a human action, and it was important that Osiander suggest human actions had an impact on salvation, however negligible, because in his teachings on penance, confession – a human action – played a vital role in achieving forgiveness. The next chapter will discuss this in greater detail, but if Osiander had transposed Luther's catechetical teachings directly into his own catechism, his overarching aim of strengthening the role of the pastor in the process of forgiveness would have been undermined: the importance of private confession would have been weakened, and this was something Osiander sought to protect in his sermon on the keys. In fact, Osiander's language was closer to Luther's 1519 sermon on baptism, which declared:

you pledge yourself that you stay in [baptism], and always more and more slay your sin, as long as you live, this God accepts and tries you life long with many good works and various sufferings ... As long as this your pledge to God stands, God gives you his grace, and promises

¹⁵⁵ 'Das er von der sund ledig wird ... wir in der tauff new geporn und ganz verendert werden': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 256.

¹⁵⁶ 'Aber durch leyden und sterben nimpt er sie hinweg / unnd tilget sie aus': *ibid.*, p. 253.

¹⁵⁷ 'Krafft / den allten menschen zu unterdrücken / das der newe erfür komē un̄ starck werde': Luther, *Deusch Catechismus* (1535), p. 104a.

¹⁵⁸ 'Macht yhn frey von dem sunden gewalt / und hilfft im / das er wider die sund straiten / unnd ihr widerstandt thun kan': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 257.

you that he will not hold against you the sins that are in your nature after baptism, he will neither regard them nor damn you for them.¹⁵⁹

This suggests that an individual needs to fight actively against sin even after baptism, although Luther explained that the ability to battle sin comes from the Holy Spirit, which is poured into the believer in baptism.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, Luther taught that post-baptismal sins will not be held against the individual by God. Osiander's catechism repeats this to a certain degree, explaining that the pouring of the Holy Spirit in baptism 'makes [the individual] free from the force of sin'.¹⁶¹ He explained also that through baptism, the individual's 'frailty is covered with the righteousness of Christ'.¹⁶² Osiander, however, taught that the Holy Spirit 'helps' the individual to fight against sin: the Holy Spirit contributes to the renewal of the human condition. Thus, while Osiander promoted the core aspects of Luther's doctrine on original sin, the language was altered in order to prepare his audience for his teachings on the keys, in which he promoted regular confession as a means to achieve forgiveness.

In terms of theology, it has been suggested here that the catechisms did not engage deeply with those issues that were disputed between Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics. On the other hand, collectively they denounced the teachings of the Anabaptists and other sects. Yet, theology is only one aspect

¹⁵⁹ 'Vorpindest du dich, alzo zu bleiben und immer mehr unnd mehr zu todteen dein sund, die weil du lebest, biß in den todt, zo nimpt dasselb got auch auff, und ubet dich dein lebelang mit vilenn guten wercken und mancherlei leiden ... Die weil nu solch dein vopinden mit got steet, thut dir Gott wider die gnad, unnd vopindet sich dir, er wolle dir die sund nit zurechnen, die nach der Tauffe inn deiner natur sein, will sie nit ansehen noch dich drumb vordammen ...': WA, vol. 2, pp. 730-731.

¹⁶⁰ 'Geust dir ein sein gnad und heiligen geist, der ansahet die natur und sund zu todten...': *ibid.*, p. 730.

¹⁶¹ 'Macht yhn frey von der sunden gewalt': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 257.

¹⁶² 'Sein geprechlichait / mit der gerechtigkeit Christi zugedeckt': *ibid.*, p. 258.

of the sacrament. The remainder of this chapter examines how the catechisms sought to direct the experience of baptism and the richness of its associated rituals.

Ritual

Mark Tranvik has suggested that the importance of baptism was less in the Middle Ages than it had been in the early Church: by Luther's time, though it was still accorded a degree of respect, it had been overtaken in importance by penance and communion.¹⁶³ Halvorson has challenged this view, instead arguing that the vivid and rich detail passed down from the Middle Ages suggests that baptism was a rite full of vitality and surrounded by deeply entrenched local customs.¹⁶⁴ From its very early years, baptism was intended to be a theatrical spectacle aimed at encouraging pagans to convert to Christianity. By the sixth century, the dramatic ceremony began to be toned down because the increasing Christianization of Europe meant less focus needed to be placed on converting pagans.¹⁶⁵ Even so, the sacrament remained highly ritualised on the eve of the Reformation, with an ordinary service usually including a number of dramatic elements. The *Rituale Romanum* (1487) provided a detailed order of service for baptisms, which was intended to standardise the rite in the Christian West. The service began with the priest meeting the baptismal party at the church door where he asked the

¹⁶³ Mark D. Tranvik, 'Luther on Baptism', *Lutheran Quarterly* 13 (1999), pp. 75-90, p. 76. Wengert has labeled baptism 'a relatively neglected sacrament in late-medieval theology' in *Martin Luther's Catechisms*, p. 100.

¹⁶⁴ Halvorson, 'Theology, Ritual, and Confessionalization', p. 51.

¹⁶⁵ Old, *Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite*, p. 3.

infant questions which, as the child could neither understand nor speak, were answered by the godparents. This was followed by the child being breathed on and having the sign of the cross traced on their forehead and breast. After this, there were prayers, the giving of salt, and obligatory exorcisms before the child was eventually carried into the church. The infant was then placed on the floor and more prayers and the Creed were intoned over them, after which they were carried to the font where the *Effeta* and renunciation took place, along with the anointing of the breast and back. After all this, finally the child was baptised, either by having water sprinkled over them, or by being dipped fully in the basin up to three times.¹⁶⁶ The child was then handed to the godparents and anointed with chrism before receiving the sign of the cross on their forehead. Lastly, the child could be wrapped in a white christening gown or given a white cloth to be worn on the forehead.¹⁶⁷ Clearly, the medieval baptismal rite was highly ritualised and its dramatic exorcisms, deliberate placement of infants outside the church door to reflect the liminality of their spiritual location outside the body of the faithful, the procession into the main body of the church, the chrism and signs of the cross, all combined to make baptism a communal, visible and highly recognisable sacrament.

One of the most theatrical features of the early sixteenth-century baptism rite was the exorcism of the devil and demonic spirits. Two types of exorcism were recognised by early modern Christians: 'major exorcisms' that were performed on the physically possessed, and 'simple baptisms' that were

¹⁶⁶ Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 113-114.

¹⁶⁷ Halvorson, 'Theology, Ritual and Confessionalization', pp. 48-49.

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included in baptismal services and were designed to combat original sin.¹⁶⁸

Both types were performed regularly in the late-medieval German Church, with salt and water frequently being exorcised in most churches every Sunday after Mass to expel various evil spirits, including the devil, fallen angels, the spirits of the damned, and the souls of the unburied.¹⁶⁹ The exorcism of baptismal candidates became part of the rite in the third century and served to emphasise the presence of original sin in mankind.¹⁷⁰ They were introduced initially because early Christians believed pagan Gods were actually demons and, as a consequence, converts had to be baptised to free them from the taint of evil upon entering the Catholic faith.¹⁷¹ As the spread of Christianity gained momentum, and while the faith was still perceived as unorthodox in Rome, exorcisms were used during the lengthy preparation for initiation 'to protect the community against Roman society and its evils'.¹⁷²

By the Middle Ages, exorcisms were a common feature of baptism services, although scholastic theologians maintained that baptism did not need exorcisms to be valid; for instance, Thomas Aquinas taught that exorcisms were a part of the ritual, but were not necessary to it.¹⁷³ Peter Lombard classed exorcisms as a sacramental which should precede baptism 'not that

¹⁶⁸ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven, 2013), p. 81.

¹⁶⁹ Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion', pp. 66-67.

¹⁷⁰ Halvorson, 'Theology, Ritual and Confessionalization', p. 43. Justin Martyr did not mention exorcism in his description of the baptism service in the second century: Old, *Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite*, p. 15.

¹⁷¹ Old, *Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite*, p. 15.

¹⁷² Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 29.

¹⁷³ Old, *Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite*, p. 15; 'Praeterea, majus est baptizare quam alia sacramentalia baptismi perficere: sicut catechizare et exorcizare et aquam baptismalem benedicere': Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, James J. Cunningham O.P. (ed.) (Cambridge, 2006), vol. 57, p. 60.

there cannot be true baptism without them', but so that 'the power of the devil may be diminished'.¹⁷⁴ Despite the views of scholastic theologians, exorcisms contributed to a broader spectrum of para-liturgical practices and sacramentals that made the medieval Church so vibrant. The exact origin of sacramentals is unclear, although Scribner has suggested that they may have developed as a response to popular demand.¹⁷⁵ They differed from the sacraments because they did not work *ex opere operato* as the sacraments did, but their efficacy instead depended on the disposition of those using them. Nevertheless, Scribner suggests that there was an assumption that sacramentals worked in the same way as the sacraments, with theologians themselves not being fully sure either way.¹⁷⁶

Research on the use of exorcisms has tended to be situated within the broader context of witchcraft and demonology.¹⁷⁷ Stenzig's study has looked at how exorcism, along with the persecution of witches, was employed as a means to discipline people, as well as to serve as a test of confessional allegiance.¹⁷⁸ He does not focus on the theology that underpinned such practices, but instead looks at trial records and handbooks to determine the rationality behind the witchcraft trials. Lyndal Roper's research on exorcisms has led her to suggest that in the second half of the sixteenth century,

¹⁷⁴ Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum* (Oxford, 2014), p. 274. Quotation taken from I. Brady, *Magistri Petri Lombardi Parisiensis Episcopi Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* (Grottaferrata, 1981), p. 276: 'non quod sine istis non possit esse verus baptismus', 'ut diaboli potestas in eo muniatur'.

¹⁷⁵ Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion', pp. 65-70.

¹⁷⁶ The Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine, said they 'probably' worked in the same way, *ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁷⁷ See Francis Young, *A History of Exorcisms in Catholic Christianity* (Switzerland, 2016), especially chapters three and four. For later exorcisms see H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment: Johann Joseph Gassner and the Demons of Eighteenth-century Germany* (Yale, 2005).

¹⁷⁸ Philipp Stenzig, *Die Schule des Teufels: Der Exorzismus in den Glaubenskämpfen der Reformationszeit* (Frankfurt, 2006).

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Catholic priests, including Canisius, used exorcisms to demonstrate both their own personal authority as priests and the truth of Catholic doctrine.¹⁷⁹ Roper's study is social in focus and, although it does point out the basic theological differences between Catholic and Protestant understandings and use of exorcisms, its purpose is not to analyse liturgy, theology or ritual in any depth but, instead, to place the discussion of exorcisms within a broader analysis of witchcraft and sorcery.¹⁸⁰ Brian Levack's work on possession and exorcism in the early-modern Christian west aims to "make sense" of the pathological behaviour that demoniacs displayed in both Catholic and Protestant communities' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁸¹ His study focuses on the 'major exorcisms' that were performed on a physically possessed person or object, rather than on the 'simple exorcisms' performed before a baptism on a 'spiritually possessed' person.¹⁸² More relevant to this study, Bodo Nischan's investigation of the role of exorcism in Lutheran and Reformed baptisms has highlighted that the use, or not, of exorcisms had become a confessional marker by the second half of the sixteenth century. He further commented that, even though the laity did not necessarily understand the theological subtleties between Lutheran and Calvinism, they could tell the difference between the liturgies, based on variations in language and ritual.¹⁸³ More recently, Anna French's study on the changing role of baptism in

¹⁷⁹ Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Religion and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion, 1500-1700* (London, 1994), pp. 172-173.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, discusses exorcism in chapter eight, pp. 172-180.

¹⁸¹ Levack, *The Devil Within*, pp. vii-viii.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁸³ Bodo Nischan, 'The Exorcism Controversy and Baptism in the Late Reformation', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987), pp. 31-52, p. 34. Nischan comments that a Saxon superintendent complained that some ministers 'have omitted exorcism entirely; others were changing the words of the rite as they saw fit; and some were publicly condemning and criticizing it from the pulpit': *ibid.*, p. 34.

Reformation England has considered how the removal of exorcisms from baptism ceremonies altered perceptions of what baptism meant and effected.¹⁸⁴ She concludes that, despite their omission from English services, the relationship between baptism and original sin remained problematic.¹⁸⁵ In Germany, despite reformers' efforts to remove exorcisms, the comfort drawn by parishioners from exorcisms and the visible, physical casting out of the devil from infants vulnerably occupying a liminal position remained largely undiminished. Indeed, Karant-Nunn has suggested that popular pressure led to the reintroduction of exorcisms in Württemberg.¹⁸⁶ It will be argued here that the catechisms' lack of textual direction regarding exorcisms permitted the continuation of traditional practices, such as exorcism, and enabled local cultures to develop individual religious identities, whilst still conforming to their broader confession.

The performance of exorcisms in baptism became a source of contention between Protestant factions in the sixteenth century, with Lutherans tending to view exorcisms as *adiaphora* while Reformed Protestants viewed them as superstitious and a papal relic.¹⁸⁷ With their intrinsic connection to the devil, the human body and soul, and the efficacy of Mary's intervention on behalf of the victim, exorcisms were challenged by the emerging Protestant theology on a number of levels. Luther's theological development can be seen in the gradual reduction of exorcisms permitted in his baptismal rite. In 1523, his

¹⁸⁴ Anna French, 'Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings', in Jonathan Willis (ed.), *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England* (Abingdon, 2015), pp. 157-172, p. 159.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁸⁶ Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, p. 59.

¹⁸⁷ Nischan, 'The Exorcism Controversy', p. 33. See also Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, pp. 21-22.

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Taufbüchlein retained a number of exorcisms, but it omitted the exorcism of salt.¹⁸⁸ By 1526, in response to criticisms made by Zwingli and Karlstadt, he further reduced their number to one.¹⁸⁹ Despite this, Luther still maintained that exorcism remained a core component of baptism since the sacrament was about being saved from the clutches of the devil.¹⁹⁰ However, reducing the number of exorcisms led to questions over whether baptism did, or did not, help to deliver a child from evil.¹⁹¹ Calvin's theological justification of baptism lay in the concept of a covenant (*Bund*) with God which, by its nature, precluded the use of exorcisms and other rituals in the baptism service.¹⁹² For him and his followers, exorcism 'falsely testifies against God's eternal covenant of grace which includes also the unborn fruit of Christian parents'.¹⁹³ They held that the notion of unbaptized babies being possessed by the devil only caused the parent unnecessary anguish should a child be stillborn.¹⁹⁴ Nischan has explained that for Calvinists, an exorcism was purely 'monkish hocus pocus' and implied an *ex opere operato* view of baptism, detracting from the focus on God's grace and power. Furthermore, exorcisms had no biblical foundation and could not even be regarded as *adiaphora* because it had blasphemous implications.¹⁹⁵ Despite the theological arguments, exorcisms were demanded and expected by the laity nonetheless. Nischan related an incident that occurred in Wittenberg in the 1590s whereby a butcher threatened to 'split the minister's head' if an exorcism was not

¹⁸⁸ Martin Luther, *Das Tauffbüchleyn* (Matthes Maler: Erfurt, 1523), pp. 19-23.

¹⁸⁹ Martin Luther, *Das tauffbüchlein auff's new zu gericht* (Nickel Schirlentz: Wittemberg, 1526), p. 15.

¹⁹⁰ Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, pp. 9-14.

¹⁹¹ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁹² Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, p. 63.

¹⁹³ Nischan, 'The Exorcism Controversy', p. 49.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

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performed during his daughter's baptism.¹⁹⁶ Some Lutheran theologians, such as Tilemann Heshusius and Polycarp Leyser, insisted that exorcisms be retained purely because their Reformed opponents wanted their removal.¹⁹⁷ Jakob Coler (1537-1612) also maintained that baptismal exorcism was needed at a time when 'the dreadful sect of the sacramentarians ... was expanding as rapidly and wildly as a malignant cancer'.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the topic of exorcism encompassed far more than theology, touching on popular culture, emotions, meaning, and identity with and to a given confession. Though the exorcism controversy has been seen to have reached its height in the second half of the sixteenth century, the initial stirrings can be detected much earlier on.

The medieval Church had stressed the urgency in expelling evil spirits from a newborn child, insisting that without exorcism, the infant risked eternal damnation should they die. So vital was it that a child be reconciled with God and removed from the taint of the devil and original sin that midwives were permitted, and encouraged, to perform emergency baptisms if a child was likely to die soon after birth.¹⁹⁹ In the case of a stillbirth, midwives were instructed to revive the child so that it could be baptised and enter the kingdom of heaven. Baptismal exorcism was fundamentally different to those exorcisms carried out on possessed individuals post-baptism in that the

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁷ Euan Cameron, 'Angels, Demons and Everything in Between: Spiritual Beings in Early Modern Europe', in Clare Copeland and Johannes Machielsen (eds.), *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 17-52, p. 42.

¹⁹⁸ Bodo Nischan, 'Lutheran Confessionalization, Preaching, and the Devil', in Bodo Nischan (ed.), *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot, 1999), chapter seven, pp.1-20, p. 19.

¹⁹⁹ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, pp. 102-103.

former delivered a child from original sin. The intrinsic connection between sin, the devil and damnation meant that for much of early modern society, exorcisms in baptism were crucial. Seemingly, the onset of the Reformation did not allay these fears. Indeed, Nischan has noted that, not only did the obsession with the devil intensify because of a 'prolonged educational campaign by the intellectual and popular elites', but also because of a new form of cautionary book – the Devil book (*Teufelsbücher*) – which appeared in the 1560s and 1570s.²⁰⁰ These books aimed to show that 'devils in great numbers are present constantly and everywhere, but also that all their endeavours ... are solely aimed at doing as much harm to man as possible'.²⁰¹ They were popular in Lutheran lands, with almost a quarter of a million in circulation in the second half of the sixteenth century.²⁰² Luther himself had contributed to this growing pre-occupation with the satanic and he, along with other theologians, connected the devil and possession with sin: to be possessed was a punishment.²⁰³

However, in Catholic areas, this inbred fear of the devil's power was less pronounced, although by no means not unrecognised. In Bavaria, this was, in part, down to the policies of local rulers. Albrecht V, for instance, banned the word 'devil' (*Teufel*) from appearing in pamphlet titles because 'such tracts only served to enlarge Satan's dominions'.²⁰⁴ Nischan has suggested that for

²⁰⁰ Nischan, 'Lutheran Confessionalization', pp. 2-3.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3. For a broader discussion of this genre see Keith L. Roos, *The Devil in 16th Century German Literature: The Teufelsbücher* (Bern, 1972).

²⁰² Nischan 'Lutheran Confessionalization', pp. 2-6. See also H.C. Erik Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People', in Darren Oldridge (ed.), *The Witchcraft Reader* (second edition) (Abingdon, 2008), pp. 211-222, p. 212.

²⁰³ Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People', p. 217.

²⁰⁴ Nischan, 'Lutheran Confessionalization', p. 16.

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Catholic Bavaria, rituals such as pilgrimages fostered a sense of confessional solidarity while, for Lutherans, this cohesion was achieved through a fear of and obsession with the devil.²⁰⁵ This widespread and deep-seated fear, along with Luther's insistence that exorcism was needed to save a child from the taint of the devil, meant that it was necessary to provide detailed guidance on how to protect an infant's soul: a concern that was all the more pressing in light of the attempted removal of the protection offered by exorcisms. Luther's obsession with the devil can be seen to be reflected in the numerous exorcisms carried out during the sixteenth century that either occurred in Luther's Wittenberg, or were handled by Wittenberg trained pastors.²⁰⁶

Nischan has noted that cases of demonic possession were fewer in Reformed territories than in Lutheran lands.²⁰⁷ In spite of this, there still remained the need to provide the comfort the removal of exorcisms had taken away. Elector Frederick III's church order included a prayer following the exhortation on the necessity and benefits of baptism, and preceding the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the actual baptism. The prayer was an adaptation of Luther's Flood Prayer (*Sindflutgebet*), which had been incorporated into his 1523 *Taufbüchlein*. The prayer reminded the congregation of the great flood which killed the wicked Pharaoh and his people 'yet, [you] led your people [of] Israel dry foot through [the Red Sea] to safety.'²⁰⁸ The Flood Prayer focused on the

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁰⁶ Timothy J. Wengert and Philip D.W. Krey, 'A June 1546 Exorcism in Wittenberg as a Pastoral Act', *Archive for Reformation History* 98 (2007), pp. 71-83, pp. 79-80.

²⁰⁷ Nischan, 'Lutheran Confessionalization', p. 16.

²⁰⁸ The text of the Flood Prayer given in the church order is: 'Allmechtiger ewiger Gott / der du hast durch die Sündfluß nach deinem strengen vrtheil die ungläubige uñ unbußfertige welt gestrafft und den glaubigen Noe selb acht auß deiner grossen barmherzigkeit erhalten / uñ den verstocken Pharao mit allem seinem volck im rote Meer etrencket / dein volck Israel aber

redeeming nature of water in relation to the Great Flood, by which God had punished 'the unbelieving and impenitent world and preserved the believer ...'²⁰⁹ Hill has commented that the Flood Prayer strengthened the association of baptism with the cleansing of sin.²¹⁰ The exact sources Luther used in its composition are unknown, but its points have been seen to proclaim 'that new birth came through the direct relationship between the God of groundless mercy and the person addressed', and the baptisand would either follow the example of Noah in trusting in and accepting God and being saved, or that of Pharaoh, who turned away from God and died.²¹¹

The inclusion of this prayer in Elector Frederick III's church order for the Palatinate is interesting on two levels. Firstly, it serves to corroborate the hypothesis that Frederick tried to reach out to the Lutherans in his lands. Calvinist doctrine was maintained in the baptism service with the discussion of the covenant established by God, while an amended Lutheran prayer was included. Secondly, and crucial to this chapter, is that the Flood Prayer appeared at the place in the service where the exorcisms would normally have taken place. Halvorson has noted that Luther's amendment to the exorcisms in his baptismal order had turned them into a form of prayer, with

truckens fuß hindurch gefuhrt / durch welches dieser Tauff bedeutet ward / Wir bitten dich durch deine grundlose barmherzigkeit du wollest diß dein kind / * gnediglich ansehē uñ durch deinē heiligen geist / deinem Son Jesu Christo einleben / daß es mit im seinē todt vergraben werde / mit im auch aufferstehe in einem newen leben / in dem es sein Creuz ime taglich nach folgende frolich trage / im anhang mit warem glaubē / steiffer hoffnung / und innbrünstiger liebe / das er dises lebem / das doch nichts anderst ist / denn ein tod / umb deinet willen getrost verlassen moge / und am jüngsten tag für den Richterstul Christi deines Sohns unerschrocken erscheinen / durch denselben unsern Herrn Jesum Christum deinē Son / der mit dir und dem heiligen Geist ein einiger Gott / lebt und regiert in ewigkeit / Amen':

Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 6.

²⁰⁹ 'Die ungläubige und unbußfertige welt gestrafft ...': *ibid.*, p. 6.

²¹⁰ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 110.

²¹¹ Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition*, pp. 12-13.

the second exorcism even ending with 'Amen'.²¹² Perhaps, then, the Flood Prayer was intended to be used in place of the exorcisms in the Palatinate, and was designed to provide the consolation of exorcism needed by the parishioners. Nischan has noted that the Palatinate, amongst other Lutheran states, did not employ Luther's other exorcism prayers.²¹³ Rather, in order to provide comfort and consolation to parishioners, a revised version of Luther's Flood Prayer was included in Palatinate services.

The version of the Flood Prayer in the *Heidelberg Church Order* was different to Luther's original, with the Heidelberg version placing more emphasis on the theme of comfort.²¹⁴ This version taught that one 'may leave this life, that is nothing but a death, according to [God's] will, and appear on Judgement Day unafraid before the seat of Judgement' as long as one has 'true faith, firm hope and fervent love'.²¹⁵ This was not an unusual feature of Frederick's church order; its section on ministering to the dying, for instance, instructed

²¹² Halvorson, 'Theology, Ritual, and Confessionalization', pp. 88-89.

²¹³ Nischan, 'Exorcism Controversy', pp. 162-163.

²¹⁴ Luther's original flood prayer was included in his 1523 baptism booklet: 'Almechtiger ewiger Gott der du hast durch die syndtflutt / nach deynen gestrengen gericht / die unglewbige welt verdampft / uñ den gelubigen Moe selb acht / nach deyner grosszenn barmherzigkeyt / erhalten. Unnd denn verstockten Pharao mit allen seynenn im Rotten Meer ersewfft / unnd deynn volck Israell truckenn durch hyn gefuret / da mit dys bad deyner heyligenn tauffe zukunfftiff bezeychnet / unnd durch die tauffe deins lieben kinds unsers herren Jhesu Christi den Jordan und alle wasser zur seligen sindflut und reychlicher abwaschung der sunden geheyliget uñ eingesezt. Wyr bitten durch die selbe beine grundtloße bermherzigkeyt / du woltest dyeßen. N. gnediglich ansehen / uñ mit rechten glauben im geyst beseligen / das durch diese heilsame sintflut / am ym erlauffe und untergehe / alles was yhm vonn Adam an geporn ist / unnd er selb datzu gethan hat. Und era us der ungleubigenn tzall gesundert / in der heyligen Arra der Christenheyt trucken unnd sicher behaltenn / alltzeyt brunstig im geyst frolic ynn hoffnung / deinē namen diene / auff das er mit allen glewbigen diener verheyssung ewigs lebens zu erlangenn / wirdig werde / durch Jhesum Christum unsern hern / Amen': Martin Luther, *Das tauffbuchleyn verdeutscht durch Mart. Luther* (Matthes Maler: Erfurt, 1523), pp. 15-18.

²¹⁵ 'Er dises lebem / das doch nichts anderst ist / denn ein tod / umb deinēt willen getrost verlassen moge / und am jüngsten tag für den Richterstul Christi deines Sohns unerschrocken erscheinen'; 'warem glaubē / steiffer hoffnung / und die innbrünstiger liebe': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 6a.

pastors to 'have compassion on all, and with faithfulness and diligence console the hearts of the afflicted'.²¹⁶ There was a symmetry between the beginning and end of life in the church order: the Flood Prayer expressed hope that the child being baptised will 'happily carry his cross in the days following, with, in addition, true faith, firm hope and fervent love', while the ministry to the dying frequently sought to remind the individual that God 'has purified our hearts through faith'.²¹⁷ Both Luther's original and the version appearing in the Heidelberg church order specifically connected the Flood Prayer to baptism and the deliberate turning away from evil by the individual. Thus, the Flood Prayer, in revised format, potentially served a trifold purpose: firstly it offered a concession to the laity's attachment to the comfort usually found in Lutheran exorcisms; secondly, it mirrored the evolution of these exorcisms into prayers; and thirdly, it served gently to teach further aspects of the Reformed doctrine of justification. The catechism did not offer the same degree of comfort and reassurance that can be seen in the church order. Ideally, for both Lutherans and Calvinists, faith alone should be enough and no further consolation should be required whilst, in practice, this confidence was beyond the reach of many people and the practical application of the faith had to provide the consolation needed by parishioners.

In Catholicism, exorcisms and other sacramentals continued to remain a feature of baptisms in the sixteenth century. Given the centrality of

²¹⁶ 'So sollen auch die diener Gottes mit allem mitleiden / trew und fleiß die betrübten herzen trosten': *ibid.*, p. 75.

²¹⁷ 'Sein Creuz ime taglich nachfolgende frolich trage / im anhang mit warem glaubē / steiffer hoffnung / und die innbrünstiger liebe'; '[Gott] hat ihre herzen gereiniget durch den glauben': *ibid.*, p. 6, p. 76.

sacramentals in the Catholic faith, the Catholic catechisms would be expected to be very different to the Protestant texts in terms of advocating their use. Certainly, the Council of Trent encouraged the continued use of exorcisms in the Catholic liturgy, with its catechism having an entire section devoted to the 'Ceremonies of Baptism', which explained that the point of the exorcism was to 'expel the devil, to weaken and crush his power'.²¹⁸ Soergel has argued that exorcisms were used in Bavaria to 'convince people not only of the omnipotence of the devil, but also of their particular confession's ability to combat Satan', and were proof of Catholicism's power to defend the church against devilish attack.²¹⁹ However, despite the use of exorcisms in the Church for over 1300 years, Canisius did not refer to them directly at any point in his catechisms. He did, however, refer to sacramentals as 'external ceremonies' in his *Small Catechism* (1574), and explained that such rituals both 'instruct and remind [us] of the ... divine secrets' found in the sacraments and provide a means of encouraging 'common peace'.²²⁰ Yet, no further instruction was provided. Indeed, in the 1558 edition of the *Small Catechism*, the question on ceremonies was not included at all. Canisius did not necessarily need to refer to exorcisms and chrism by name in the questions on baptism because they were already an established component of the corpus of sacramentals that had been used for centuries. Trent, in defending the use and efficacy of sacramentals against Protestant attacks, had to provide further information. The Jesuit was not against performing exorcisms,

²¹⁸ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 194.

²¹⁹ Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints*, pp. 144-145.

²²⁰ 'Erstlich gebraucht man solche ceremonien zu anweisung unnd erinnerung der Geistlichen ding und der Gotlichen gehaimnussen / so bey den Sacramenten zufindern ... durch dise Ceremonien ... gefurdert ... gemainer frid': Canisius, *Der Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 101.

nor did he doubt the powerful effects they wrought, as evidenced by the exorcisms he personally carried out, most notably the public exorcism of Anna von Bernhausen in 1570 which, according to reports, Canisius publically performed in Augsburg Cathedral as a 'vindication of Catholicism'.²²¹ Given that the Jesuit clearly believed in the power of exorcism and used it to defend his Church, why did he not include it in the catechisms? Canisius' involvement in exorcisms drew criticism from within the ranks of the Jesuits: Loyola did not participate in any and his successor, Laynez, did not trust them.²²² However, Canisius' activities did not raise any eyebrows until the mid-1560s, when the Superior General, Francisco de Borja, discouraged Canisius' involvement in exorcisms, stating that the 'procedure does not fit what we do'.²²³ The *Large Catechism* was published well before this, which makes redundant any attempt to suggest that he omitted exorcisms from the catechisms as a way to appease his fellow Catholics. What, then, can explain its absence?

A number of possible explanations can be offered. Firstly, the omission of exorcisms from Canisius' catechisms may have been a way of preventing people carrying out their own exorcisms on children or, indeed, anyone else. Yet, mentioning that an exorcism should be performed is not the same as giving detailed instructions on how it ought to be enacted. Moreover, including detailed instructions on exorcisms within its catechism did not perturb the Council of Trent: it reaffirmed their status as a core part of the baptismal rite

²²¹ Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints*, p. 123.

²²² Lyndal Roper, 'Magic and the Theology of the Body: Exorcism in Sixteenth-Century Augsburg', in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *Demonology, Religion and Witchcraft: New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, vol. I (London, 2001), pp. 304-334, p. 307.

²²³ Simone Laqua-O'Donnell, 'Family Matters: Peter Canisius as Confessor and Spiritual Guide in Early Modern Augsburg. A Case Study', *Jesuit Journal* 2 (2015), pp. 606-623, p. 615.

and, as such, exorcisms were likely to be retained in Catholic services across Europe.²²⁴ Surely Canisius would want to ensure they were performed correctly, at least in the *Large Catechism* which had a clerical audience, and this was an even more pressing issue once it became apparent that his own catechisms were preferred by the Germans to that of Trent. A second theory is that Canisius was attempting to avoid antagonising the Protestants. Again, this suggestion presents issues. Lutherans, as Nischan has explained, were not against exorcisms: they simply did not view them as a necessary part of the baptism rite. In fact, in the later decades of the sixteenth century, 'the rite of exorcism became practically a mark of confession for the Lutherans'.²²⁵ Given that the Peace of Augsburg (1555) recognized Catholicism and Lutheranism, which both accepted exorcism, there was no reason that Canisius should not have included exorcisms in his catechisms. Roper has pointed out that exorcism was a difficult topic for Catholics because they did not have a standardised theology regarding the relationship between the body, the soul and demons.²²⁶ She further comments that 'both Canisius' precise attitude to exorcism, and his theory of demonic possession, are difficult to reconstruct'.²²⁷ Taken together, these points can be seen to indicate that Canisius avoided discussing exorcism in his catechisms, despite baptismal exorcism's fundamental difference to other exorcisms, because there was no set doctrine to impart and he did not have a solid theory of his own.

²²⁴ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 194.

²²⁵ Nischan, 'The Exorcism Controversy', p. 34.

²²⁶ Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, p. 175.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Yet, it can be suggested that the most likely reason for the absence of catechetical instruction on exorcism was more political than theological.

Exorcisms were contentious – doctrinally and practically – and Canisius was aware of the political and social dangers of being perceived as overly prescriptive. Leaving out exorcisms offered a solution that allowed local areas to proceed as they saw fit. Moreover, Duke Albrecht wanted to reduce the number of references to the devil and, given that exorcisms were centred on the deliverance of the infant from his clutches, not mentioning them in the catechisms can be seen to have been a reflection of Albrecht's broader policy. It is examples such as this which makes it so difficult to view catechisms as shapers of religious identities: in this case, Canisius was influenced by local political concerns which might not necessarily have been concerns that were shared by Catholics in different areas of the Empire or beyond.

Exorcisms were but one of many rituals that together formed the ritual of the baptism service. The following explores how the catechisms and associated church orders approached the wider topic of ceremonial rituals. It will be argued that, where there was a significant degree of contention, the documents remained silent. Whilst catechisms were not necessarily the place to instruct on specific liturgical details, this does not automatically prevent them from mentioning rituals, either to condemn or to condone them. This analysis begins with a comparison of Osiander and Luther's catechisms, before discussing those of Trent and Canisius.

Osiander's catechism sought to reassure parishioners of the benefits of baptism it explained why the sacrament is necessary, and what it signifies in the life of the baptised. However, the text itself did not offer any explanation or guidance regarding the performance of the ceremony. This was similar to Luther's approach, but the reason for it was different. Osiander was at pains to distinguish the special role played by pastors in comparison to the laity in church services. With this in mind, it is plausible that his lack of detail on the ritualistic aspects of the baptismal service was deliberate: this was knowledge to which only the pastor needed to be privy. Even the woodcut used to mark the start of the baptism sermon depicted a biblical scene of baptism, rather than a contemporary baptism, as was found in some editions of Luther's catechisms [figs. 2 (p. 162) and 4].



Figure 4: Luther, *Enchiridion* (1537), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München.

Osiander's image reinforced the special authority of pastors who alone dispensed this ancient sacrament by reminding readers of Jesus' own baptism by John, but without indicating any contemporary practices to be

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observed. For the laity, passive acceptance of the service was sufficient as long as they understood the merits and necessity of baptism. The *Brandenburg-Nuremberg Church Order*, however, reminded the pastor that '[the use of] salt and oil is not founded in God's word, but is inharmonious with it in many ways'; however, it included an exorcism: the pastor was instructed to say '[G]o out you unclean spirit and give space to the Holy Spirit' and then 'he makes the [sign of the] cross on the forehead and breast'.²²⁸ This exorcism was in accordance with Luther's Order of Baptism; in fact, much of Nuremberg's baptism rite followed the format of Luther's service, albeit being slightly expanded in places, for instance, there was an added section on the role of godparents in a child's life.²²⁹ The Nuremberg city magistrates had sent a copy of the draft of Osiander's church order to Luther in Wittenberg, which he had approved in August 1532.²³⁰

Luther rejected the use of a key medieval sacramental: the chrism, a mixture of oil and water. It was not until 1528 that Luther omitted the use of chrism from his baptism rite, arguing that 'the true chrism itself is the Holy Spirit'.²³¹ Kat Hill has attributed this adherence to the chrism to the parishioners' need for something to draw comfort from in the absence of the elaborate rituals

²²⁸ 'Salz und Oel geweyhet warden in Gottes wort nicht gegründet / sunder demselbē in vil weg ungemēß': *Kirchen Ordnūg / In meiner gnedigen herrn der Marggrauen zu Brandenburg / und eins Erberen Rats der Stat Nürnberg Oberkeyt un̄ gepieten / Wie man sich bayde mit der Leer und Ceremonien halten solle* [hereafter, *Kirchen Ordnūg*] (Nürnberg: Jobst Gutknecht, 1533), p. ciiii; 'Far auß du unrayner gayst und gib raum dem heyligen gayst. Darnach mach er ime ein Creütz an die stirn vnd brust': *ibid.*, p. CXVIa.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. CXXa-CXXI.

²³⁰ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 131; AOGA, vol. 5., pp. 38-40.

²³¹ 'Von dem chrisma oder kresem sol man sich nicht zanken. Denn der rechte chresem, selbs, ist der heilig geist': E. Sehling (ed.), *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* vol. 1: *Sachsen und Thüringen nebst angrenzenden Gebieten*, 1. Halbband. *Die Ordnungen Luthers, Die Ernestinischen und Albertinischen Gebiete* (Leipzig, 1902), p. 158.

they had been used to seeing in Catholic ceremonies.²³² This reflects Luther's awareness that to remove all ritual would potentially alienate support from his new doctrines.²³³ Indeed, he wrote at the end of his 1523 German translation of the baptismal rite that external rituals were maintained so that 'the weak ... do not complain that I want to employ a new baptism'.²³⁴ As well as associating chrism with the Holy Spirit, Luther removed many of the 'visibly purifying elements' of the Catholic service.²³⁵ These changes are apparent in his *Taufbüchlein*, but less so in the catechisms. Equally, for other Protestants, the use of chrism was deeply frowned upon: Calvin wrote '[H]ow much better would it be to omit from baptism all theatrical pomp, which dazzles the eyes of the simple and deadens their minds'.²³⁶ None of the Protestant catechisms analysed in this study, therefore, mentioned chrism in connection to baptism, and nor did the respective church orders. However, the 1529 edition of Osiander's baptism order still specified that the pastor 'anoint the believer on the crown with the Chrism of salvation'.²³⁷ This had been removed from Luther's 1526 edition of the *Taufbüchlein*, suggesting that Osiander preferred Luther's earlier liturgy, which, in some respects, represented continuity with medieval Catholic practices. Osiander wanted to maintain and emphasise the role of the clergy, and this was easier to achieve by drawing on Luther's earlier works.

²³² Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood and Belief*, p. 110.

²³³ Other examples of retaining traditional Catholic rituals can be seen in the practice of bell ringing during a funeral service. See Atherton, 'The Pursuit of Power', p. 47.

²³⁴ 'Aber die schwachen gewissen zu scheuwen / laß ichs fast so bleyben / das sie nicht klagen / ich wolle ein neue tauffe einsetzen': *Das Tauff-büchleyn verdeutscht durch Mart. Luther* (Wittenberg: Matthes Maler, 1523), pp. biii-biv.

²³⁵ Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 110.

²³⁶ Old, *Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite*, p. 261.

²³⁷ 'Salbe der diener den glaubigē auff der schaytel mit dem Chrisma des hayls': Andreas Osiander *Ordnüg wie man Tauffet / biszher im Latein gehalten / verteutscht. Hierynn ist / aus etlichen ursachen / was die andern / als uberflüssig / veracht haben / nicht außgelassen* (Nürnberg, 1529), p. 18.

It made sense for the Protestant catechisms to omit references to chrism in their catechisms but, for Catholics, the continued use of chrism and other sacramentals remained a feature of baptism services in the sixteenth century. Canisius can be seen to have responded to the changing religious climate and attacks on the sacramentals through his catechisms. As already mentioned, the 1558 edition of the *Small Catechism* did not include a question on the 'outward ceremonies and elegant traditions of the church in the sacraments', although later revised editions did.²³⁸ In these revised editions, Canisius explained that there are two reasons why such 'external ceremonies and elegant customs' (which he did not specify) should be retained in the baptismal rite: firstly, to emphasise the spiritual nature of the sacraments as well as their 'divine secret'.²³⁹ Secondly, these rituals 'and other outward [forms of] worship promote honest discipline and common peace. Which peace is otherwise ... often troublesome, severed and destroyed, since when one gratuitously changes and abandons the approved ceremonies and old Christian traditions that have mostly been maintained in steady succession in the church since the time of the Apostles'.²⁴⁰ Clearly, Canisius was responding to the factions within the Protestant faiths, which were becoming more apparent during the middle decades of the sixteenth century, and which were attacking traditional practices with more vigour. However, unlike the

²³⁸ 'Warumb gebraucht man bey den heiligen Sacramenten die eusserlichen Ceremonien und und zierliche gebrauch der Kirchen?': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus*, p. 100.

²³⁹ 'Eusserlichen Ceremonien und zierliche gebrauch'; 'der Gotlichen gehaimnussen': *ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

²⁴⁰ 'Zum andern / wird durch dise Ceremonien / gebrauch / und andern eusserlichen Gottes dienst / erhalten / und gefürdert ehrliche zucht und gmainer frid. Welcher frid sunst ohn das oftmals beschwerlich zertrennt unnd zerstort wird / da man freuenlich verendert uñ abthut die bewerte Ceremonien unnd alte Christliche gebrauch / so mehrers thails von der Apostel zeit her / in steter succeßion unnd halting inn der Kirchen gewesen': *ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

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Tridentine Catechism, Canisius did not dwell on these external rituals in his chapter on the sacraments and he did not refer to them at all in the questions specifically pertaining to baptism. However, the questions on the sacrament of confirmation in the *Large Catechism* (1563) explicitly mentioned ceremonial rituals, including chrism and the sign of the Cross, as did his question regarding the components that make a sacrament, placed in the general sacramental discussion at the start of the fourth chapter.²⁴¹

Overall, however, the Council of Trent's detailed exposition on the sacrament of baptism in its catechism is in stark contrast to the comparatively brief overview offered by Canisius in his catechisms. Canisius' *Large Catechism* of 1563 had four questions specifically on baptism, although it grouped confirmation in the same section, raising the number of questions to nine. The 1558 edition of the *Small Catechism* had a single question on baptism, which had been revised by 1563. The *Smaller Catechism* also had only one question on baptism. Despite this, the importance of baptism was emphasised in a woodcut marking the start of the chapter on sacraments in the 1596 edition of the *Smaller Catechism*.²⁴² This woodcut placed the image of baptism in the centre framed by smaller depictions of the other six sacraments. The effect of placing the image at the heart of the woodcut reinforced the vital role baptism played in the Catholic faith. Further, in the 1574 small catechism, Canisius taught that baptism was necessary for salvation, writing that it was a sacrament that 'without any exception, no

²⁴¹ Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 154, p. 132.

²⁴² Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus* (1596), p. 16.

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person [should miss]'.²⁴³ The *Smaller Catechism* taught that baptism is the 'first necessary sacrament', and the *Large Catechism* expounded on the benefits it bestowed, explaining that through baptism man is 'renewed and made entirely innocent, righteous, holy and worthy of heavenly glory in Christ'.²⁴⁴ It is clear that Canisius viewed baptism as occupying a central position in the Catholic sacraments, and so it is strange that the focus on baptism was so brief and largely void of ceremonial description, even in the *Large Catechism*.

In one sense, there was no need to discuss these sacramentals because there was already an established set of rituals detailed in the *Rituale Romanum*, which had been used in Western Europe since the twelfth century.²⁴⁵ Equally, various breviaries were used in Bavaria and wider Catholic Germany, which provided priests with information on how to conduct services.²⁴⁶ However, most, if not all, of these texts were in Latin. Given the widely recognised problems with priests and clergy not understanding Latin, the lack of German instruction must have been an issue that needed resolving. In a letter to Cardinal Morone, written in 1576, Canisius informed him that 'many [bishops] can barely speak Latin'.²⁴⁷ It is perhaps more likely that the real reason behind Canisius' reticence to prescribe specific rituals in his catechisms lay in his acknowledgement of Bavarian hostility towards

²⁴³ 'Der Tauffe zwar / ohn aller außnehmung der Personen': Canisius, *Der kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 112.

²⁴⁴ 'Die Taufe ist das erste nothwendigste Sakrament': Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus* (1596), p. 14; 'der getaufft gar vernewert uñ ganz unschuldig / gerecht / heilig / und der Himmelischen glory wirdig in Christo gemacht wirt': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 147.

²⁴⁵ Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 101.

²⁴⁶ The *Freising Breviary* was used at the Munich court in the sixteenth century.

²⁴⁷ 'Multi enim Latine loqui aegre possunt': *Beati*, vol. 7, p. 363.

Roman decrees. Strauss has outlined the religious policies of Dukes Wilhelm and Ludwig of Bavaria during the early years of the Reformation and it is clear that, though they were committed to Catholicism, they wanted a form of Catholicism that reflected their own political ambitions.²⁴⁸ They wanted to be free from constraints to both Rome and the Emperor; indeed, they helped to form the Schmalkaldic League in February 1531 purely to defend their rights as independent feudal lords, rather than having been motivated solely by religious reasons.²⁴⁹ Effectively, Canisius had four masters: the Pope, his Superior General, the Emperor and, whilst in Bavaria, the Duke. Each had conflicting demands but, equally, each had to approve Canisius' catechisms before publication. Thus, Canisius avoided areas that might be a cause for concern in his catechisms, one such issue being the rituals surrounding baptism. By not prescribing a specific formula for baptism, he was neither contradicting local customs nor condoning them, thereby neutralising the political ambitions and motivations of his various masters. He did offer more guidance on ritual in his questions on the sacrament of confirmation, but even this was relatively brief. Evaluating Canisius' catechisms in this light reveals a number of parallels with his Protestant counterparts. The *Heidelberg Catechism* was deliberately evasive, and Luther openly acknowledged the role of popular customs in practicing the evangelical faith, as well as recognised the authority of secular rulers in the application of doctrine. Where there was confessional contention, such as regarding the use of chrism, the

²⁴⁸ Gerald Strauss, 'The Religious Policies of Dukes Wilhelm and Ludwig of Bavaria in the First Decade of The Protestant Era', *Church History* 28 (1959), pp. 350-373.

²⁴⁹ The election of Ferdinand as Charles V's successor angered the Duke of Bavaria: T.A. Morris, *Europe and England in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1998), p. 215; William Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V* (Houndmills, 2002), p. 53.

Protestant catechisms did not mention it at all, while Canisius removed any reference to it from the questions on baptism, and only mentioned it briefly in the section on confirmation.

While the use of exorcisms and other rituals, such as making the sign of the cross and the use of chrism, was open to debate, the actual ablution was not such a contested issue in the sixteenth century. The early Church had permitted full immersion, pouring or sprinkling to be used in the baptism service.²⁵⁰ Despite a brief revival of full immersions, based on a misunderstanding of the Greek word for baptism, sprinkling had been the preferred mode of ablution since the fifteenth century.²⁵¹ Luther declared in his 1519 sermon on baptism that children should be 'sunk in the water and baptised', and Leo Judd's 1525 baptism order instructed the pastor to 'dip the child in the water'.²⁵² However, by 1526, even Anabaptists were ambivalent regarding full immersion, which can help explain why the catechisms were largely non-prescriptive; there was nothing about how the radicals practised ablution that needed a staunch defence.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Old, *Shaping of the Baptismal Rite*, pp. 270-272.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273, p. 266.

²⁵² 'Ynß wasser senckt und tauffe': Martin Luther, *Ein sermon von dem heiligen hochwirdigen Sacrament der Tauffe* (Wolfgang Stockel: Leipzig, 1520), p. aii; 'duncke es in das wasser': Leo Jud, *Ain Kurze und gemain form die schwachglaubigē / kinder zu tauffen. Auch andere ermanūgen zu got / so da gemaintlich geschehen in der Christenlichē versamlung* (Simprecht Ruff: Augusburg, 1524), p. bi.

²⁵³ Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, p. 234fn. Spinks has noted that in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Mennonite Brethren only practiced backward immersion: *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, p. 91.

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The 1530, 1531, 1535, 1537, 1538 and 1542 editions of both Luther's *Small* and *Large Catechisms* included woodcuts clearly depicting infant baptism.²⁵⁴

The 1531 and 1535 editions have exactly the same woodcut, created by Lucas Cranach, with the other images all being slightly different variations of the same. Both the 1542 editions, along with the 1537 edition, depicted the child being held face down over the font, while the other woodcuts show the child being held face up. Holding the child face down over the baptismal font was usual practice before the onset of the Reformation, and the priest would either immerse the baby three times, or pour water over its head and back three times.²⁵⁵ The three images in Luther's catechisms demonstrating this traditional positioning do not show which version of baptism was used in the service, although Luther himself preferred full immersion.²⁵⁶ Equally, the *Tridentine Catechism*, though shown to be very detailed and precise with its instructions in places, was more relaxed when outlining the physical administration of baptism, instructing that 'it is a matter of indifference whether the ablution be performed once or thrice ... The faithful, however, should follow the practice of the particular church to which they belong'.²⁵⁷ Calvin had expressed a similar attitude, teaching in his *Institutes* that 'whether the person being baptised should be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, whether he should only be sprinkled with poured water – these details are of

²⁵⁴ Another edition of Luther's catechism published in Augsburg in 1531 included many woodcuts, but not one for baptism: Martin Luther, *Deütsch Catechismus / Gemehret mit einer neuen / vnderricht vñ ermanung zû der Beycht* (Augsburg: Heinrich von Steiner, 1531).

²⁵⁵ Jourden Travis Moger, *Priestly Resistance to the Early Reformation in Germany* (Brookfield, 2014), p. 105.

²⁵⁶ Luther's sermon on baptism declared that 'it would be right, in accordance with the word Baptism, that the child or whoever is to be baptised, is sunk completely into the water and is baptised and is drawn out again' ('und were recht, das nach lautt des wortlein "tauffe" man das kind odder iglichen, der taufft wirt, ganz hinehm nuß wasser senckt und taufft und wider erauß zughe': *WA*, vol. 2, p. 727).

²⁵⁷ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 169.

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no importance, but ought to be optional according to the diversity of the countries'.²⁵⁸ The catechisms could afford to indulge local preferences over immersion because it was not an area of contention amongst either the mainstream faiths or the radical groups.

Godparents

The implicit acknowledgement of local traditions and preferences in the catechisms also spilled into the realm of popular culture when it became apparent that both Reformed and more radical understandings of the spiritual meaning of baptism precluded the use of godparents. The procurement of baptismal sponsors was a fiercely protected custom across early-modern Germany, and the numerous godparents, after-parties, and customary giving of gifts presented secular authorities with a swathe of problems that could impact on the maintenance of social order. Equally, ecclesiastical authorities had to contend with stubborn refusals to hold swift baptisms in favour of postponing them until a distant but socially impressive sponsor could arrive. Baptisms were not simply a way of ensuring a child was reconciled with God, but they functioned as a social occasion where the infant was accepted into the wider Christian family. Godparents represented this extended kinship, and it was very important to have suitable candidates on hand.²⁵⁹ Halvorson's study on court culture in late sixteenth-century Germany has highlighted the political aspects of baptism, using three different case studies to demonstrate

²⁵⁸ John T. McNeill (ed.), *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion Book IV* (Westminster, 1960), p. 1320.

²⁵⁹ C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society: The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528-1603* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 167.

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how the occasion was used to forge alliances and discuss state matters, show off wealth, as well as look towards future avenues of dynastic expansion.²⁶⁰

Whilst the lower orders did not necessarily have the same political considerations as their overlords, baptisms nevertheless were important social occasions, serving to forge stronger bonds of communal kinship.

Research on the role of godparenthood and spiritual kinship has been the focus of increasing attention, but much still remains to be done.²⁶¹ Alfani and Gourdon have suggested that the field has been overlooked because there was a long held view, now discredited, that spiritual kinship was becoming less important towards the end of the Middle Ages.²⁶² Jussen has further commented that studies on kinship have traditionally ignored the role of godparenthood and, when they have been included, their roles have not been analysed satisfactorily.²⁶³ Godparents first began appearing in baptisms between the second and fourth centuries, when the series of exercises known as the *Catechumenate* developed. In order for a person to be admitted into these exercises, they had to be sponsored by two guarantors who could confirm their suitability.²⁶⁴ By the early-modern period, godparents were a prominent feature in baptisms and, according to John Bossy, the role they

²⁶⁰ Halvorson, 'Baptismal Ritual and Court Culture', pp. 408-409.

²⁶¹ For an analysis of spiritual kinship in early medieval Europe see Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, 1986). For a later discussion see David Warren Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870* (Cambridge, 1998).

²⁶² Guido Alfani and Vincent Gourdon, 'Spiritual Kinship and Godparenthood: An Introduction', in Guido Alfani and Vincent Gourdon (eds.), *Spiritual Kinship in Europe 1500-1900* (Houndmills, 2012), pp. 1-43, p. 1.

²⁶³ Bernhard Jussen, *Spiritual Kinship as Social Practice: Godparenthood and Adoption in the Early Middle Ages*, trans. Pamela Selwyn (Newark, 2000), p. 20. He seeks to understand the practical value of godparenthood.

²⁶⁴ Alfani and Gourdon, 'Spiritual Kinship', p. 3.

played in the service was the most elaborate of all.²⁶⁵ Local noblemen, on occasion, acted as a godparent to many of the children in their villages and marked the occasion with a welcome monetary gift to the parents.²⁶⁶

Godparents bore a spiritual responsibility for their young charges and, in the late medieval period, they were expected to teach their godchildren the basics of the faith as contained in the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer.²⁶⁷

Theologically, godparents in the Calvinist faith were superfluous because of Calvin's understanding of a covenant with God. As a result, Calvin tried to remove godparents from the baptism rite, along with rejecting the associated notion of spiritual kinship. Rather than having godparents present at the font, Calvin instead encouraged parents to fulfil the role, a practice which had been forbidden since at least the Council of Mainz in 813.²⁶⁸ In Geneva, Calvin was met with such fierce resistance to his radical changes from the laity that he was forced to accept a number of compromises, including accepting godparents at baptism. Their role was much reduced, however, and they shared the task of presenting the child at the font with the parents.²⁶⁹ Equally, Zwingli had also rejected the role of godparents because his understanding of the covenant between God and mankind meant parents and their faith in the covenant were the crucial aspects. They presented their child and made a confession of faith on behalf of him/her, which was accepted by the Church.

²⁶⁵ John Bossy, 'Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries', *Studies in Church History* 10 (1973), pp. 129-143.

²⁶⁶ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, p. 63. People were so keen to receive this money that if the nobleman was away they would postpone baptisms until they returned.

²⁶⁷ Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629* (Oxford, 2006), p. 241.

²⁶⁸ Alfani and Gourdon, 'Spiritual Kinship', p. 11.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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However, as in Geneva, Zwingli was met with intense resistance and his church order was forced to retain godparents because of the strength of social pressure.²⁷⁰

Luther's main concern regarding godparents was the consequences such spiritual kinship brought in terms of matrimonial bans. For a couple to break the confines of this type of kinship, they needed to pay for a papal dispensation. The lack of scriptural references to godparents also worried him.²⁷¹ On the other hand, Luther did not want the institution of godparenthood to be abolished because he believed they had an important duty to teach their charges the true faith, particularly in the absence of parents or parental ability.²⁷² Alfani has explained that the number of godparents did not particularly concern Luther, especially once the concept of spiritual incest had been removed.²⁷³ Thus, the main Protestant faiths ultimately retained godparenthood and it was only the Anabaptists and other anti-sacramentarian groups that abolished it.²⁷⁴

The Council of Trent used the opportunity of the Reformation to revise and define its view of godparenthood in 1547, well before Canisius penned his first catechism. The role of godparents was an important responsibility. Yet, despite the agreement of Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics on the inclusion of godparents in the baptism service – albeit for differing theological reasons

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁷¹ Guido Alfani, *Fathers and Godfathers: Spiritual Kinship in Early-Modern Italy* (Burlington, 2009), p. 68.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

and with varying degrees of reluctance – only the *Tridentine Catechism* discussed their role. The other catechisms remained silent. Further, despite the permittance of godparents by Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics, their continued role was a cause for concern to secular authorities who were alarmed at the potential for social disorder caused by gatherings of large groups. Godparents and other friends and relatives would expect the host to hold a party after the baptism service, with these revelries sometimes lasting ‘three and four days’.²⁷⁵ Karant-Nunn has pointed out that secular authorities opposed the size of these parties because of the economic consequences of the feast, and made attempts both to limit their size and the amount of presents given to a child and/or their mother.²⁷⁶ However, though these were clearly ritualistic aspects of the service, Karant-Nunn claims that the authorities ‘failed to appreciate’ the strength of lay attachment to them, but that they recognised that they probably were unable to abolish them. She also points to the increasingly harsh punishments of the seventeenth century as evidence that popular customs, such as parties, were happening regardless of secular efforts to curtail them.²⁷⁷ However, the absence of any concrete guidance in the catechisms regarding sponsors – with the exception of the Tridentine codex – indicates that author and patron probably did appreciate the social requirement for baptism parties and the importance of having the ‘correct’ sponsors in attendance. Though police ordinances discussed punishments for such gatherings, the catechisms did not attempt to teach parishioners that such extravagances were frowned upon. Here, the

²⁷⁵ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, p. 64.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

catechisms were not overtly working in tandem with other tools of social control, including police and church orders. If catechisms were intended to act in this capacity, then surely they ought to have included some form of guidance, even if it was not necessarily their overriding purpose to dictate on social behaviour. Instead, by neither condemning nor condoning the practice, they were reducing the likelihood of lay alienation or resentment.

While avoiding ritual direction in the text, catechisms did include images, possibly of godparents, in their woodcuts. Luther's 1531 and 1535 editions of the *Large Catechism* depicted a child being presented by two figures – a male and a female – who may have been the child's sponsors or parents: it is unclear which. In the medieval period, it had been customary for a boy to have two godfathers and one godmother, while a girl would have two godmothers and one godfather.²⁷⁸ In the early-modern period, this custom continued, although it was not unusual for a child to have more or fewer than three godparents.²⁷⁹ Osiander's 1533 edition depicted the biblical baptism of Christ; therefore, no sponsors were shown. However, the 1534 Magdeburg edition showed three adults around the basin in which the person being baptised was standing. These may be there as a reminder of the ancient practice of baptism, where the adult catechumate was sponsored by two Christians of good standing. Or, a more radical reading of the woodcut could see it as indicative of a queue of people waiting to be baptised themselves. Having unspecified adults depicted in the woodcuts, even if not directly mentioning them in the text itself, suggests that visual images may have been

²⁷⁸ Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, 2003), p. 25.

²⁷⁹ Karant-Nunn, "Suffer the Little Children to Come unto Me, and Forbid them Not", p. 360.

an attempt both to respond to the concerns of secular authorities, as well as to appeal to the general audience. Theologically, there was no reason to have godparents in the Lutheran faith; therefore, they were not discussed in Luther's catechisms, but his woodcuts were less restrictive because he recognised their importance and likely wanted to influence popular practice. Godparents were not the focus of as much attention in the Catholic faith because, theologically, their status was assured. However, the *Tridentine Catechism* stipulated very clearly that:

the number of sponsors is limited by the Council of Trent to one godfather or one godmother, or at most, to a godfather and a godmother; because a number of teachers may confuse the order to discipline and instruction, and because it was necessary to prevent the multiplication of affinities which would impede a wider diffusion of society by means of a lawful marriage.²⁸⁰

It did not mention the secular concerns regarding godparents, but reinforced the prescriptive nature of the Council of Trent. Canisius, in contrast, did not attempt to interfere in popular practices regarding godparents, either textually or visually. How far these messages actually influenced the laity and clergy in practice is beyond the remit of this thesis, but their analysis serves to demonstrate their use as a visual tool employed by the catechists alongside the text within the catechisms.

²⁸⁰ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 176.

Conclusion

Through close textual analysis of the catechisms, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate how the treatment of baptism was deliberately engineered to address social concerns, as well as to unite the mainstream Christian faiths against challenges posed by radical sects. Those areas where there was fierce resistance from the Anabaptists and other fringe groups were staunchly defended, but other issues could be treated far more flexibly. This chapter has also raised a number of important questions regarding Osiander's Lutheranism, suggesting that his dissent began earlier than has traditionally been acknowledged. The centrality of baptism to the Christian faith was heavily promoted in each of the catechisms, and clear attempts to draw strength from those areas of agreement between and within Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism can be seen. This chapter has also sought to suggest that the avoidance of ritual in the catechisms permitted the continuation of local practices and traditions and, particularly with regards to exorcism, the consolation and comfort parishioners drew from the sacrament of baptism could be maintained. Yet, whilst the confessions could draw on common agreements regarding a practice where the sacramental status was not in doubt, how did the catechisms navigate the thorny issue of penance? This was a sacrament upheld by the Catholic Church, but officially stripped of its status by Lutherans and Calvinists. Given the obvious usage of penance for social control, consolation and instruction, the following chapter will consider the ways in which the catechists moulded their texts to appeal to secular concerns and allay popular fears.

Chapter Four: ‘What they bind on earth shall also be bound in heaven’: The Sacrament of Penance

Penance was one of the central pillars of medieval Catholicism, which combined devotional practice and atoning discipline with spiritual consolation. Unlike baptism, it could be – and was intended to be – repeated regularly and only a priest could administer it. The Reformation transformed the purpose, use and meaning of penance; moreover, although Luther initially retained its status, he ultimately rejected it as a sacrament.¹ However, penance continued to be seen by Lutherans and Calvinists as a way to control the outward excesses of society. Moreover, Catholics and Protestants alike sought to use its dual purposes of consolation and discipline to aid the personal development of one’s relationship with God. Both confessions encouraged an increased internalization of sin whilst maintaining and extending the disciplining aspect of penance.² Thus, despite the Protestants’ rejection of its sacramental status, addressing penance alongside the two retained sacraments of baptism and communion in this thesis is justified and warranted in order to appreciate the ways in which reformers attempted to reshape the outward practice of penance whilst retaining its traditional core principles. For Catholics, penance remained a central aspect of the faith, distinct from the other sacraments; moreover, although they responded to Protestant challenges, Catholic theologians also accepted the existence of

¹ In his 1520 treatise on the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther concluded that ‘the sacrament of penance ... lacks the visible sign and divine institution, and, as I said, is nothing else than a return to baptism’ (‘Nam poenitentiae sacramentum ... signo visibili et divinitus instituto caret et aliud non esse dixi quam viam ac reditum ad baptismum’): *WA* vol. 6, p. 572.

² Katharine Jackson Lualdi, ‘Introduction’, in Katharine Jackson Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer (eds.), *Penitence in the Age of the Reformations* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 1-9, pp. 4-8.

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abuses within the existing penitential system, and sought to clarify theological uncertainties.

This chapter will demonstrate that the different treatments of penance in the catechisms reveal locally-influenced expressions of faith, rather than a confessionally united approach to penance. A consequence of this approach forced catechists and secular authorities to accept a less stringent application of doctrine, both in theory and in practice. The following discussion will continue to raise doubts regarding the viability of using catechisms in support of the confessionalization paradigm and will stress, in particular, the negotiated approach to confession and forgiveness that can be discerned in the catechisms. In doing so, it will be suggested that catechisms are no more weathervanes that determine the process and direction of confessionalization than they are facilitators in the creation of non-location specific identities. Rather, they destabilised Church-wide efforts to impose uniformity and, ultimately, encouraged the formation of local faiths.

John Bossy's analysis of the social history of confession and Thomas Tentler's study of how sin and confession were viewed on the eve of the Reformation proved to be the catalyst for further research on how the medieval penitential processes helped to define future Catholic and Protestant doctrines.³ Tentler argued that 'the first function of ecclesiastical penance is discipline or social control' and more recent scholarship has recognised that

³ John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975), pp. 21-38; Thomas Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977).

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the treatment of sin infiltrated all aspects of the medieval Christian faith.⁴ However, this treatment was not consistent across the Christian West. Recognising this, Thomas Worcester, S.J. has highlighted differences between preaching techniques prevalent in the late medieval period to demonstrate the variations in emphasis and purpose from location to location.⁵ He discovered that while Savonarola, for instance, focused on impending damnation and ruin, Pelbart of Temesvar emphasised themes of hope and praise in his sermons on Mary.⁶ More specifically, Anne Thayer's 2004 study on penance argued that there is a correlation between the type of preaching that was practised in a given region and its religious adherence after the Reformation.⁷ She suggests that Protestantism tended to be favourably received in areas that had grown up in the rigorist tradition of Peter Lombard (1100-1160), who had stressed that forgiveness is granted by God in contrition.⁸ This type of preaching placed a huge burden on the shoulders of the penitent and, as was the case with the young Martin Luther, could evoke feelings of doubt over whether they had done enough to warrant forgiveness.⁹ At the other end of the spectrum, absolutionists promoted the notion that forgiveness comes through the absolution dispensed by the priest in confession. Absolutionists, such as the Italian Franciscan Roberto

⁴ Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, p. 13; See Jackson Lualdi, 'Introduction', p. 2.

⁵ Thomas Worcester SJ, 'Catholic Sermons', in Larissa Taylor (ed.), *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 3-34.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-9.

⁷ Anne T. Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation* (Aldershot, 2002). See also Berndt Hamm, 'Between Severity and Mercy. Three Models of Pre-Reformation Urban Reform Preaching: Savonarola – Staupitz – Geiler', in Robert J. Bast (ed.), *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety: Essays by Berndt Hamm* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 50-87.

⁸ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, p. 185.

⁹ Luther would have heard preachers urging listeners to have complete and utter sorrow for their sins and to demonstrate 'true' contrition: Ian Siggins, *Luther and His Mother* (Philadelphia, 1981), pp. 59-70.

Caracciolo (d. 1495), believed that confession was the most important aspect of the penitential process, and that the absolution granted by the priests was essential to forgiveness.¹⁰ The focus here was on forgiveness, rather than on the penitent's outward display of penance and degree of contrition for sins. This type of preaching, according to Thayer, was popular in areas that ultimately remained loyal to Catholicism in the sixteenth century, including France and Italy.¹¹ It is important to note that Thayer qualifies her findings by pointing out that 'preachers were more interested in motivating their listeners to engage in the penitential process than in promoting a particular school of thought'.¹² This agenda can be detected in Canisius' catechisms, which, as I will continue to argue, were shaped to appeal to popular sentiment rather than to impart an inflexible teaching of the Catholic faith.

Preaching is a recognised tool of confessionalization and Thayer's work lends support to the paradigm, despite that not being the primary purpose of her study.¹³ This chapter will extend her findings and challenge her marginal note that Catholicism tended to endure where there was strong central authority, while Protestantism flourished where there was not.¹⁴ Rather, it will be suggested here that the *strength* of the ruling body was less important than its ability to accommodate the confessional diversity of its subjects.

¹⁰ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, p. 134. Mirk and Barletta had twenty-one and nineteen editions published respectively between 1450 and 1520: Anne T. Thayer, 'Ramifications of Late Medieval Preaching: Varied Receptivity to the Protestant Reformation', in Larissa Taylor (ed.), *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 359-387, p. 362.

¹¹ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, p. 133.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹³ Thayer's intention was to analyse model sermon collections to discern the penitential messages of the late-medieval Church and the ways they were promoted: *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Indeed, while the catechisms certainly conditioned responses to confession and forgiveness, importantly they demonstrated also the significance of the compromised nature of the formulation and reception of religious instruction. Bavaria, for instance, has long been seen as the bastion of Counter-Reformation Catholicism but, instead of adopting the orthodox *Tridentine Catechism* as its flagship text in 1566, the Wittelsbach Dukes promoted Canisius' catechisms instead, which had a number of small, but vital, inconsistencies with that of Trent's catechism. Previous chapters have briefly commented on the independent religious policies of Dukes Albrecht and Wilhelm in Bavaria: whilst devout Catholics, they asserted their territorial independence by promoting a Catholic catechism that had been written in Germany, rather than in Italy. For instance, in 1569, Duke Albrecht's school ordinance for Bavaria decreed that children should be instructed in Canisius' *Small* and *Smaller* catechisms on Sundays and other holy days.¹⁵ Moreover, in 1571, Canisius wrote to Duke Albrecht encouraging him to adopt the revised form of his *Small Catechism* in Bavarian schools and, though this revised edition was more Tridentine in content than Canisius' earlier editions, inconsistencies between it and the *Tridentine Catechism* remained.¹⁶ As will be shown, these permitted a degree of interpretation and, regarding penance specifically, they can be seen as attempts to attract Catholics to the confessional, rather than teach with precision the doctrines of the Council of Trent. In contrast to the comparatively steady religious policy adopted in

¹⁵ Albrecht V, *Schul Ordnung der Fürstenthumb Obern unnd Nidern Bayerlands* (Adam Berg: München, 1569), p. 8.

¹⁶ Andrew L. Thomas, *A House Divided: Wittelsbach Confessional Court Cultures in the Holy Roman Empire, c.1550-1650* (Leiden, 2010), p. 114.

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Bavaria, the Palatinate experienced a tumultuous number of decades in the second half of the sixteenth century, and the various religious allegiances of its electors undermined the development of a strong centralised state. Yet, the Palatinate successfully developed into a Protestant state due to an alliance between religious leaders and the electors.¹⁷ This alliance successfully removed the vast majority of Catholics from the territory during the sixteenth century, but it meant that the electors had to accommodate a less stringent application of their personal faiths – Lutheran or Reformed – which can be detected in successive church orders. Thus, both Bavaria and the Palatinate allowed a degree of accommodation in their religious directives, and it is this negotiated approach to religious reform that explains why one state remained firmly Catholic and one became Protestant in the sixteenth century.¹⁸

Penance, like the other sacraments, was a fusion of theology and ritual. There is disagreement, however, on the significance of each of these components in imparting knowledge of the sacrament. Palmer Wandel has suggested that catechisms did not invite readers to ‘acquire knowledge’ of the sacraments through their reception. Rather, readers knew them through the words as taught in the catechisms, and this enabled them to be received worthily ‘by a Christian in possession of “true knowledge”’.¹⁹ She disagrees with W. David Myers, who has argued that the ritual of penance shaped the sacrament more

¹⁷ R. Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (New York, 1990), p. 26.

¹⁸ The Palatinate was re-Catholicised in the seventeenth century and this was successful partly because of the state’s gradual approach during the 1620s and willingness to tolerate local customs and practices: Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles*, pp. 313-315.

¹⁹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, pp. 274-275.

than 'the concerns of pastoral theology'.²⁰ In support of Palmer Wandel's argument, there is indeed very little in the way of ceremonial direction in the catechisms, particularly regarding penance, suggesting that words were more important than ritual. Yet, the textual discrepancies, emphases, and omissions in the catechisms raise questions regarding the quality and degree of knowledge conveyed to their users, as well as the significance of Protestant and Catholic identity in the penitential process. It will be argued here that, if Palmer Wandel is correct in suggesting that catechisms 'sought to teach the knowledge that constituted worthiness', then Canisius, for instance, can be seen to have transformed the practice of confession for the users of his *Small Catechism*.²¹ Part of Catholic identity in penance was the confession of all transgressions to a priest. Unlike his *Large Catechism*, Canisius' *Small Catechism* neither confirmed the quantity nor the quality of sins to be confessed in his questions on penance, which suggests two things. Firstly, 'worthiness' was conveyed by the words, but what actually comprised that 'worthiness' was shaped by the ordinary Catholic, and not the catechist or church council. Secondly, this being the case, then the knowledge conveyed by the catechisms surely cannot be deemed 'true', but is partial at best. The catechisms were too ambiguous to be representative of either a fixed confession or 'true knowledge'.

Furthermore, the knowledge conveyed by the catechisms was not impartial.

Mary Haemig's analysis of consolation and discipline in the catechisms of

²⁰ David Myers, *Poor, Sinning Folk: Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany* (Ithaca, 1996), p. 7.

²¹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 274.

Osiander and Cyriacus Spangenberg suggests that three aspects of Osiander's sermons on the keys directly relate to issues in Nuremberg. The emphasis on the necessity of having a properly ordained preacher reflected the discussions over the call of pastors; his comments on excommunication were a response to the on-going debate over clerical authority in the city; and his support for private confession represented his view that it is the only legitimate form of confession.²² Haemig suggests further that these local disputes influenced later Lutheran and Reformed catechisms, and draws particular attention to Osiander's preoccupation in his catechism with the pronouncement of absolution. She comments that anyone reading his catechism outside Nuremberg might have attached undue importance to the office of the one pronouncing absolution, which was not Luther's intention, although it may well have been Osiander's objective.²³ The impact of such unintended messages surely alters the concept of identity. Are catechisms representative of a general Protestant or Catholic identity? As far as penance is concerned, it is hard to see how they can be. The differing emphases, lack of ritual direction, non-uniformity of language and meaning, and noticeable inclination to local bias suggests that identity cannot easily be quantified or shaped by words. At best, catechisms tried to represent a territory-specific identity, but the personal experience of the sacraments could be neither captured nor directed by them.

This chapter will be separated into three main themes: confession, forgiveness, and the binding of sins. The traditional sacrament of penance

²² Haemig, 'Community, Consolation and Discipline', pp. 44-45.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

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combined these, albeit with variations in emphasis, but the sixteenth-century Reformation saw their separation into distinct aspects. Within these broader themes, analyses of theological and practical applications of the sacrament will be undertaken. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of how penance was broadly understood in Catholic and Protestant thought. This section will introduce the concept of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and will provide the necessary background to the following textual consideration of the catechisms. The second part of the chapter will address the matter of confession, both public and private. In particular, this section will draw attention to the different perceptions of how confession and forgiveness operated in the catechisms of Luther and Osiander. Moreover, it is in Osiander's chapter on the keys, especially, that fundamental division between him and Luther can be seen most clearly, and in which he was most overt in his defence of clerical authority. The third part of the chapter will focus on forgiveness and absolution, while the final section will concentrate on the binding of sins. It is on these final points that the conflict between secular rulers and the clergy can be detected most clearly in the catechisms.

Penance in Catholic and Protestant Thought

The sacrament of penance was the subject of much interest during the Middle Ages.²⁴ As Thayer's research has stressed, penitential theology was not

²⁴ For more on medieval penance, see Henry Charles Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1896); Tentler, *Sin and Confession*; Lawrence Duggan, 'Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984), pp. 153-175; Abigail Firey (ed.), *A New History of Penance* (Leiden, 2008).

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standardised across the Christian west, resulting in differing emphases on the component parts of penance: contrition, confession, absolution, and satisfaction. There was division also over the relative roles of divine and human agency regarding contrition and absolution.²⁵ Yet, irrespective of these diverging interpretations, it was accepted that Christ's death has paid the debt of original sin, and that the benefits of his sacrifice are realised by baptism. The purpose of sacramental penance was to pay the debt and endure the punishment for sins that occurred *after* baptism. Humans naturally are inclined to sin, but to not seek forgiveness could result in eternal damnation for mortal sins or painful suffering in purgatory for venial sins.²⁶ A crucial part of achieving forgiveness was the annual confession to the priest of all transgressions committed over the year, and the subsequent performance of an imposed penance, or satisfaction, to repay the debt accrued by the sin. This temporal punishment was permitted by virtue of the power of the keys, which, wielded by the priest, allowed the penitent to suffer the punishment for their transgressions here on earth, rather than to suffer it after death.²⁷ By the late Middle Ages, priests were encouraged to impose suitable penances that reflected the seriousness of the transgression committed, although, there was concern that the instructions provided in penitential handbooks were not being adhered to.²⁸ Moreover, physical penances tended to be fairly light because

²⁵ Ronald K. Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the German Reformation', in Mark J. Boda and Gordon T. Smith (eds.), *Repentance in Christian Theology* (Minnesota, 2006), pp. 189-210, p. 192. See also, John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 4-8.

²⁶ Ronald K. Rittgers, 'Embracing the "True Relic of Christ": Suffering Penance, and Private Confession in the Thought of Martin Luther', in A. Firey (ed.), *A New History of Penance* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 377-394, pp. 377-378.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

²⁸ Rob Meens, 'The Frequency and Nature of Early Modern Penance', in Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (eds.), *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages* (York, 1998), pp. 35-62, p. 37.

the Church believed the penitent would not perform anything too strenuous.²⁹

An extension to the repayment of debt for sin was the granting of indulgences, which were intended to reduce the temporal punishment for sin. Initially, they were granted to, or earned by, an individual for the reduction or remission of their own punishment. Yet, by the late fifteenth century, indulgences could be earned to aid those already suffering in purgatory.

In 1516, Erasmus published an edition of the New Testament in Greek, along with his own translation of the text into Latin. This work drew on that of the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457), who had compared the Latin translation of the New Testament with the *Graeca veritas* in order to remove errors from the Vulgate.³⁰ Erasmus' translation differed from the Latin Vulgate in several places, including a passage from Matthew 4:17 often taken as the biblical basis for penance, in which Jesus exhorts his followers: metanoiete! The vulgate had translated this verb as 'poenitentium agite'. The Vulgate interprets the verse to mean 'do penance', while Erasmus' 1516 New Testament translated it as 'you repent'. As Whitford notes, Erasmus' translation indicated that 'do penance' was not an appropriate interpretation, casting the Catholic system of indulgences into doubt.³¹ For Erasmus, repentance was a process of internal conversion, rather than the Catholic

²⁹ Rittgers, 'Embracing the "True Relic of Christ"', p. 378. Pilgrimages, fasting and processions were seen as additional penances.

³⁰ John Monfasani, 'Criticism of Biblical Humanists in Quattrocento Italy', in Erika Rummel (ed.), *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 15-38, p. 27.

³¹ David M. Whitford, *A Reformation Life: The European Reformation through the Eyes of Philipp of Hesse* (Santa Barbara, 2015), p. 29.

practice of performing outward penance.³² Luther was aware of Valla's earlier translation and this influenced his 1517 attack on indulgences. In his Ninety-Five Theses, Luther argued that indulgences were guilty not only of imparting false confidence, but also of promoting a lackadaisical approach to spirituality and true repentance.³³ He concluded that the Pope could only release sinners from man-made penalties, and could not relieve the divine punishment that a sinner endured after death.³⁴ By 1519, Luther had replaced the doctrine of satisfaction with that of justification. For him, the former placed too much emphasis on human agency and guilt, rather than on a personal relationship with God and the importance of faith. Luther's conclusions challenged the entire foundation on which the medieval sacrament of penance rested, and reduced significantly the soteriological role of the priest. Crucially for Luther, though, his objection to indulgences reinforced the lingering doubts over the certainty of Catholic forgiveness and highlighted the flaws in its doctrine of salvation.

Reformers accused the medieval Church of focusing on guilt rather than consolation, an accusation which has received a sympathetic hearing from scholars such as Ozment and, to a lesser degree, Tentler.³⁵ Yet, there is evidence to suggest that efforts were made to console those who were

³² Richard Viladesau, *The Triumph of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts from the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford, 2008), p. 113.

³³ Thesis One of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses stated: 'When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'Repent' [penitentiam agite], he called for the entire life of believers to be one of penitence.' (Dominus et magister noster Iesus Christus dicendo "Penitentiam agite &c." omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse voluit.): Martin Luther, 'Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum (1517)', *WA*, vol. 1, p. 233.

³⁴ Rittgers, 'Embracing the "True Relic of Christ"', pp. 381-382.

³⁵ Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven, 1975); Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, p. xiii.

worried they had not remembered all their sins, or felt that they had not performed enough penance. Medieval writers and preachers assured penitents that doing one's best, *facere quod in se est*, was enough to warrant forgiveness in the eyes of God. However, this led to fears over how an individual knew they had done their very best, and whether the priest's word on the matter really could be trusted. Oberman has suggested that Luther had broken from the medieval theological tradition regarding *facere quod in se est* as early as 1509-10 and, certainly, by 1515.³⁶ His Ninety-Five Theses rejected the medieval tradition, and Luther emphasised further the uncertain nature of Catholic forgiveness in his 1530 treatise on the keys. Depicting a conversation between himself and a Catholic priest, Luther drew attention to the doubt that remained over whether one was truly absolved from their sins if they adhered to the Catholic doctrine of salvation. He argued that for an individual to know they were absolved, they must know that they have done enough in the eyes of God, which is impossible since no one can claim to know God's mind:

For an uncertain pardon is no pardon, yes it is fraudulent (*triegerei*) and villainy (*büberei*). For it must be uncertain because the penitence upon which pardon hinges is mixed with any uncertainty. But who will say that his contrition is sufficient in the eyes of God? Ah, indeed! What contrition can be sufficient in his sight? ... [as long as there is uncertainty] so [the Pope's] followers must be uncertain [as to] whether they are freed or bound, or whether they are living and doing what is right or wrong, that is, they must be wavering in their faith; yes, vain unbelievers, unchristian, Turks and heathens. So one blind man leads another, and both fall in the pit.³⁷

³⁶ Heiko A. Oberman, 'Facientibus Quod in se est Deus non Denegat Gratiam: Robert Holcot O.P. and the Beginnings of Luther's Theology', in *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids, 1992), pp. 84-103, p. 97.

³⁷ 'Deñ ungewisser Ablas ist kein Ablas / ja es ist triegerey und bübery. Ungewiß muse s aber sein / weil die rew ungewiß ist / darauff er steet. Deñ wer wil sagen / das seine rew fur Gott gnugsam sey? Ja welche rew kan fur Gott gnugsam sein? ... so müssen seine unterthane

In Luther's eyes, therefore, the penitential system created unnecessary doubt and anxiety. Moreover, he believed that the traditional process elevated human contribution in achieving forgiveness, rather than seeing God as the origin and sole means of salvation.³⁸ At the same time, however, Luther recognised penance as a 'means of grace' and, as Calvinists were later to teach, he saw sin as a threat to both the individual and the community.³⁹ Thus, while penance could no longer be maintained as a sacrament, its disciplinary and consoling qualities were retained, albeit with a revised emphasis and form.

The disciplining aspect of penance was based on the doctrine of the keys of heaven. It was the control over these, as proclaimed by the Gospel, that allowed the Church to have assumed authority in spiritual and temporal affairs, and on which they based their prerogative to forgive and retain sins. There was not a uniform theology of the keys until the late medieval period, although Kevin Madigan has commented that Pope Gregory had understood the power of the keys to mean that temporal rulers were subordinate to the spiritual authorities.⁴⁰ As Rittgers notes, this led to discord between the spiritual and secular estates regarding temporal authority in the high and late Middle Ages.⁴¹ Pope John XXII (r. 1316-34), for instance, insisted that the

auch ungewiß seyn / ob sie loß oder gebunden sind / ob sie recht oder unrecht lebenn oder thun / das ist / sie müssen wanckel glauber / ya eitel ungläubige / unchristen / Türcken unnd Heyden seyn. Also füret ein blinder den andern / unnd fallen beide yn die gruben': Martin Luther, *Von den Schlüsseln* (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1530), pp. 28-32.

³⁸ Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the German Reformation', p. 194.

³⁹ Trigg, 'Luther on Baptism and Penance', p. 317.

⁴⁰ Kevin Madigan, *Medieval Christianity: A New History* (New Haven, 2015), p. 136.

⁴¹ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 30.

keys provided him with temporal authority, while Marsilius of Padua argued that the power of the keys extended to the spiritual realm only.⁴² The debate regarding the extent of spiritual authority was not resolved by the onset the Reformation, when Luther rejected the idea that the clergy had the authority to affect an individual's temporal standing (the large ban), and argued that they could only restrict access to communion (the small ban): the large ban could be implemented only by secular authorities.⁴³ Lutherans believed that the keys should only be used by the Church to forgive or loose sins; a position that was to be roundly rejected by the canons and decrees of Trent.⁴⁴ Luther's interpretation of the keys redefined the jurisdiction of the Church through limiting its disciplinary power over unrepentant sinners, and increasing that of secular rulers. As far as Luther was concerned, the Church's focus ought to be on reconciliation through means of persuasion, rather than discipline. His reformation of confession, with its emphasis on repentance and faith, rather than on a list of sins, laid the foundations for his reshaping of church discipline. Later, Calvin argued that when properly practised, church discipline was as vital a component to the true church as the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments.⁴⁵ He maintained that the keys could bind and loose sins, and both were to be used by the Church but, crucially, the clergy could not pronounce salvation or damnation through them: this was the prerogative of God alone. Calvin differentiated between Reformed excommunication, the purpose of which was to encourage the sinner towards

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴⁴ See Canon XV of the 14th Session, 1551.

⁴⁵ Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609* (Oxford, 2013), p. 188.

reconciliation, and the Catholic use of anathema, which 'condemns and consigns a man to eternal destruction'.⁴⁶ For Calvin, discipline was not to be overly rigorous, and he encouraged pastors to have realistic expectations of their inherently sinful parishioners.⁴⁷ He denounced the interrogative nature of Catholic auricular confession as an abuse of the true and holy discipline of the ancient Church.⁴⁸ The difference between Protestants and Catholics was that the former felt the latter abused the power of the keys, while the difference between Luther and Calvin lay in the fact that Luther afforded secular authorities power over the Church, while Calvin tried to retain ecclesiastical authority in the moral disciplining of society, despite facing opposition from the Genevan city council.

Confession

Confession was a crucial component of penance and could be performed in two ways: in public and in private. Each was important and each had its own specific function. Public confession predated private confession. Originally, a sinner was expected to confess their sins before the entire community to demonstrate their repentance. During the early years of the Church, a public penance followed this public confession.⁴⁹ Private auricular confession dates back to the seventh century, and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decreed that all Christians who had reached the age of discretion should confess and

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁴⁸ Amy Nelson Burnett, *John Calvin, Myth and Reality: Images and Impact of Geneva's Reformer* (Oregon, 2009), p. 62.

⁴⁹ James Brundage, 'Sin, Crime and the Pleasures of the Flesh: The Medieval Church Judges Sexual Offences', in Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (eds.), *The Medieval World*, vol. 10 (Oxford, 2006), pp. 294-307, p. 295.

receive communion annually.⁵⁰ With the development of private confession came the practice of performing penance privately also. General public confession was developed partially in response to people who 'exhaust themselves and their confessors with repeated confessions, especially of light and unimportant sins'.⁵¹ This non-sacramental general confession developed in the Middle Ages, and was recited usually in the vernacular after the sermon.⁵² Despite Luther's re-evaluation of the penitential process, he encouraged the continuation of confession and developed a form of private confession that prevented clerical abuses, such as using confession as a way to interrogate the consciences of penitents.⁵³ His exhortation in the *Large Catechism* rebuked those who 'do as they please and apply their freedom wrongfully, as if it meant they ought not, or must not, go to confession'.⁵⁴ Luther wanted to emphasise the necessity of confession but, equally, he was determined to remove the widespread abuses practised by unscrupulous Catholics. Private confession was not a violation of the Word and, indeed, Luther, fellow reformers and Protestant magistrates saw it as a useful aid in ensuring people received communion worthily. Parishioners were encouraged to partake of communion frequently, and, similarly, private confession was to be a regular feature of life.

⁵⁰ For a brief overview of the developing nature of private confession see Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the German Reformation', pp. 190-193.

⁵¹ Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, p. 77.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 77-80.

⁵³ See his 1521 treatise *On Confession: Whether the Pope has Power to Command it: WA*, vol. 8, pp. 138-185; Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the German Reformation', p. 194.

⁵⁴ 'Das sie thun was sie wollen / und sich der freiheit also annemen / als solten oder dürfften sie nermehr beichten': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), pp. 118a-119.

A crucial characteristic of Luther's revised form of private confession was its strictly voluntary nature. His *Large Catechism* taught that 'we force no one, but we suffer ourselves to be forced, just as we must let people force us to preach [or] to proffer the sacrament'.⁵⁵ Though careful not to make private confession compulsory, declaring that 'there had been no rule so burdensome as the one that forced everyone to go to confession on pain of committing the most serious of mortal sins', an examination of faith became a pre-requisite for receiving communion.⁵⁶ Established in Wittenberg in 1524, the examination's primary function was to determine whether an individual was worthy of receiving communion. The first part served to demonstrate an individual's knowledge of the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, as well as an understanding of what the sacrament is and how it can be received worthily. The second part of the examination required individuals to confess public sins, although they were not expected to disclose private sins. The clergy were ordered not to shame the laity in order to prevent potential future avoidances of communion.⁵⁷ This confession was seen to be less intrusive than traditional private confession, although it still performed a disciplinary function.⁵⁸ Whilst stressing the voluntary nature of private confession, Luther emphasised that 'if you are a Christian, then you do not need either my pressuring or the pope's orders, but undoubtedly you will compel yourself to come to confession ... If you were a Christian ... you rather should come and

⁵⁵ 'Wir dringen nieman / sondern leiden das man zu uns dringet / gleich wir man uns zwinget das wir predigen / und Sacrament reichen müssen': *ibid.*, p. 122a.

⁵⁶ 'Denn kein schwerer ding bisher gewesen ist / wie wir aller versucht haben / denn das man jederman zu beichten gezwungen / bey der hohisten todsunde / dazu deselbige so hoch beschweret hat': *ibid.*, p. 118a.

⁵⁷ Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the German Reformation', p. 197.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

force us to give you the opportunity' to confess.⁵⁹ Thus, for Luther, while private confession was not obligatory, if you were a true Christian you would want to go and confess.

Confession was important to Luther, also, as a reminder of the baptismal promises. Medieval theology drew on Jerome's teaching that penance was a 'second plank' of salvation, indicating that the 'ark of baptism' was in danger of sinking and taking down the individual in the process. To prevent this, reconciliation could be achieved through penance: a second plank. However, Luther interpreted this to imply that baptism was fallible, rather than an everlasting certainty. In his *Babylonian Captivity*, Luther declared 'how perilous, indeed, how false it is to suppose that penance is the second plank after the shipwreck, and how pernicious an error it is to believe that the power of baptism is broken, and then dashed to pieces, because of sin'.⁶⁰ Baptism could not be fallible. Instead, for Luther, penance 'is, as I have said, nothing but a way and return to baptism'.⁶¹ His *Large Catechism* repeated that the 'ship [of baptism] never breaks ... but it happens that we slip and fall out, but if anyone falls out, he sees that he swims back again and holds to it until he comes in again. And then go on in it [life] as begun before'.⁶² Luther's views, expressed as early as 1520 and maintained in the *Large Catechism*, rejected

⁵⁹ 'Bistu nu ein Christ / so darffstu wider meins zwangs noch Bapsts gepot nicht uberall / sondern wirst dich wol selbs zwingen ... Werstu ein Christ ... sondern komet und uns zwingen / Denn das mus der zwang umbgekeret warden': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), pp. 122-122a.

⁶⁰ Luther, *WA*, vol. 6, p. 529, cited in English in Paul W. Robinson, *The Annotated Luther, vol 3: Church and Sacraments* (Mineapolis, 2016), p. 63.

⁶¹ *WA*, vol. 6, p. 572, cited in English in Paul W. Robinson, *The Annotated Luther, vol 3: Church and Sacraments* (Mineapolis, 2016), p. 127.

⁶² 'Denn das schiff zubricht nicht ... Aber das geschiche wol / das wir gleiten und eraus fallen / fellet aber jemand eraus / der sehe das er wider hinzu schwimme und sich dran halte / bis er wider hinein korne / Und darein gehe wie vorhin angefangen': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), pp. 105-105a.

clearly the Catholic interpretation of penance, instead arguing that penance is an extension and corollary to baptism. In contrast, the *Tridentine Catechism* explicitly confirmed the medieval tradition:

The saying of St. Jerome that penance is a second plank is universally known and highly commended by all subsequent writers on sacred things. As he who suffers shipwreck has no hope of safety, unless, perchance, he seize on some plank from the wreck, so he that suffers the shipwreck of baptismal innocence, unless he cling to the saving plank of penance, has doubtless lost all hope of salvation.

Thus, there is a difference between the sacraments of baptism and penance in Catholic thought, while, for Luther, penance is intrinsically connected to baptism.

Canisius framed penance as a 'second plank' in his *Large Catechism*, explaining that everyone, 'though burdened with many and big vices, may be led out of the sea of deadly sin, like as out of a shipwreck [and] be included in the mercy and friendship of God'.⁶³ He did not include any discussion of a 'second plank' in his *Small Catechism*, although he inferred to it indirectly by teaching that if anyone has fallen from grace, God 'will send the grace of righteousness to the living', indicating that penance is an opportunity to return to the path of salvation after one has sinned.⁶⁴ The connection to a shipwreck was not made overtly. Similarly, Luther's *Small Catechism* did not discuss the concept. This indicates that small catechisms, designed for the laity, were

⁶³ 'Ein jeder, wiewol mit vielen uñ grossen lastern beschwert / mog auß dem Mare der todlichen sünd gleich als auß einem schiffbruch / gefuret / in die gnade und freundschaft Gottes auffgenommen werden': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 189.

⁶⁴ 'Widerumb zu dem leben der gnaden auffrichten wollen': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 108.

adapted to suit them: here is an example of the avoidance or omission of difficult and contentious theological matters.

Technically, Luther allowed a confession to be heard by any Christian. His *Large Catechism* taught that should anyone have 'something particular to petition or [something] important that is biting, and we cannot be at peace, nor are we strong enough in [our] faith, we can weep (*klagen*) such to a brother, to bring counsel, comfort and strength, when and how often we want'.⁶⁵

Luther explained that Christ 'placed his Absolution into the mouth of his Christian people with the command that they should absolve one another of their sins'.⁶⁶ Whilst permitting confession to lay people, Luther preferred pastors to hear confessions and was more specific about this in his *Small Catechism*. The sample confessions included in the catechism encouraged the penitent to address their confessor as 'worthy dear Sir', which, according to Rittgers, was not a general appellation for a fellow layman, indicating that confession to a pastor was the ideal option.⁶⁷ Through promoting the role of the pastor in hearing confession, a consequence of this ultimately less intrusive approach to confession was the change in how forgiveness was communicated. The confessor, in Luther's eyes, did not grant absolution, he merely conveyed God's forgiveness to the penitent. This drastically altered the traditional understanding of the priest as a guardian of – or barrier to – salvation. While the medieval Church viewed the priest as the channel of

⁶⁵ 'Und sol dazu dienen / wo uns etwas sonderliche anligt oder ansichet / damit wir uns beissen / und nucht können zu friden sein / noch uns im glauben starct gnug finden / das wir solchs einem bruder klagen / rat / trost und stercke zuholen / wenn / und wie oft wir wöllen': *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁶ 'Christus selbs die Absolution seiner Christenheit inn mund gelegt und befohlen hat / uns von sunden aufzulösen': *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁷ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 113.

grace and forgiveness, the rigorous examination of a penitent's conscience placed the priest in the role of judge: he evaluated whether the sinner was truly repentant, he determined the seriousness of each transgression, and he decided on an appropriate punishment.⁶⁸ In contrast, Luther reduced the pastor to a communicator of a grace that was promised and granted outside of his control and that was irrespective of his own opinion of the penitent.

The promise of grace was vital to Luther's defence of private confession. His emphasis was intended to offer the consolation he believed had been lacking in the medieval Catholic penitential process and he did not want this comfort to be lost.⁶⁹ The *Small Catechism* (1537) echoed Luther's efforts to recast private confession from a forced interrogation that turns 'confession into torture', to one that instead focused on the absolution 'received from the confessor as from God himself, and indeed do not doubt it. But firmly believe that the sins thereby are forgiven before God in heaven'.⁷⁰ The theme of comfort continued with his instructions on how to confess, concluding with the recommendation that pastors may offer 'more words of comfort' to those who 'have a great burden of conscience, or are troubled and frightened'.⁷¹ In his assessment of Luther's treatment, Tentler concluded that Luther broke away from traditional methods of controlling sin.⁷² More recently, Karant-Nunn has argued that a close reading of visitation protocols from across Germany

⁶⁸ Brundage, 'Sin, Crime and the Pleasure of the Flesh', p. 295.

⁶⁹ Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, p. 349.

⁷⁰ 'Das man die Absolutio odder vergebung vom Beichtiger empfahe / also von Gott selbs / und ja nicht dran zweivel / sondern feste gleube / die sunde seien dadurch vergeben für Gott im himel': Luther, *Enchiridion* (1537), p. 66.

⁷¹ 'Welch aber grosse beschwerung des gewissens haben / odder betrübet und angefochten sind / die wird ein Beichtvater wol wissen mit mehr sprüchen zu trosten und zum glauben reitzen': *ibid.*, p. 71.

⁷² Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, p. 356.

indicates that Lutherans used auricular confession, with its threat of denying the sacrament, to produce a society which was concerned uniformly towards personal sin and corruption.⁷³ The catechisms, though certainly intended by Luther to offer consolation, did not preclude their later use as methods of social control. The *Small Catechism* did not elaborate on the consequences of not confessing, nor list specific types of sin to confess. This was because Luther wanted the *Small Catechism* to be brief and, moreover, discussing disciplinary measures ran the risk of turning confession into a punitive action, rather than a comforting exercise. In contrast, the *Large Catechism* did teach that those who do not go to confession cannot be regarded as Christians and, that being the case, they 'shall not enjoy the sacrament'.⁷⁴ The lack of precision in the *Small Catechism* and the threat of discipline in the *Large Catechism* provide space for Karant-Nunn's findings from Lutheran visitation records later in the century. Luther's catechisms offered comfort to users of the *Small Catechism*, but the practical application of the instructions provided in the *Large Catechism* enabled the disciplinary function of penance to continue and, crucially, enabled local areas to develop their own conditions according to the requirements of their secular and ecclesiastical rulers. Church ordinances and visitation records point to the diversity in the practice of private confession across Lutheran Germany. Augsburg's ecclesiastical ordinance of 1537 specified that Lutherans must undertake a collective absolution and confession before receiving communion, indicating, as Karant-

⁷³ Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, p. 104.

⁷⁴ 'Und auch des Sacraments nicht solt geniessen': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 122.

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Nunn notes, that private auricular confession was no longer being offered.⁷⁵

Heinrich of Saxony's ordinance of 1539 included a lengthy and detailed script that pastors were encouraged to recite to penitents in the confessional.

Pastors were to impress the seriousness of failing to keep the commandments, cautioning penitents that they would be 'eternally lost' for such contempt towards God's word.⁷⁶ In the 1560-61 church visitations conducted in the Nuremberg countryside, one pastor complained that his parishioners came to confess on Sunday mornings before the service to avoid a 'lengthy examination' of their faith, indicating that this pastor wanted a far more detailed private confession than that required in Brandenburg twenty years later.⁷⁷ Indeed, Joachim Friedrich, Margrave of Brandenburg, issued visitation instructions in 1585 that encouraged private confession, but stated that penitents need not recount all the details of their sins.⁷⁸

Luther's challenge to the Catholic structure of salvation and its hierarchy was welcomed by many across the empire, with Miriam Usher Chrisman demonstrating that the very early years of the Reformation witnessed a growing reluctance of the laity to kneel in the confessional.⁷⁹ Luther's reconceptualization of the ecclesiastical office resulted in a radically different role and image of the pastor. Whilst priests were traditionally cast as judges in the absolving of sins, Luther saw pastors instead as more akin to servants of the laity. This view was compounded in his *Treatise on the Keys*, as well as in

⁷⁵ Karant Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, p. 243 fn. 54.

⁷⁶ 'Ewiglich verloren sein': *Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen*, vol. 1., p. 269.

⁷⁷ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 212.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 240, fn. 28.

⁷⁹ Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519-1530* (Boston, 1996), p. 93.

his catechisms. Yet, the 1530 edition of Luther's *Large Catechism* included a woodcut depicting a traditional scene of private confession, with a seated pastor listening to the confession of a bareheaded layman kneeling in front of him.⁸⁰ The image was similar to those depicting confession in the later Middle Ages. It softened Luther's radical transformation of the process of confession and forgiveness, and served to emphasise the ways in which he sought to stress the continuities with medieval Christianity. By 1540, however, the woodcut had changed. In this edition of the *Large Catechism*, the image depicted Christ standing in front of a group of men and giving two keys to a barefooted man standing in ordinary clothes.⁸¹ The giving of the keys to a man not specifically marked out as a pastor reflected Luther's opinion that they were given for the benefit of the whole community.⁸² By standing, the man is on an equal level with both Christ and the group of men standing behind him: they are all brothers in the Church. Further, the depiction of two keys reflects Luther's rejection of the traditional belief that there was a third key which enabled the disciples to gain insight into the inward moral condition of a penitent.⁸³ The changing image can be seen to correspond with changes in Luther's focus over the decade. Whilst in the 1520s, Luther was at pains to

⁸⁰ Martin Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus. Gemehret mit einer newen vorrhede / und vermanunge zu der Beicht* (Wittemberg: Georg Rhau, 1530), p. 167. The same image appears in the 1535 edition of the *Large Catechism*. This woodcut represents how private confession was carried out in the Middle Ages, with a seated confessor and kneeling penitent. Moreover, they are the only two people in the image, indicating that this confession is private. Rittgers has suggested that, despite intentions to keep confession private, this was not always achieved: Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the Reformation', p. 192.

⁸¹ Martin Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus: Auff's new Corrigirt und gebessert* (Georgen Rhaw: Wittemberg, 1540), p. biiia.

⁸² Luther wrote, 'It is clear enough that the keys were not given to St. Peter alone, but rather to the whole community. Therefore, the keys are not for the purpose of regulating binding and loosing because of teaching or rules, but only because of sin, and it is a vain thing when they write otherwise about the keys', cited in Carol Piper Heming, *Protestants and the Cult of Saints in German-Speaking Europe, 1517-1531* (Missouri, 2003), p. 26.

⁸³ Rittgers, 'Luther on Private Confession', p. 225.

disassociate himself with sects such as Anabaptism, the arguments over the keys within the Lutheran faith during the 1530s forced Luther to defend his theology with more certainty and vigour.

One of the most protracted debates over the keys occurred in Nuremberg. In his sermon on the keys, Osiander's main concern was to protect and justify clerical authority in the process of penance. He devoted a fifteen-page section of his catechism to the 'Office of the Keys' (*Amt der Schlüssel*) and placed this sermon between his chapters on the sacraments of baptism and communion. This ordering is mirrored in the sermon's text where he declared that the pastors are acting on the orders of Christ when they 'baptise, forgive sins or administer the body and blood of Christ'.⁸⁴ Though careful to avoid classing the penitential process itself as a sacrament, Osiander, in fact, did believe that the keys were a third sacrament and, when a properly called pastor uses the keys, 'what they bind on earth shall also be bound in heaven. And what they loose on earth shall also be loosed in heaven'.⁸⁵ This sermon was incongruous with most of the other sermons in his catechism because, while the others largely echoed Luther's *Small Catechism*, this chapter represented a more significant divergence from Luther's teachings. This is evidence of the early variation of the Lutheran faith and, indeed, Osiander's changes served as a precursor to the increasing revisions made to Luther's *Small Catechism* and *Large Catechism* by later catechists. As Halvorson has commented, such

⁸⁴ 'Als wann sie tauffen / sund vergeben / oder den leyb unnd das blut Christi außstailen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 270.

⁸⁵ 'Was sie binden auff erden / das sol auch im himel gepunden sein / Und was sie aufflosen auff erden / das sol auch im himel auffgeloset sein': *ibid.*, p. 266. Though Osiander himself did not refer to penance as a sacrament, Klemens notes that he referred to Communion as the third Sacrament in his catechism, thus implying that penance was a second sacrament: Klemens, *Die Nürnberger Kinderpredigten*, p. 200.

changes were commonplace in the later sixteenth century, with catechists trying to meet the 'pedagogical needs of individual communities', as well as to rival the catechisms of competing confessions.⁸⁶ However, Osiander was one of the earliest Lutheran catechists to deviate from Luther's teachings, and his treatment of confession and sin is a significant example of how Luther's catechisms were expanded and manipulated to address local concerns.

Osiander rejected Luther's reduction of the pastor's authority and defended the role of the confessor as a judge. Just as Luther's woodcuts reflected his current thinking so, too, did Osiander's. The woodcut marking the start of his sermon on the keys depicted a pastor holding a key in his left hand, whilst pronouncing forgiveness on a kneeling layman with his right (fig. 5). The dress of the layman suggests a man of some wealth, perhaps a pointed reference to the city magistrates who probably needed forgiving for their continued attacks on God's ordained pastors. The cleric is holding only one key: the city council had already managed to wrestle control of the binding key – much to Osiander's outrage – so this remaining key is the loosing key, which was used to forgive sinners. The 1533 church order, to which the catechism had originally been appended, had been revised on the orders of the city magistrates to remove any reference to the pastor laying his hands on the confessant when pronouncing absolution.⁸⁷ Osiander, co-author of the church order, complied with this request in the church order, but retained the traditional image in his own catechism, pointing to his tenacity, stubbornness, and determination to protect clerical authority irrespective of secular orders.

⁸⁶ Halvorson, *Heinrich Heshusius*, p. 70.

⁸⁷ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 135.

The standing pastor demonstrates Osiander's rejection of the pastor being subservient to the confessant, and reinforced the vital role of the cleric in the forgiveness of sins. In early medieval acts of contrition, the priest stood over the kneeling penitent who, after acknowledging his sinful nature, begged the priest to act as an intercessor with God. The standing position of the priest was intended to demonstrate his superiority over the sinner.⁸⁸ Significantly, this supplication to the priest occurred during contrition, which followed a detailed confession during which both parties could sit. In the thirteenth century, Aquinas had argued that contrition allowed the remission of sins, but true contrition could be achieved only through the priest's absolution.⁸⁹ Luther appealed to the later Middle Ages in his image, but Osiander mirrored the physical positions of the confessor and penitent of an older Christianity in order to support his defence of clerical authority. Whether the choice of woodcuts was intentional on the part of Luther and Osiander is difficult to ascertain. Luther used the same printer for the 1530 and the 1540 editions of the catechism, and he continued to employ him after this publication, indicating that Luther was not angered by these images. Regardless of authorial choice, however, to those familiar with the teachings of Osiander and Luther, the visual messages conveyed by these woodcuts may have been understood.

⁸⁸ Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance, 900-1050* (Woodbridge, 2001), p. 112. She describes a tenth-century order for confession.

⁸⁹ Andrew James Johnston, "The Secret of the Sacred: Confession and the Self in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"", in Susanne Rupp and Tobias Döring (eds.), *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Amsterdam, 2005), pp. 45-64, p. 56.



Figure 5: Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek.

Thayer's analysis of model sermon collections labels as rigorists those preachers who focused on the importance of contrition and role of confessors as judges in penance. Preachers who fell into this category, such as John Herolt (1390-1468), had stressed the rigours of satisfaction and, significantly for Osiander, placed high expectations on confession. They taught that it was necessary for salvation, needed to be considered in advance, and had to be complete. They also had cautioned priests not to forgive those who intended on sinning.⁹⁰ Another rigorist, John of Werden (d. 1437), had encouraged penitents to respect priests as intermediaries between man and God.⁹¹ It is evident that Luther and many other Protestants rejected rigorist principles but Osiander, it appears, was keen to retain aspects of this preaching style that promoted ecclesiastical authority. Both Luther and Osiander encouraged private confession, although they had somewhat different interpretations of its purpose. Both appreciated the disciplining purpose of private confession, but

⁹⁰ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, pp. 97-111.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Osiander emphasised the significance of the pastor, while Luther focused on consolation. Yet, further indications that Osiander clung to rigorist principles can be detected in his antagonism towards general confession and absolution.

This issue was at the centre of a prolonged debate in Nuremberg during the 1530s, and involved high-profile reformers including Luther, Melanchthon, and Johannes Brenz. For Luther, the only difference between private and general confession was location.⁹² In the *Large Catechism*, Luther saw the general confession provided by the Lord's Prayer as a 'public, daily and necessary confession' because it acknowledged one's sins against God as well as one's neighbours and the general absolution granted covered both sets of transgressions.⁹³ He declared that 'such [a] confession should and must not be omitted, so long as we live'.⁹⁴ Luther continued to recognise that some might feel in need of further consolation and want 'private confession that takes place with only one brother', but he was convinced that this was not commanded by divine law.⁹⁵

However, for his part, Osiander was strongly opposed to general confession. On 3rd April 1533, he participated in a meeting between Nuremberg preachers and magistrates in which he announced that general confession and absolution were 'completely useless and unscriptural'.⁹⁶ In his treatise

⁹² Rittgers, 'Private Confession in the German Reformation', p. 201.

⁹³ 'Solche offentliche / tegliche und nötige beichte': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 120.

⁹⁴ 'Solche beicht sol und mus on unterlas geschehen / so lang wir leben': *ibid.*, p. 119a.

⁹⁵ 'Die heimliche beichte / so zwisschen einem bruder allein geschihet': *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁹⁶ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 140.

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regarding the use of the keys, entitled *Advice on the Use of Absolution* (1533), Osiander argued that general confession would stop people seeking private absolution – as had happened in Nuremberg during the 1520s – and he questioned how a pastor could absolve someone without knowing if they were truly sorry for their sins, reiterating the concerns raised by rigorist preachers. Further, Osiander argued that because general confession made forgiveness conditional on the individual's faith, it was, in fact, no absolution at all.⁹⁷ In contrast, Luther's treatise on the keys had emphasised the uncertain nature of Catholic forgiveness:

he who has confessed his sins, and done penance, doubtless becomes absolved. We give absolution but whether it is for you, we leave that to your consideration. For we cannot by any means find out how far your repentance is sincere. Therefore, we are uncertain whether the key has applied or failed.⁹⁸

Luther accused the Catholic system of thrusting back onto the individual's conscience the burden of knowing whether one is forgiven, thus leaving them vulnerable to feelings of doubt. Luther's opinion that absolute trust in God was enough for forgiveness was intended to remove this inner turmoil. However, in his own treatise on the keys, Osiander argued that faith did not have an impact on absolution:

When the Pope and his [followers] absolve someone they say the following: Are you repentant, then you are also absolved, if not, then the key has not released you. This general absolution does the same

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-152.

⁹⁸ 'Wer seine sund berew et und gebeicht hat / der hat den Ablass gewiß. Wir geben Ablass ob er dir werde / da lassen wir dich für forgen. Deñ wir können nicht wissen / ob du recht gerewet und gebeicht hast / Darum sind wir auch nicht gewiß / ob der schlüssel troffen odder gefeilet hat': Luther, *Von den Schlüssel*, p. 22.

and even worse, [it] demands humility, remorse, heartfelt desire for God's grace, and help to form faith and trust in his promise, heartfelt forgiveness of neighbours, which are the highest and most difficult works and virtues that one can wish or demand from a person on earth ... The pope and his [followers] let it rest on repentance alone, but this absolution stretches [us] even more. Who can believe, then, that he has been absolved? Truly, no one, [unless] he believes and knows beforehand that he has in him all the above-mentioned virtues.⁹⁹

In his catechism, Osiander declared instead that a penitent should believe that their sins are forgiven because God has commanded his pastors 'to preach, to punish and to forgive sins in his name'.¹⁰⁰ Osiander encouraged his audience to say: 'God the Lord, you have sent me your servant, who has preached forgiveness of my sins in your name, and has baptised me in forgiveness of sin, therefore, I am certain that my sins are forgiven me, and I am become a child of God'.¹⁰¹ Thus, in the catechism, he based his defence of the keys on the argument that one should trust and respect God's command.

Therefore, instead of general confession and absolution, Osiander admonished sinners to trust neither in their own thoughts that God will forgive them, nor in the words of their fellow laymen; rather they should go to 'a minister of the church and petition, confess and weep your sins, and ask him

⁹⁹ 'Wann der babst und die seinen absolvirn und sprechen gleichwol darnach: Bistu bereuet, so bistu auch absolvirt, wa nicht, so hat dich der schlüssel auch nit gelöst. Eben also und noch vil gröber thut es diese vermainte absolution auch, fodert demut, reuhe, hertzliche begir nach Gottes gnad und hilf, vessten glauben und trauen auf sein zusagen, hertzlichs vergeben dem nechsten, welchs die höchsten und schwersten werckh und tugent sein, die man von einem menschen auff erdtrich begern und fordern kan ... Der bapst und die seinen lassen es doch bei der reuhe allein bleyben; diese absolutio aber spannet es noch vil höher, wer kan dann daruber glauben, das er absolvirt sey? Warlich neymandt, er glaub und wiss dann zuvor, das er die obgemelten tugent all an ime habe': *AOGA*, vol. 5., p. 465.

¹⁰⁰ 'Zu predigen, buß und vergebung der sunden in seinem namen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 271.

¹⁰¹ 'Gott der Herr / der hat mir seiner diener ain geschicht / der mir hat vergebung der sund in seinem name gepredigt / uñ hat mich zur vergebung der sund getaufft / darumb bin ich gewiß / das mir meine sund vergeben sein / und ich ein kindt Gottis bin worden': *ibid.*, p. 272.

that he, according to Christ's command, proclaim forgiveness of sins'.¹⁰² For Luther, private confession posed the very real danger of turning into an interrogation. Both he and the Nuremberg Council were in agreement that this should not happen, with the latter encouraging private confession during the 1520s, but only as long as it did not result in 'trespassing into the human soul'.¹⁰³ Instead, confessors were to offer consolation to those weak of faith through instruction. In his catechism, Osiander showed himself to be in agreement with the pedagogical responsibility of pastors, advising his audience that 'we do not know in ourselves what to believe' and, therefore, need direction.¹⁰⁴ He promoted also the role of the pastor as comforter, referring to Solomon's observation that 'when a person is alone, he feels he has no one to help him'.¹⁰⁵ Despite this, Osiander's overall point seemed to be that relying on oneself to confess to God privately and to be assured of forgiveness by general confession and absolution actually created doubt, and contravened Jesus' original intentions regarding the keys. Luther's entire theology rested on the faith of the individual and, with regards to penance, he taught that the keys' efficacy required only trust that God would forgive.¹⁰⁶ Osiander, by way of contrast, did not believe faith affected the power of the keys, and instead focused on the inability of humans to *know* in themselves whether their sins were forgiven. Such knowledge could only come from God

¹⁰² 'Darum sol er zu derselbē ainem gehn / und sein sund und anligen bekennen und klagen / und in bitten / das er nach dem beuelh Christi / ihm vergebung seiner sund verkündigen woll': *ibid.*, p. 276. Both Luther and Osiander referred to 'weeping' in their catechisms, indicating that sorrow was still an acknowledged feature of private confession.

¹⁰³ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁴ 'Dann wir wissen von uns selbs nit / was wir glauben sollen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 265.

¹⁰⁵ 'Weh dem menschen der allain ist / dañ wañ er felst so hat er niemandt der ihm auff hilfft': *ibid.*, p. 272.

¹⁰⁶ Rittgers, 'Luther on Private Confession', pp. 222-223.

who 'does not speak to us down from heaven; [instead] he has left the keys of heaven and commanded the power to forgive sins to the ministers of the church'.¹⁰⁷ In this way, Osiander's sermon on the keys can be seen to offer much more consolation than Luther's works on the keys; in Osiander's catechism, one does not need to worry about whether one has enough faith or trust in oneself, which was part of the problem with Catholic penance anyway. Rather, an individual can confess to a pastor and, once forgiveness is proclaimed, that person can 'believe joyfully and comfortingly that his sins are truly forgiven in heaven'.¹⁰⁸ Osiander connected faith in God's promise of forgiveness and the comforting knowledge of salvation to the role of the pastor. Indeed 'the reason and source of the entire preaching office and the keys of the kingdom of heaven ... [are] ... so that we can be certain that we have forgiveness of sin, and all that the holy Gospel brings with it, as often as we require it'.¹⁰⁹ Unlike Luther and the Nuremberg Council, Osiander repeatedly sought to reinforce the vital role of the clergy in the penitential process, and did so by appealing to the laity's collective need for consolation.

Such was the degree of Osiander's aversion to general confession that in October 1533, after reading Osiander's treatise on the keys, Luther conceded that he need not employ it in his church of St Lorenz. Osiander's colleagues could use general confession, but he was no longer under any pressure to do

¹⁰⁷ 'Nun redet aber Got nicht mit unns von himel / uñ den gewalth die sund zuvergeben / den dienern der kirchen gelassen / und bevolhen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 276.

¹⁰⁸ 'Wann das geschicht / so sol er frolich uñ trostloch glauben / das yhm sein sund warlich / auch im himel vergeben sein': *ibid.*, p. 276.

¹⁰⁹ 'Dē grund und ursprung des ganzen predig ampts / unnd der schlüssel des himelreichs ... Auff das wir gewiß sein kondten / das wir vergebung der sunde / unnd alles was des heylig Evangelion mit sich bringt / haben / so offt wirs bedorffen': *ibid.*, p. 278.

the same. Rittgers notes that, on the very same day Luther offered this compromise, he wrote to his friend Wenzeslaus Link – another Nuremberg preacher – advising him to treat Osiander as ‘a sick person who would only recover from his malady if treated with discretion, intelligence, and patience’.¹¹⁰ Osiander’s defence of private confession and pastoral authority was shaped by the religio-political situation in Nuremberg and stemmed from flaws within Luther’s own soteriology. Luther was not unaware of these problems, but did not think their resolution was a pressing concern.

The later divisions between Luther and Osiander, however, can be seen to have their foundations in this local dispute, and Luther’s decision to compromise for the sake of confessional unity. These divisions were to have long-lasting consequences for the Lutheran faith later in the century. Not only was Osiander’s catechism widely reprinted throughout Germany and beyond, but also it influenced, potentially, later Lutheran catechisms.¹¹¹ From 1531 to 1573, editions of Luther’s *Small Catechism* included a section on confession in between the discussions of baptism and communion. Unlike in Osiander’s catechism, there was no clear marker that the text was a new chapter or a distinct section. Rather, this discussion simply ran on from the questions on baptism, reflecting Luther’s belief that confession and the keys were not a sacrament in their own right. However, in 1573, a generation after Luther’s death, questions specifically pertaining to the keys were added to one edition of Luther’s catechism published in Regensburg, and the entire section was

¹¹⁰ WA, vol. 6, pp. 485-486. Quotation taken from Rittgers, ‘Luther on Private Confession’, p. 228.

¹¹¹ Thomas Cramner had the catechism translated into English in 1548: Bode, ‘Instruction of the Christian Faith’, p. 170.

converted into its own chapter entitled 'The Office of the Keys and Absolution'.¹¹² This was placed between the chapters on baptism and communion, mirroring the placement of the sermon on the keys in Osiander's catechism. The catechism's title page tells the reader that, while it is Luther's catechism, it includes questions pertaining to how the Church operates in Lower Austria.¹¹³ The chapter on confession instructed its users to confess privately to a pastor, and taught that the 'absolution or forgiveness received from the confessor is as from God himself and, indeed, do not doubt, but believe firmly that your sins are forgiven by God in heaven'.¹¹⁴ The 1573 catechism instructed that, in the confessional, one should 'only confess the sins we know and feel in our hearts' – as Luther had taught – but the importance of confession and associated role of the pastor in declaring forgiveness was reinforced.¹¹⁵ This was done through a detailed dialogue of what the penitent ought to say to the pastor, and what his subsequent response should be: 'I, through the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive you your sins in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen'.¹¹⁶ Whilst not completely in accordance with Osiander's understanding, this revised version of Luther's catechism certainly had aspects that reflected

¹¹² Three questions on the keys were also present in Elector Otto-Henry's church order for the Palatinate published in 1556. See *Kirchenordnung. Wie es mit der Christenlichen Leere / heiligen Sacramenten / unnd Ceremonien / in des Durchleuchtigsten Hochgebornen Fürsten unnd Herren / Herrn Ottheinrichs / Pfalzgrauen bey Rhein / des Heiligen Römischen Reichs Erzdruchsessen unnd Churfürsten / Herzogen in Nidern un̄n Oberrn Bairn ic. Chur und Fürstenthumben gehalten wirdt* [hereafter, *Kirchenordnung* (1556)] (Neuburg/Donau: Hans Kilian, 1556), pp. 24a-25.

¹¹³ Gerlicus, *Catechismus Doctoris Martini Lutheri*. The Book of Concord's version of the *Small Catechism* includes questions on communion between the questions on baptism and the Lord's Supper.

¹¹⁴ 'Die Absolution oder Vergebung von Beichtiger empfahe / als von Gott selbs / und ja nicht daran zweiffeln / sondern Fest glauben / die Sünde sein dardurch vegeben für Gott im Himel': *ibid.*, p. 175.

¹¹⁵ 'Sollen wir allain die Sünde bekennen / die wir wissen und fülen im herzen': *ibid.*, p. 175.

¹¹⁶ 'Ich aus dem befehl unsers Herren Jesu Christi / vergebe dir deine Sünde / im namen des Vatters und des Sohns und des Heiligen Geistes / Amen': *ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

Osiander's teachings, not least regarding the central role of the pastor in forgiving sin in a private setting.

Establishing a link between Osiander and Lower Austria is difficult: his catechism was not published there and Osiander did not travel there.

However, according to Wandel, the 1533 Nuremberg Church Order was the source of the 1571 ordinance for Lower Austria.¹¹⁷ Thus, it is possible that the Lutherans of Lower Austria may have been familiar with Osiander's catechism also. This is speculative, but the similarities in structure and content between the 1573 catechism published in Lower Austria and Osiander's 1533 catechism are intriguing, and point to the ways in which later catechisms could appropriate and revise the content of multiple texts to suit local areas.

It is evident throughout Osiander's catechism and his separate treatise on the keys that the matter that lay at the very heart of private confession – and which was threatened by general confession – was clerical authority. The catechism itself did not refer to general confession in any depth, and the focus remained on the justification of going to confess to a pastor and their power to bind and release sins. Moreover, as far as Osiander was concerned, Luther's efforts to remove the uncertainty of salvation created by the Catholic penitential system had led to a new arrangement that unwittingly resulted in forgiveness still being dependent on human effort; the action of believing replaced that of doing good works or performing satisfaction. Concomitantly, Luther's emphasis on voluntary private confession and the need for penitents

¹¹⁷ Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation*, p. 119.

to confess only the sins they felt they needed to was perceived by Osiander as putting too much power into the hands of an individual, which could well lead to not only an unworthy communion for the individual, but also 'poison' those who witnessed it.¹¹⁸ He stressed that the only way to be sure of forgiveness was to rely on properly ordained pastors who are bound by Jesus' order to bind and forgive sins in his name, but who could only do so if the penitent 'lets himself be judged'.¹¹⁹

In seeking to protect the authority of the Church to forgive sins, Osiander was not too dissimilar from Calvin, who was determined to keep state interference in the Church at a minimum. Extending Luther's emphasis on faith, Calvin concluded that the requirement to confess and receive absolution was made redundant when one had true faith in Christ's promise of forgiveness. He agreed that auricular confession was not scripturally based and was a later unnecessary development of the Church.¹²⁰ He maintained that a full confession of all sins was impossible, and merely created uncertainty in the mind of the penitent. Instead, he believed that the focus ought to be on the mercy of God in forgiving sin.¹²¹ Yet, in his *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Calvin did not condemn the practice of private confession, although, as with Luther, the role of the pastor was strictly controlled. The clergy did not play any role in the assessment of the individual's moral worthiness, but they were to 'instruct us by word of mouth to overcome and correct our sins, and also to

¹¹⁸ Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 275.

¹¹⁹ 'Und sich lassen bedüncken': *ibid.*, p. 274.

¹²⁰ Kenan Osborne, *Reconciliation and Justification: The Sacrament and its Theology* (Oregon, 2001), p. 146.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

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give us consolation through assurance of pardon'.¹²² Echoing Luther's *Large Catechism*, Calvin taught that there were three forms of confession, including private confession; however, later Calvinists reduced the emphasis on this form because it lacked scriptural basis.¹²³

In the Palatinate, Frederick III's predecessor, the Lutheran Otto-Henry, had retained private confession in his church order's instructions on ministering to the sick and dying.¹²⁴ Thus, it was an established practice, and, while Eike Wolgast has asserted that 'tolerance was not practised in the Palatinate under Frederick III', a close reading of the Elector's catechism and church order points towards a degree of strategic negotiation and compromise in the way in which private confession and absolution were treated.¹²⁵ Karant-Nunn has referred to auricular confession as 'one of the lines of structural as well as theological demarcation between Lutheranism and Calvinism', although, in southwest Germany, politics and the influence of the Swiss reformation diluted these confessional boundaries.¹²⁶ This can certainly be seen in the *Heidelberg Catechism*. In January 1563, Zacharius Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus argued against the necessity of private confession for salvation, although they recognised its use in providing 'unity and order'.¹²⁷ Reflective of this gradual move away from a strict Lutheran view of confession, the

¹²² John T. McNeill (ed.), *Calvin: Institutes of Christian Religion Book 3*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Westminster, 1960), p. 636.

¹²³ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 99.

¹²⁴ Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering*, p. 170.

¹²⁵ Wolgast, *Reformierte Konfession*, p. 47, p. 52.

¹²⁶ Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, p. 100.

¹²⁷ Jesse Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark, 2011), p. 57. Ursinus and Olevianus submitted this opinion in response to the Wesel Confession which had been intended to overcome religious diversity in Wesel. However, controversy erupted surrounding key points of this confession: *ibid.*, pp. 51-60.

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Heidelberg Catechism was largely silent on the question on confession of sin, merely commenting that those 'who by their confession and life show that they are unbelieving and ungodly' cannot partake of Holy Communion.¹²⁸ The catechism did not elaborate on what constituted a good confession, or whether it should be done privately or in public. On the other hand, the church order allowed for private confession, although it placed far more emphasis on general confession.¹²⁹ In his *Institutes*, Calvin had encouraged public confession, confirming that 'it matters not though in one assembly it may sometimes happen that a few are innocent, seeing that the members of a languid and sickly body cannot boast of soundness'.¹³⁰ The Heidelberg church order devoted an entire section to the explanation and practice of general confession. It decreed it should take place after an individual examination of faith of those seeking admittance to communion, conducted by the pastor. The three questions on general confession directed the parishioners towards taking comfort in the sacrifice of Christ, which has saved humankind from eternal damnation – if the individual chooses to believe in this divine promise.¹³¹ This can be seen to be in support of Calvin's teachings, thus should have appeased Frederick's Calvinist ministers.

However, regarding private confession, if someone was sick or dying, the church order reminded the minister that 'if anyone has a private petition that he gladly wants to discuss with his pastor, then the same shall not be

¹²⁸ 'Die sich mit irer bekentnuß und leben / als ungläubige und Gotlose erzeigen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 57.

¹²⁹ Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, pp. 43-45.

¹³⁰ John Murray (ed.), *Institutes*, Book 3, chapter 4, p. 63.

¹³¹ Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, pp. 43a-45.

refused'.¹³² Whilst compulsion was not permitted, this indicates that private confession should be supported on a voluntary basis. The elector could not encourage the Lutheran interpretation of private confession because the fundamental doctrine on which it rested would not have been acceptable to the Calvinists. Yet, the catechism did not forbid explicitly private confession either; at best, it discouraged it, but by not providing clear direction it can be seen to suggest that local pastors and parishioners could partake in private confession along either Lutheran or Reformed lines. Ultimately, the catechism and church order did not offer guidance on how private confession was to be performed because to do so would be to engage with divisive issues over authority, jurisdiction, and soteriological doctrine.

The catechism and church order highlight the confessional division of Frederick's subjects and their composition reinforced his desire to unite the two factions. Moreover, the Peace of Augsburg had outlawed Calvinism in 1555 but, in 1566, the elector refused a direct order from Emperor Maximilian to retract the confessional status of the Palatinate.¹³³ He wrote a series of letters to the Emperor and fellow princes, in which he denied claims he was a Calvinist, sought to justify his religious position, and defended his catechism with Scripture.¹³⁴ Wolgast reminds us that, for Frederick, west European politics outweighed confessional interests and that he was very diplomatic in his foreign policy, frequently calling to his fellow Protestant princes to stand

¹³² 'Und da jeman ein privat anligen hetter / darumb er sich mit seinem Kirchendiener gern besprechen wolte / dem soll dasselbig unverwegert sein': *ibid.*, p. 45a.

¹³³ For more, see Walter Hollweg, *Die Augsburger Reichstag von 1566 und seine Bedeutung für die Entstehung der Reformierten Kirche und ihres Bekenntnisses* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1964).

¹³⁴ Kluckhohn (ed.), *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen Kurfürsten von der Pfalz*, vol. 1, pp. 650-682.

together in unity.¹³⁵ Thus, the confessional documents in his territory not only were produced for local religious purposes, but reflected also the Elector's political motivations in fostering uniformity. Private confession was a divisive issue – as we saw with Luther and Osiander – so the catechism's silence and the ambiguity of the church order can be interpreted as an attempt to overcome avenues of resistance from his fellow rulers and subjects.

Across the religious divide, Peter Canisius faced somewhat similar problems in trying to offer a version of penance that would be acceptable to multiple factions. During the 1550s, a second wave of Protestantism threatened to derail Albrecht V's plans to strengthen Catholicism in his territory, with areas around Bavaria, including Augsburg and Regensburg, adopting Lutheran church orders. According to Soergel, this second Lutheran wave was most popular among the Bavarian nobility, prosperous burghers, artisans and patricians, and it was not until 1570 that Albrecht was strong enough politically to withdraw religious concessions such as communion under both kinds and clerical marriage.¹³⁶ Canisius encouraged Albrecht to 'act confidently in the matter of religion, do not allow wolves to rage in either the churches or in the schools'.¹³⁷ Yet, despite this advice, Canisius' catechetical treatment of penance reveals that, like Elector Frederick III in the Palatinate, he was prepared to be flexible, even ambiguous, when he felt it was necessary.

¹³⁵ Wolgast, *Reformierte Konfession*, p. 65.

¹³⁶ Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints*, pp. 70-77.

¹³⁷ 'Et oro, ut Christi gratia fauente pietas tua confidenter agat in negotio Religionis, nec sinat usquam grassari lupos [siue in] templis, siue in scholis': *Beati*, vol. 2, p. 284.

In 1558, Albrecht V ordered a visitation of the Bavarian dioceses. The results were disappointing, revealing a lack of Christian knowledge amongst the people, an alarming degree of clerical concubinage, the use of Lutheran practices, and the inclusion of Lutheran songs in churches, specifically Luther's *Aus tiefer Not*, which rejected works of penance through its emphasis on repentance and faith in God's Word.¹³⁸ In 1562, Canisius delivered a sermon in Augsburg, in which he addressed the question of dancing on Sundays. Despite this, and other such activities, being 'accompanied by many sins', Canisius declared that he would 'consider it an impertinence were anyone to judge, condemn and despise his neighbour because he indulged in such recreations'.¹³⁹ In November 1564, Canisius reported that the standard of the clergy in Lower Bavaria was very poor, and 'only a very few use the correct form of the Sacraments, especially of Absolution'.¹⁴⁰ These examples suggest that the standard of Catholicism in Bavaria was fairly low, and this can explain partly why there were clear divisions between his catechism and that of Trent. These divisions challenged the identity of the Catholic penitential process, and suggest that there was a conscious blurring of confessional differences in Canisius' catechisms. Two specific discrepancies will be considered here: the need to confess *all* sins, and the performance of satisfaction. While Canisius' *Large Catechism* largely was in accordance with the Council of Trent on these points, both in tone and structural placement, the *Small Catechism* was not.

¹³⁸ Alexander J. Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscape of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 35-36; Anton Landersdorfer, *Das Bistum Freising in der bayerischen Visitation des Jahres 1560* (St. Ottilien, 1986).

¹³⁹ Brodrick, *Peter Canisius*, p. 831; *Beati*, vol. 3, pp. 648-649.

¹⁴⁰ Brodrick, *Peter Canisius*, p. 606.

The *Large Catechism* was rigorous in its demands for a full confession, teaching people to confess 'before the priest all crimes which [you are] guilty of after a diligent examination of [your] conscience'.¹⁴¹ In contrast, both the *Small* and *Smaller Catechisms* simply taught that 'penance is a sacrament through which an ordained priest remits and forgives sins instead of God, if the sinner has heartfelt sorrow and pain, confesses his sins orally, and performs ... penance'.¹⁴² The *Small Catechism* required 'heartfelt repentance, sorrow and grief' for sins committed, but it did not stipulate that they all needed to be confessed.¹⁴³ The omission of 'all' transgressions is a small, but significant, detail for several reasons. Firstly, the *Tridentine Catechism* was very specific in its insistence that a confession should be entire, instructing that 'all mortal sins must be revealed to the priest ... even though they may be most secret'.¹⁴⁴ It was due to this insistence that Lutherans had accused the medieval Catholic interrogation of a penitent's conscience as being invasive and manipulative. Many people were swayed by Luther's criticism that confession was being used to control penitents, as was the case in Osiander's Nuremberg, where the laity simply stopped going to confession. Thus, Canisius' apparent acceptance in forgoing the outward confession of *all* sins can be seen as an attempt to encourage lapsed Catholics back to the

¹⁴¹ 'Vor den Priestern von allen lastern / die dem menschen bewüst sein nach fleissiger erforschung des gewissens': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 193.

¹⁴² 'Die Buß ist ein Sacrament, dardurch ein ordentlicher Priester an Gottes statt die Sün nachlasse und verzeyhet, wann die Sünder im herzen Reu und Leyd hat, seine Sünd mit dem Mund beichttet, und eine rechte Buß würcken will': Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus* (1596), p. 14. 'Gehort dazu die Beicht / daß er die sünd seinem ordenlichen priester / als dem statthalter Christi': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 109.

¹⁴³ 'Herzliche reu / laid und bekümmernuß uber alle sine begange sünden': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 109.

¹⁴⁴ *Tridentine Catechism*, pp. 287-288.

confessional. Secondly, the *Tridentine Catechism* had differentiated between mortal and venial sins, and declared of the latter that 'although they may be usefully confessed ... [they] may be omitted without sin'.¹⁴⁵ Canisius, however, did not distinguish between mortal and venial sins in the question on penance in the *Small Catechism*. Further, the subsequent chapter on Christian righteousness in Canisius' *Small Catechism* explained the differences between the two sets of sins, but it did not clarify which ought to be confessed. By removing both the distinction between mortal and venial sins and the requirement to confess all sins in the questions on penance, Canisius was re-shaping Catholic penitential identity in direct response to the situation in Germany.

Thirdly, by not requiring every mortal sin to be outwardly confessed, but teaching that the penitent should have sorrow for all sins, Canisius promoted the internalization of confession. Aware of the laity's desire for more autonomy in their relationship with God, Canisius, consciously or not, left open the possibility for them to confess directly to God in their hearts. His teachings in the *Small Catechism* largely adhered to the view of Duke Albrecht, who had declared in the winter of 1563-64 that:

[F]or, however pleasing and pleasant it would be to him to keep his land, people and subjects, each and every one of them, in the old Catholic faith, he does not desire to fathom the heart and spirit of every one of his subjects: that is an impossible thing, and remains reserved for the righteous judgement of the Almighty.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁴⁶ 'Denn wie lieb und angenehm es ihm auch sein möchte, Land, Leute und Unterthanen alle und jede bei dem alten Katholischen Glauben zu erhalten, so begehre er doch nicht, eines jeden seiner Unterthanen Herz und Gemuth zu ergründen; das sei unmöglich Ding und bleibe

Yet, as Karant-Nunn has commented, the internalization of sin fostered a sense of guilt for sins that accumulated within the individual. These individual sins mount up until God punishes the entire community, both the innocent and guilty alike.¹⁴⁷ She comments that this 'alteration in the landscape of religious metaphor coincided very nicely with the scrutinizing, accusatory, subduing behaviour of the early modern state'.¹⁴⁸ In Canisius' catechism, the onus was on the individual to consider their sins and to ensure that they were worthy to receive communion, as those participating in a state of sin are 'guilty of the flesh and blood of Christ'.¹⁴⁹ His *Large Catechism* and the *Tridentine Catechism* – both aimed at a well-educated audience – promoted the traditional method of penance, but the *Small Catechism* removed one of the obstacles that, according to the Protestants, had prevented the assurance of forgiveness. Myers has noted that visitation records from the mid-sixteenth century suggest that there was a widespread preference for Protestant confession, even in areas loyal to Catholicism.¹⁵⁰ The *Small Catechism*, being influenced by popular sentiment and political direction, reflected this preference and, in so doing, tacitly changed the meaning of Catholic confession.

dem gerechten Urtheile des Allmächtigen vorbehalten': J. Buehl, 'das Verfahren des V. oder des Grossmüthigen, Herzogs in Baiern', *Oberbayerisches Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte* 2 (1840), pp. 234-264, p. 249.

¹⁴⁷ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, p. 69.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁴⁹ '[Er] ist auch schuldig an dem Lieb und Blut Christi': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 107.

¹⁵⁰ Myers, *Poor, Sinning Folk*, pp. 87-101.

Forgiveness

An expected and welcome consequence of confession was forgiveness. Yet, the requirements for forgiveness were contested throughout the sixteenth century. In a letter to Johann Staupitz in March 1518, Luther stated 'I teach that people should trust in nothing but Jesus Christ alone, not in prayers or merits or even in their own works', which led to conflict over the doctrine of justification, the associated benefits of good works, and the accrual of merit.¹⁵¹ Traditionally, the priest, by his authority to use the sacred keys of heaven, could employ the loosing key to forgive sins and absolve penitents. However, the way this forgiveness was communicated was another divisive issue between Protestants and Catholics. This section will consider this dispute and will explore what the catechisms taught regarding the manner in which forgiveness was to be conveyed. The second part will discuss the doctrine of justification in more depth.

Catholics believed that priests dispensed absolution, while Protestants believed that pastors only could announce or proclaim forgiveness. The difference is subtle: neither side sought to suggest that the clergy exercised God's power of forgiveness, although the Catholic practice of penance tended to disguise this. However, for Catholics, the actions of the priest were vital in recognising God's mercy, and, as explained in the *Tridentine Catechism*, the

¹⁵¹ 'Ego ... doceo, ne homines in aliud quicquam confidant, quam in solum Jesum Christum, non in orationes et merita, vel opera sua ...': Luther to Staupitz, March 31, 1518 in *Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe, Schreiben und Bedenken*, briefe 60, pp. 101-103, p. 102. Translated in Scott Hendrix, 'Luther', in David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 39-56, p. 40.

priest's position and authority renders him a judge and physician.¹⁵² The catechism confirmed that:

sins are pardoned by the absolution of the Priest ... The words of the Priest sacramentally and lawfully absolving us from our sins are to be accepted in the same sense as the words of Christ our Lord when He said to the paralytic: Son, be of good heart: thy sins are forgiven thee.¹⁵³

Trent's canons and decrees further supported the role of the priest as judge, and canon IX on the sacrament of penance anathematised those who claimed 'the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act, but a bare ministry of pronouncing and declaring sins to be forgiven to him who confesses'.¹⁵⁴ For his part, in his *Small Catechism*, Canisius confirmed that 'Christ has given the true sacred and consecrated priests power in and through this sacrament to forgive every penitent their sins'.¹⁵⁵ Canisius' *Large Catechism*, in line with the *Tridentine Catechism*, compared the priest to a 'judge and doctor'.¹⁵⁶ The *Large Catechism*, being more detailed, explained in depth the sacrament of penance and did so along thoroughly orthodox lines. The *Small Catechism*, however, avoided engaging with discourse on how sins are forgiven, other than teaching that it was effected by the priest.

In his handling of private confession, Luther did not focus on the confession itself. Rather, he transformed the process into an opportunity for an individual

¹⁵² *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 267, 292.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

¹⁵⁴ Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees*, p. 109.

¹⁵⁵ 'Christus dem recht geweyschten unnd geordneten Priester gewalt geben hat / in und durch diß Sacrament / einen jeden Beichtkind seine sünden zuverzeihen': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 108.

¹⁵⁶ 'Richter und Arzet': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 194.

penitent to find refuge for a 'heart that feels his sin and desires comfort ... that it finds and hears God's word, that God, through a person, releases and absolves from sin'.¹⁵⁷ However, these words of absolution were there purely to vocalise God's forgiveness, which does not come about *because* of the confessor's words. Luther reduced drastically the priest's role in the process of penance, transforming him from the traditional role of judge and doctor to someone who simply declares God's forgiveness to the penitent. This idea was not novel; the medieval rigorist, Johann Herolt, had taught that the 'priest simply announces absolution granted by God, rather than effecting forgiveness by his words'.¹⁵⁸ Here, however, the similarity ends because for Herolt, the focus of the penitential process was contrition, whereas for Luther, the entire crux of forgiveness rested on whether one had absolute faith in God's promise to forgive sins.

Like Luther, Calvin felt that absolution was announced to, rather than conferred on, the penitent by the pastor. Yet, neither the *Heidelberg Catechism* nor the church order encouraged the belief that absolution either was granted or announced by the pastor. It simply was not mentioned. The closest Frederick's catechism and church order went was to maintain after the general confession that, if one has faith in their heart, 'they shall not doubt that, through the holy suffering and death of Christ, they have forgiveness of all their sins and [will] certainly keep [it] as long as they persist in this

¹⁵⁷ 'Wo nun ein herz ist / das seine sunde fület und trost begeret ... das er Gottes wort findet und höret / das in Gott durch ein menschen von sunden entbindet und losspricht': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 120.

¹⁵⁸ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, p. 111.

principle'.¹⁵⁹ The pastor, therefore, announced forgiveness, but the word 'absolved' was not employed.

The fundamental doctrine that Luther and, later, Calvin challenged was justification. While the traditional process of forgiveness and reconciliation relied on good works and faith, through which the individual becomes justified, Luther argued that faith alone was the sole requirement. Justification by faith alone – *sola fide* – was a hallmark of Lutheran theology, although there was not a unilateral acceptance of it amongst all Lutherans. Osiander believed that justification comprised two parts: forgiveness, and reconciliation, which were achieved through the indwelling of Christ's divine nature. Forgiveness alone did not represent justification. Osiander published his views on justification in 1550, with the primary aim, according to Wengert, being to correct the theology of Melanchthon and his pupils.¹⁶⁰ Osiander disagreed with the idea that righteousness was forensically attributed and instead believed essential righteousness to consist of the indwelling of Christ, which renews the soul. Melanchthon drew from Luther's teachings regarding justification, arguing that there was a difference between being declared righteous, and being made righteous. Augustine had taught that both were different sides of the same coin, and that justification was imparted, while Luther had suggested that righteousness was imputed. This argument was developed in Luther's 1520 treatise, *On the Freedom of a Christian*, in which he connected faith with the

¹⁵⁹ 'Die sollen nicht zweiffelen / daß sie durch das heilig leiden unnd sterben Christi / vergebung aller ier sünden schon haaben / und gewißlich behalten / so lang sie in diesem fürnemen beharzen': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 45.

¹⁶⁰ Wengert, *Defending Faith*, pp. 11-12.

imputation of righteousness.¹⁶¹ In this treatise, Luther explained that ‘the believing soul, through the pledge of its faith in Christ, its husband, is free of all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of its husband Christ’.¹⁶² Building on this, Melancthon taught that God pronounced righteousness on the sinner in the heavenly court, and it is this legalistic approach that led to it being termed ‘forensic justification’.¹⁶³ Calvin also took a legal approach to justification, and both he and Melancthon emphasised the necessity of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness in salvation. Calvin wrote extensively against Osiander’s developed theory of justification, and Melancthon rejected it in 1566, as did the Formula of Concord in 1577.¹⁶⁴ Osiander defended his view of justification, arguing that he had taught the same thing for thirty years without causing a controversy, and drawing on Luther’s teachings for support.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, this was not a false claim and, moreover, aspects of Osiander’s theology can be seen in Luther’s 1520 treatise on Christian freedom. While Luther seemed in this treatise to support the idea that righteousness was imputed in this treatise, he emphasised also a union with Christ, declaring that faith ‘unites the soul with Christ, as the wife to the husband... Christ and the soul become one flesh’, thus the individual shares

¹⁶¹ Martin Luther, ‘Tractatus de Libertate Christiana’ (1520): *WA*, vol. 7, pp. 49-73.

¹⁶² ‘Ita fit anima fidelis per arram fidei suae in Christo, sponso suo, omnibus peccatis libera, a morte segura et ab inferno tuta, donata aeterna iustitia, vita, salute sponsi sui Christ’: *ibid.* p. 55.

¹⁶³ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 340.

¹⁶⁴ Timothy J. Wengert, ‘Philip Melancthon and John Calvin against Andreas Osiander: Coming to Terms with Forensic Justification’, in R. Ward Holder (ed.), *Calvin and Luther: The Continuing Relationship* (Göttingen, 2013), pp. 63-90, pp. 65-71.

¹⁶⁵ Vainio, *Justification and Participation in Christ*, p. 96.

in Christ's righteousness.¹⁶⁶ Vickers notes that Luther probably did not mean that the person has a share in Jesus' actual body, or essence, but this was what Osiander had understood Luther to mean.¹⁶⁷ The origins of the later furore over justification can be seen in this understanding, and it can be detected in the catechism where Osiander sought to connect both forgiveness and the indwelling of Christ's nature to the actions and authority of the pastor.

The opening paragraph of his sermon on the keys taught: 'where the preaching shall create fruit, there must God the Lord work in us through the Holy Spirit, but he does not work through the preacher if the preacher has not been ordained'.¹⁶⁸ Further, Osiander declared that, blessed are 'those who have faith in what his disciples preach, just as if they had heard the Lord Christ himself preach'.¹⁶⁹ He reiterated the point again, teaching that Jesus has commanded that pastors 'shall [forgive sin] in his name, and he is there secretly and invisibly, and works through the Holy Spirit, which serves as a powerful healing to our soul'.¹⁷⁰ This healing can be interpreted as a forerunner to the 'renewal' that Osiander saw as part of justification, and which was understood to occur through an individual's union with Christ.¹⁷¹

The point Osiander made in his catechism was that Jesus worked through the

¹⁶⁶ 'Quod animan copulat cum Christo, sicut sponsam cum sponso ... Christu et anima efficiuntur una caro': Luther, 'Tractatus de Libertate Christiana', p. 54.

¹⁶⁷ Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Illinois, 2006), p. 27.

¹⁶⁸ 'Dann wo die predig sol frucht schaffen / da mus Gott der Herr durch seinem heyligen Gaist mitwürcken / er würcket aber nichts durch die prediger / die er zu predigen nicht hat werordnet': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 265.

¹⁶⁹ 'Die da glaubt haben / was seine jungern predigten / eben also wol / als hetten sie den Herrn Christum selbs hören predigen': *ibid.*, p. 268.

¹⁷⁰ 'Das sie es in seinem namen thun sollen / und er ist haimlich und unsichtparlich auch darbey / und würckt durch den heiligen gaist / das e suns alles zu unnsere seel hayl krefftiglich diener': *ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁷¹ Steinmetz, 'Andreas Osiander', p. 67.

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‘properly ordained’ pastor. Justification comes about through Christ being in the individual and he is there through the words of the pastor, who was commanded to his post by Jesus who is received by the listener in faith. The foundations of this later controversy can be discerned clearly in the catechism. Whilst the Osianderian Controversy, ultimately, became much more theologically complex, it was rooted in the personal and localised dispute between Osiander and the Nuremberg Council.

Calvin, Melancthon, and Gnesio-Lutherans, such as Mathias Flacius and Joachim Mörlin, all rejected Osiander’s 1550 work on justification. They did not agree with his doctrine regarding essential righteousness and, furthermore, they were alarmed by Osiander’s perceived support of good works in accruing merit. They interpreted thesis 80 of Osiander’s defence of justification – ‘no other doctrine can motivate good works better than this heavenly doctrine of justification’ – to mean that good works contributed to justification.¹⁷² The *Heidelberg Catechism*, in stressing that human merit counted for naught, and that justification was a divine gift granted ‘out of pure grace’, was a rejection of this reading of Osiander’s text. Further, it represents an effort to promote cross-confessional concord because Calvinists, Philippists, and Gnesio-Lutherans all agreed that good works had no bearing on justification.¹⁷³ As we saw in chapter three, the catechisms united against common threats, such as the Anabaptists, and, in the example explored here,

¹⁷² Vainio considers whether there was any merit to the claims of Osiander’s opponents in *Justification and Participation in Christ*, pp. 101-102. See also Wengert, *Defending Faith*.

¹⁷³ ‘Auß lauter gnaden’: *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 23.

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the *Heidelberg Catechism* united the different strands of Lutheranism and Calvinism against Osiander's theology of justification.

Although it rejected Osiander's doctrine, the *Heidelberg Catechism* still had to overcome conflict between Lutherans and Calvinists. The catechism asked 'how are you right with God', and explained that this comes about 'only by true faith in Jesus Christ ... God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ as if I had never sinned, nor been a sinner ... All I need to do is accept the gift of God with a believing heart'.¹⁷⁴

This, and the following questions on justification, had a strongly Lutheran tone in that the sinner is aware that they have sinned and is inclined to evil, but is saved by faith.¹⁷⁵ Luther taught in his catechism that a sinner is justified in spite of his inclination to sin because of their faith. Calvin agreed that faith was central in justification, but he taught that faith is given by God: 'we, being adopted by God as His children, may obtain salvation and immortality in His grace and love'.¹⁷⁶ God chooses who will receive this faith in which the individual becomes justified, thus, predestination, or election, becomes a crucial, indeed motivating, force behind salvation. One's status as one of the elect cannot be lost, and the knowledge of such status comes through 'the disciplined and righteous actions of which God's chosen few are capable'.¹⁷⁷

The *Heidelberg Catechism's* questions on justification did not reflect this

¹⁷⁴ 'Wie bistu gerecht für Gott? ... Allein durch waren glauben in Jesum Christum ... Got ... mir die vollkommene gnugthuung / gerechtigkeit und heiligkeit Christi schencket uñ zurechnet / als hette ich nie keine sünde begangen noch gehabt ... wenn ich allein solch wolthat mit gläubigen herzen': *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

¹⁷⁶ Cited in Charlotte Methuen, *Luther and Calvin: Religious Revolutionaries* (Oxford, 2011), p. 152.

¹⁷⁷ Linda Woodhead, *An Introduction to Christianity* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 183.

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Reformed view, although it was alluded to briefly in the question regarding belief in the holy Catholic Christian Church, which mentioned 'a chosen community'.¹⁷⁸ In the questions on the sacraments, predestination – a supposedly central tenet of Calvinist doctrine – was absent. This omission surely would have caused concern for the Reformed faction in the Palatinate, and perhaps it did, but the catechetical silence loses much of its potency when the same silence can be seen in Calvin's Genevan catechism.¹⁷⁹

Berkhof has suggested that this indicates that election was not as central to Calvin's thought as has usually been believed.¹⁸⁰ This certainly would seem to be the case, and it allowed the Heidelberg catechists to avoid including such a divisive dogma in their catechism. Instead, the focus was on faith and the salvific redundancy of good works. The *Heidelberg Catechism* rejected the idea of being able to do good works in order to accrue merit, teaching that 'even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin'.¹⁸¹ In the sixteenth-century Protestant faith, justification was bound up with repentance and the importance and requirement of faith alone is central to its understanding. It is this that was emphasised in the *Heidelberg Catechism* rather than a focus on more contentious aspects, such as the theory of predestination.

While Osiander was the most insistent on the role of the pastor in achieving forgiveness, the other catechisms did not seek to remove them from the

¹⁷⁸ 'Ein auß̄erwelt gemein': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 39.

¹⁷⁹ Hendrikus Berkhof, 'The Catechism in Historical Context', in Bard Thompson, Hendrikus Berkhof, Edward Schweizer and Howard G. Hageman (eds.), *Essays on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Eugene, 2016 [1963]), pp. 75-92, pp. 89-90.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁸¹ 'Auch unsere beste werck in diesem leb̄ alle unvolkomen / uñ mit sünden befleckte sind': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 43.

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process. A defence of the clerical role in forgiveness was drawn from Matthew 18:18: 'What they bind on earth will also be bound in heaven, and what they loose on earth will also be loosed in heaven'. Matthew tells us that Christ gave these keys to Peter to whom the popes believed themselves to be successors. The Catholic Church based its authority on the doctrine of the keys, and used it to endow their priests with a status elevated above that of the laity. Luther did not challenge the power of the keys, but his 1530 work on the keys denounced their misuse at the hands of a tyrannical papacy and its priests, and this led to an attack on the ability of a pastor to forgive or to bind sins to individuals. In keeping with their medieval heritage, both Canisius' *Large Catechism* and the *Tridentine Catechism* referred to Matthew 18:18 to ground their teachings of penance in biblical authority. Luther's catechisms and the *Heidelberg Catechism* did not mention this verse, while by far the most frequent references to it were found in the sermons of Osiander, who mentioned it six times in his sermon on the keys alone. This highlights the difference in emphasis between Luther and Osiander; the former focused on faith, while the latter focused on the importance of contrition and confession and, by extension, the authority of the pastor. It was suggested earlier in this chapter that rigorist tendencies can be detected in Osiander's catechism, and these are made more apparent with his focus on the binding and releasing of sin. Centred on their divine institution and purpose as a justification for ecclesiastical use of the keys, Osiander's discussion of forgiveness was a direct challenge to Nuremberg Council and a rejection of Luther's transformation of their use.

The keys were a troubling concern in Nuremberg where citizens had accepted keenly Luther's early teachings that priests were subject to secular rulers and that Christ had not authorised the clergy to have power in the secular world.¹⁸² Their aversion to Catholic rituals extended to anything that could serve as a reminder, or act as an imitation, of Roman oppression and, by 1524, most of the inhabitants had stopped going to confession, believing that private auricular confession was not needed.¹⁸³ Acknowledging concerns over the misuse of the keys by corrupt or otherwise unworthy churchmen, Osiander confirmed in his catechism that if pastors 'forgive the sins of the unrepentant or unbelieving, or retain the sins of the repentant and believing, they do so wrongly and have no power, but they deceive themselves and other people with them'.¹⁸⁴ Osiander made two significant points regarding forgiveness. Firstly, it must be conveyed by an ordained pastor. Osiander spent the first third of his sermon justifying the need for, and benefits of, ordained pastors in the process of forgiveness. Yet, Luther did not mention this in his section on confession in either the *Small* or *Large* catechisms. It was something that unsettled him, but it was not the focus of his understanding of confession and forgiveness: faith was. Osiander's purpose was to defend clerical authority and the responsibilities that came with the office in order to justify why pastors ought to be trusted and respected. He explained that Christ is not with non-ordained pastors, therefore, 'the Holy Spirit does not work through their

¹⁸² Luther's 'Letter to the Christian Nobility' suggested that the secular body should be able to fulfil its office without hindrance, even if that extended to the spiritual realm and 'whether it is priest, bishop, and pope' ('wahrhaftig priester, bishoff, und bepst'): Martin Luther, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung* (1520), WA, vol. 6, pp. 381-469. p. 408.

¹⁸³ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 80.

¹⁸⁴ 'Den unbußfertigen oder den ungläubigen die sund vergebē / od den bußfertigē uñ galubigē die sund vorbehaltē / so thetē sie unrecht / uñ het kein krafft / sond sie verführeten sich selbs / uñ ander leut mit ihnen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 271.

preaching but they remain without fruit, indeed they do only harm ... they err and preach errors'.¹⁸⁵ Here, Osiander was echoing the terms of the Augsburg Confession, which decreed that only those called to the office of pastor could administer the sacraments.¹⁸⁶

The second point Osiander made in his sermon was that an ordained pastor acts and speaks in God's stead when he binds or forgives sin. Maintaining the link between divine institution and clerical authority that was expressed in his sermon on baptism, Osiander explained that 'Christ has commanded that [pastors] shall forgive people their sins so they can have peace and quiet in their conscience'.¹⁸⁷ Rittgers has commented that, in his treatise on the keys, Osiander's insistence on the unconditional nature of clerical absolution gave more power to the pastors than had the medieval Church.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, it may be suggested that Osiander was verbalising the natural consequence of rigorist preaching, which had seen Werden incline towards the belief that confessors bring about forgiveness.¹⁸⁹ In September 1533, Osiander declared that 'absolution with the laying of hands is not a sign of loosing but is the loosing itself', demonstrating continuity of thought with Werden.¹⁹⁰ The emphasis on the ability to bind or forgive sins in Osiander's catechism correlated with his

¹⁸⁵ 'Darumb würcke auch der Heylig gaise durch yhr predig nichts / sonder sie bleib on frucht / ia sie thut nur schaden ... der mus irr werden / und irrthumb predigen': *ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁸⁶ *Anzeigung und bekantnus des Glaubens unnd der lere / so die adpellirenden Stende Kei. Maiestet auff netzigen tag zu Augsburg oberantwort habend* (Erfurt, 1530), p. 17.

¹⁸⁷ 'Christo bevel haben / das sie den leutē yhre sund vergeben sollen / so kont yhr frid unnd rhu in ewern gewissen haben': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 277.

¹⁸⁸ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 273fn.

¹⁸⁹ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, p. 112.

¹⁹⁰ 'Also auch in der absolutio ist das wort mit handtaufflegen nicht ein zeichen der entbindung, sonder es ist die entbindung selbs': AOGA, vol. 5, p. 489.

later defence of justification, which highlighted the actions and words of the pastor in bringing about both forgiveness and the indwelling nature of Jesus.

Osiander's doctrine of justification, particularly the aforementioned thesis 80, was perceived by fellow Lutherans to have connections to Catholicism. For Catholics, satisfaction contributed to justification and was a core feature of their system of penance. It was the performance of a physical punishment that was endured in order to be reconciled with God and the Church. From the twelfth century, the focus on satisfaction became less and increased emphasis was placed on contrition.¹⁹¹ By the sixteenth century, these works of satisfaction included almsgiving, fasting and praying, although additional works, such as pilgrimages, could be counted also. Human agency in the process of justification, either through the bestowal of indulgences or the performance of works of merit, was undermined by Luther's doctrine of faith alone. Striking at the heart of the Catholic system of penance, Protestants denied that good works, or any human effort, could contribute to their salvation, forcing Catholics to defend their own doctrine.

The Council of Trent anathematised justification by faith alone in its 1547 decree on justification. Later, the *Tridentine Catechism* affirmed that:

through their works done by the power of God, [people] are able, on the one hand, to satisfy God's law, as far as their human and mortal condition will allow; and, on the other, they can merit eternal life, to the

¹⁹¹ R.N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passport to Paradise* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 13.

fruition of which they will be admitted if they die in the state of God's grace.¹⁹²

Canisius' *Large Catechism* echoed this, teaching that the penitent 'shall not erase his sins with tears only, but with works of improvement to offset the past sin, so it will not be attributed to him'.¹⁹³ In contrast, the *Small Catechism* stated merely that satisfaction comprises part of the sacrament and did not go any further than that. Good works were not directly mentioned in his questions on penance at all and, in the subsequent chapter on Christian righteousness, Canisius stated simply that two things contribute to righteousness: 'the first standeth in the knowledge and avoidance of evil or sin. The second, however, is in the exercise of good or righteous works'.¹⁹⁴ Such good works, Canisius explained, include 'to fast, to pray and to give alms ... the person becomes justified not from belief alone, but also from works'.¹⁹⁵ Though the *Small Catechism* was less detailed than the *Large Catechism*, these discrepancies in the questions on penance hinted at something deeper than the relative size of the catechisms. Palmer Wandel has commented on the significance of placement in the catechism: the layout of the texts taught 'different constellations of meaning'.¹⁹⁶ The ordering of Canisius' catechisms represented a journey from wisdom to justice and this explains the presence of chapter five on Christian justice, which discussed the different categories of

¹⁹² *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 302.

¹⁹³ 'Soll nit allein mit thränen seine sünde außleschen / sonder mit den wercken der besserung zu decken die vergangene sünd / auff das si im nit zugerechnet werden': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 203.

¹⁹⁴ 'Das erst stehet in erkantnuß unnd vermeýdung des bosen / oder der sünden. Das ander aber inn übung unnd würckung des guten / oder der gerechtigkeit': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 114.

¹⁹⁵ 'Es seind fasten / betten / unnd allmüsen geben ... der mensch nit auß demm glauben allain / sonder auch auß den wercken gerecht fertiget wirt': *ibid.*, pp.128-129.

¹⁹⁶ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 32.

sins and virtues. The sacraments are part of wisdom, which comprises also the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue. The separation of 'justice' meant the catechisms did not focus on confession throughout, and O'Malley has commented that this structure represents a 'break with the preoccupation of sin' that was prevalent in earlier catechisms.¹⁹⁷ This is a plausible and likely interpretation. The division of the catechisms enabled Canisius to convey Catholic doctrine regarding justification but, in the *Small Catechism*, it meant also that penance could be taught in a way that appealed to popular sentiment and inclination. Certainly, the chapter on justice imparted teachings regarding sin, the virtues, and the benefits of good works, but these are disconnected from the questions on penance. Moreover, in the *Small Catechism*, other than a brief reference to the sacraments of penance and communion in helping to avoid sin, there was little explicit connection to penance at all. The chapter was Canisius' most overt catechetical response to Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone, but it refrained from devolving into polemic, and focused on the positive benefits of faith and good works. Rather than fear, Canisius promoted hope – a clear reaction to Protestant accusations regarding Catholic justification. The questions on penance in the *Small Catechism* focused attention on the individual and their relationship with God, which can be seen as a further indication that Canisius was attempting to overcome Protestant objections to the Catholic sacrament of penance.

¹⁹⁷ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 123.

Binding Sin

Thus far, this chapter has discussed the processes by which sins were forgiven, and has considered the role of the priest or pastor in its dispensation. Yet forgiveness was but one side of the coin; if anyone was not deemed repentant enough, or continued to sin with no sign of improvement, then their transgressions could be bound to them. This process had spiritual and temporal consequences but the principle of discipline, upon which these consequences rested, was by no means agreed either between Protestants and Catholics, or between Lutherans and Calvinists. The ultimate disciplinary power that could be deployed was exclusion from the Church. This exclusion can be divided into two tiers: one was the small ban, which prevented sinners from receiving Communion, and the other was the large ban, which affected the temporal affairs of the individual. If there was no discernible repentance or improvement, this latter exclusion could become permanent. Regarding the small ban, Luther taught in his catechism that, if people were true Christians then, they would want to go to confession willingly, but that 'if you want it contemptuously and are proud to go un-confessed, so we conclude ... that you are no Christian and also should not enjoy the Sacraments ... you can have no forgiveness of sins'.¹⁹⁸ While considering the small ban in his catechism, Luther did not touch upon the power of excommunication. For an understanding of his opinion on this, we must turn to his 1520 *Treatise Concerning the Ban*. In this, Luther declared that the inner fellowship with Christ:

¹⁹⁸ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 122.

may neither be given nor taken away by anyone, be he bishop, pope, even an angel or any other creature ... [This fellowship] no ban can reach, but only the unbelief, or sin, of the person himself, [by these] he may ban himself, and thus separate himself from the grace, life, and salvation [of the fellowship].¹⁹⁹

While popes and bishops could ban a sinner from Communion, they could not do anything which would affect his standing in the temporal world because 'to wield the temporal sword belongs to the emperor, to kings, to princes, and to the rulers of this world, and not at all to the spiritual estate, whose sword is not to be of iron, but is to be spiritual, which is the Word and command of God'.²⁰⁰ Armed with this understanding of Luther's theology concerning excommunication, it is unsurprising that his catechism discussed only the small ban because it was not within the remit of the Church to go further; indeed, it was impossible for the clergy to go further because to do so would be to go against the Word of God.

However, the ramifications of this approach appalled Osiander who was of the unshakeable opinion that the Nuremberg Council had overstepped the mark by forbidding the clergy to have sole recourse to the small ban. Osiander did not agree with Luther's teachings on church discipline, and was discomfited by the clause in the 1528 *Brandenburg-Nuremberg Visitation Order* that

¹⁹⁹ 'Diese gemeinschaft mag weder geben noch nemen irgent ein mensch / er sey bischoff / babst / ia auch engel oder all creature / sonder ... Also mag auch hie her kein Bann reychen noch sein / dann allein der unglaub oder sundt des menschen selbs / der mag sich selbs damit verbannen / uñ also von der gemeinschaft / gnaden / leben / uñ seligkeit absondern': Martin Luther, *Ein Sermon von dem Bann* (Nürnberg, 1520), p. aia.

²⁰⁰ '[Dann] mit weltlichen schwert zu handeln / höret zu dem Keyser, künigen, fürsten und herschafften der welt und gar nichts dem geystliche standt / des schwerdt nit eyßnen / sonder geystlich sein sol / welches ist das wort und gebot gottes': *ibid.*, p. aii.

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required the clergy to consult the city magistrates before imposing the ban.²⁰¹

Writing against the backdrop of local politics in Nuremberg, Osiander

lamented that:

Though, now such a fine, wholesome, godly order to punish public, vexing sins has been completely broken, wasted and suppressed, we should not, therefore, scorn and cast aside the power and use of the keys. For those who have incited such disorder, and still hinder it being improved nowadays, certainly will find their judge, there may be no doubt.²⁰²

For Osiander, the removal of their sole recourse to the ban, combined with the implementation of general confession and absolution, bankrupted the pastors of any vestige of authority. In response to this threat, Osiander emphasised the power of the clergy in his catechism, and one of his concluding statements in the 'Office of the Keys' clarified that:

the minister of Christ [who] acts with us through his divine command, particularly when they exclude publically unrepentant sinners from the Christian community and release them when they regret their sins and want to improve, that is as powerful and certain in heaven as [though] it is acted by our Lord Christ himself.²⁰³

²⁰¹ 'Und ob sich jemand unter dem cristlichs pfarrvolckh durch offenliche sund und laster so strefflich und ungeschickt alten wurd, das er inn vermog gotlichs worts billich verpannt warden sollt, den soller die prediger nach geschehener vermanung den weltlichen obrigkaitten anzaigen, damit sie durch dieselben eintweder gewarnt oder mit zimblicher straff zue besserung gezogen wurden. Ob aber die obrigkaitten in sollichem leßlich erscheinen oder sich die angezaigten strafwirdigen personen nit pessern wurden, allßdann soll gegen dem der denselben der cristenlich pan, wie sich dem wort und bevelch Gottes nach gepurt, gebraucht werden': *Die brandenburgisch-nürnbergische Visitationsordnung (1528, zwischen Juni 15 und August 22)*, AOGA, vol. 3, pp. 221-222.

²⁰² 'Wiewol nun solch feine, hailsame, göttliche ordnung, die offentliche, ergerlichen sund zu straffen, gantz und gar zerrüt, verwust und untergedruckt ist, so sollen wir doch darumb den gewalt und prauch der schlussen nicht verachten und hinwerfen; dann die solche unordnung angericht haben und noch heutigs tags hinder, das es nicht gepessert wirdt, die warden ihren richter wol finden, das darfs kains zweyfels': AOGA, vol. 5, p. 325.

²⁰³ 'Was die beruffnen diener Christi aus seinē göttlichen bevelh mit uns handeln / sonderlich / wann sie die offentlichen unbußfertigen sunder von der Christlichen gemain außschliessen / und die / so yhr sund beweren / und sich bessern wollen / wider entpinden / das es alles so krefftig uñ gewiß sey / auch im himel / als handelte es under lieber Herr Christus selbs': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 277.

Osiander was not necessarily at odds with Luther over clerical jurisdiction but, while this was not the main concern of the Wittenberg theologian, conflict in Nuremberg meant that it was Osiander's primary focus.

Calvin believed that discipline was an important function of the church because the power to excommunicate and reconcile sinners helped to unite the Christian community, and served as a method of promoting and maintaining order.²⁰⁴ Calvin's Geneva established a Consistory in 1541, which was comprised of the city's ministers and a number of magistrates. Its purpose was to oversee and discipline the morals of parishioners. The Consistory had the power to admonish or excommunicate men and women brought before it, and it could send offenders to Geneva's secular court for corporal punishment. Despite the harsh, and occasionally shaming, punishments that could be inflicted, Calvin stressed that the primary purpose of discipline was to bring about reconciliation both with God and the Church and, as such, he preferred mild, rather than harsh, treatment.²⁰⁵ The difference between Calvin and Luther was that the latter was much more vague regarding the establishment of church discipline and structure. Whilst Luther saw the Church and state as having separate responsibilities, in practice, the Reformation was shaped by secular rulers and magistrates.²⁰⁶ In the Palatinate, the magistrates had achieved authority over Church discipline by the 1560s, and a controversy erupted over the suggested establishment of

²⁰⁴ Nelson Burnett, *John Calvin, Myth and Reality*, p. 55.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

²⁰⁶ Methuen, *Luther and Calvin*, pp. 169-170.

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a consistory modelled on that of Geneva, which would be given independent power of excommunication.²⁰⁷ Caspar Olevianus, with the support of Calvin and Theodore Beza, was an advocate of the plans to implement a consistory, but he was opposed firmly by members of the government and church. Thomas Erastus emerged as the leader of this opposing faction and he was a member of the newly established Church council. It is little wonder then that the catechism, authored by Olevianus, taught the exact opposite to the 1564 church council order (*Kirchenratornung*), which was influenced by Erastus, regarding discipline.²⁰⁸

The *Heidelberg Catechism* taught that anyone who has shown himself to be 'unbelieving and ungodly' should not be admitted to the Lord's Supper and that, 'according to the instruction of Christ and his apostles, the Christian Church is obliged to exclude such [people], until they improve their lives, through the office of the keys'.²⁰⁹ The catechism went on to teach that anyone who does not reform their life, despite encouragement and warnings, and:

Or those who after being instructed by the church ... but do not attend to this admonition, they are excluded [by the church] from the Christian community by being forbidden the holy sacraments, and by God himself from the Kingdom of Christ.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Charles Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate: A Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 135-136.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

²⁰⁹ 'Derhalben die Christliche Kirch schuldig ist / nach der ordnung Christi uñ seiner Aposteln / solche / biß zu besserung ires lebens / durch dz ampt der Schlüssel außzuschliessen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, p. 57.

²¹⁰ 'Oder denen so von der kirchē darzu verordnet sind ... uñ so sie sich an derselbē vermanung auch nit keren / von inen durch verbietung der heligē Sacrament auß der Christlichē gemein / uñ von Gottes selbst / auß dem Reich Christi warden außgeschlossen': *ibid.*, p. 59.

It was clear in the catechism that, when it came to applying this sanction, the power lay with the church. However, this was in stark contrast to the church council order, which laid down instructions on how excommunication was to be carried out, and where it was apparent that such a powerful tool was to be wielded by a 'fundamentally state-controlled body'.²¹¹ Moreover, the church order, to which the catechism was appended, qualified:

that it is not less necessary that a Christian and lawful ban be kept in the Christian congregation according to the command of Christ ... and for the well-being and need of the Church. But so that this exclusion from the use of the Sacraments does not fall into abuse and disorder, as happened under the papacy ... in every place ... a number of honourable and God-fearing men from the community should be appointed who, on behalf of and in the name of the entire community, in addition to the ministers ... [shall] isolate [the unrepentant sinner] from the Christian congregation by forbidding the holy sacrament of Christian communion until they promise improvement and show it.²¹²

In the catechism, the church had the power to discipline but, in both the church order and church council order, excommunication could be implemented only with the co-operation of the state, thus the responsibility of the keys was shared.

As the ability to bind sins was nominally shared, was the power to forgive sin also divided? The *Heidelberg Catechism* stated simply that excluded persons 'are received again as members of Christ and the church when they promise

²¹¹ Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate*, p. 138.

²¹² 'Ist auch nicht minder notwendig daß ein Christlicher unnd rechtmessiger bann / von wegen des befelchs Christi ... unnd der Kirchen heil unnd notturfft in der Christlichen gemein behalten werde. Auff daß aber diese ausschliessüg vom brauch der Sacrament nit in mißbrauch und unordnung gerahte, wie in Bapsthumb geschehen ... an jedem ort ... ettliche erbare und Gottsforchtig Menner auß der gmein sollen verordnet weren / welche von wegen / unnd in namen der ganzen gemein neben den Kirchendienern ... mit verbietung der heiligen Sacrament von der Christlichē gemein absondern / biß sie besserung verheissen und erzeigen': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, pp. 52a-53.

and demonstrate true improvement'.²¹³ Oddly, the church order made no mention of the re-admittance of excommunicated sinners. The reason for this omission is not clear, but tentative suggestions can be made. Firstly, if it was stipulated how one could be readmitted into the church, the punishment of being excommunicated would have been diluted. In order to achieve a pious and, more importantly, orderly populace, the fear of excommunication from the Christian community had to be emphasised. A second reason may be that, in the absence of guidance in the church order, pastors would be compelled to check with the magistrates before re-admitting a sinner to the church, thus acknowledging secular control of the loosing key. This suggestion serves to reinforce the strength the temporal arm had over the church. Gunnoe explains that the reason the ecclesiastical organization of the Palatinate did not become fully Calvinist in 1563-64 was because ecclesiastical control went against the church-state relations of the post-Reformation era.²¹⁴ The Magisterial Reformation was very much alive in the Palatinate and can be charted all the way back to Frederick II (r.1544-56).²¹⁵ Moreover, the elector was wary of unrestricted church control, and the creation of a church council was a way to prevent arbitrary clerical power. Finally, Erastus, an influential counsellor and a key figure in the controversy, was content with the state having power.²¹⁶ Thus, the church order and church council order can be seen to have reflected the influence of Erastus

²¹³ 'Wideruñ als glieder Christi und der Kirchem / angenommen / weñ sie ware besserung verheissen uñ erzeigen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, p. 59.

²¹⁴ Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate*, p. 138.

²¹⁵ Friedrich II was the first Lutheran Elector in the Palatinate but was very cautious in the implementation of the evangelical faith. His church order retained a number of Catholic practices. See Atherton, 'The Pursuit of Power', p. 40.

²¹⁶ Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate*, pp. 138-139.

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and his supporters. On the other hand, the *Heidelberg Catechism* reflected the opinion of Olevianus and his allies.

The other likely author of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Zacharias Ursinus, was the leader of the Reformed movement in the Palatinate, and had published his own catechism in 1562, only a year before the *Heidelberg Catechism* was printed.²¹⁷ In this, he had taken a firmly Reformed approach towards church and magisterial discipline, teaching:

The first and foremost difference is that the magistrate punishes and corrects wrongdoers with physical force, whereas the church only admonishes verbally and excludes from communion. Second, the magistrate is content with the execution of justice through punishment whereas the church seeks the correction and salvation of those whom it admonishes. Third, the magistrate proceeds right away to punishment; whereas the church admonishes in a brotherly way, so that the magisterial punishment may be avoided by early correction. Fourth, the magistrate does not punish many of the sins that harm the church and must be condemned by it.²¹⁸

He taught that a version of the Genevan Consistory should be established to 'watch over the conduct of the Church'.²¹⁹ The *Heidelberg Catechism*, with its instruction that those who did not respond to admonishment should be denied the sacrament and be 'excluded [by] the Church from the Christian congregation', echoed Ursinus' own views regarding discipline.²²⁰ The discrepancies between the church council order and the catechism point to

²¹⁷ Bierma outlines the uncertainty of this date in 'Introduction', in Lyle D. Bierma (ed.), *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechisms: Sources, History, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 137-140, pp. 137-138.

²¹⁸ Lyle D. Bierma, 'The Larger Catechism', in Lyle D. Bierma (ed.), *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechisms: Sources, History, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 163-223, p. 223.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

²²⁰ 'Der kirchen ... auß der Christlichē gemein ... werden außgeschlossen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 60.

the difficulties Frederick faced in pursuing a reform of the Church in the Palatinate. The eventual outcome was a contradiction but, as far as the catechism was concerned, it would offend neither Lutherans nor Calvinists in its broader approach to discipline.

For the Catholics, the matter should have been more straightforward. Their doctrine of the keys taught that the Church held the keys to the kingdom of heaven and, thus, had the authority to bind and remit sins. The *Tridentine Catechism* confirmed this, stating that the keys are 'deposited with the Church, that to her has been confided the power of remitting sins [and] of denouncing excommunication'.²²¹ Canisius obviously wanted to protect this privilege, but was cautious in doing so in his *Small and Smaller Catechism*. Indeed, his discussion of punishment was placed in chapter one, which taught lessons on the Creed. He explained that anyone outside of the Church 'should be reported by all true Catholics, especially the heretics and schematics, who are considered an evil plague, [and] ... if anyone does not listen to the Church they should publicly be held as a heathen'.²²² He was careful, though, not to determine expressly who had the power to implement this punishment. In this way, Canisius was similar to Luther, whose catechetical discussion on how to bind sins was equally unspecific. Despite his backing of the small ban being imposed by the clergy, Luther was no clearer in the catechisms about who could or should ultimately ban someone from the Church than was Canisius.

²²¹ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 108.

²²² '[Sie] sollen auch von den Catholischen billich alle gemelte / und sonderlich aber die Keze uñ Schismatici / als ein schadliche Pestilenz geflohen und gescheut werden ... So jemandt die Kirchen nit höret / der soll con dir als ein Hayd unnd publican gehalten werden': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), pp. 52-53.

Luther's reliance on the state for support in the early years of the Reformation goes a long way in explaining why he was circumspect in his approach to church discipline, and it is likely that Canisius was ambiguous for the same reason. Soergel has explained that the Bavarian Dukes were keen to adopt a model similar to that of Spain, which had reformed the Church through a partnership between secular and ecclesiastical authorities.²²³ Duke Albrecht V created the clerical council in 1570, whose function was to oversee the local clergy and to confirm the orthodoxy of state officials. Ultimately, it 'transformed the duchy's priesthood into functionaries who served as officials within a state church'.²²⁴ This church council was comprised of both laymen and clergy and paved the way for a concordat of 1583 in which the papacy recognised the duke's control over the resources and personnel of the church.²²⁵ Canisius' *Small Catechism* acknowledged this gradual transferral of power because it did not emphasise ecclesiastical control over the power to discipline sinners. Canisius and his fellow Jesuits were reliant on the duke's support to preserve Catholicism in Bavaria. There had been concerted attempts by Protestants to infiltrate the duchy, the dukes had been prepared to allow key concessions in order to maintain their authority, including granting the lay chalice – as will be discussed in the next chapter – and strategically important territories surrounding Bavaria had embraced the Lutheran faith. Canisius' *Small Catechism* reflected the uncertain wisdom of implementing a strict form of Catholic doctrine, and recognised the ambition of secular

²²³ Philip M. Soergel, 'Protestantism in the Age of Catholic Renewal', in Ulrika Rublack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformation* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 253-273, p. 257.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

²²⁵ Hughes, *Early Modern Germany, 1477-1806*, p. 72.

authorities to assert control over the Church. He did not grant the state power over excommunication in the catechism explicitly, but it is what he did not say regarding the church's authority that is important here. It also was in contrast to the *Tridentine Catechism*, which taught that 'excommunicated persons are not members of the Church because they have been cut off by her sentence'.²²⁶ According to the Council of Trent, it is clear that the Church had the authority to impose this punishment. The canons and decrees were far more explicit, stating that 'the sword of excommunication is not to be rashly used: when an execution can be made on property or person, censures are to be abstained from: the civil magistrate shall not interfere herein'.²²⁷ Canisius was aware that this approach likely would do more harm than good in Bavaria, thus avoided the degree of precision that can be seen in the *Tridentine Catechism*.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the processes of confession and forgiveness was one that saw conflict not only over theology but that this extended into the realms of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and authority. The Protestant catechisms were influenced by the politics of their local territories, and both Luther and Osiander anchored their discussions of confession and forgiveness on those principles they believed were the most important to convey. For Luther, this was the significance of justification by faith alone while, for Osiander, it was the preservation of clerical authority. The *Heidelberg Catechism* has been

²²⁶ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 101.

²²⁷ Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees*, p. 256.

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shown to have attempted to unite Lutherans and Calvinists in the Palatinate by avoiding contentious issues surrounding Church discipline. As with the Lutheran catechisms, it was heavily influenced by the authors' views on confession and forgiveness, but it reflected also the concerns of Elector Frederick III, who faced accusations of heresy from fellow princes. It was crucial for both domestic and foreign policy that his catechism appealed to Lutherans as well as to Calvinists. The discussion of the Catholic catechisms has suggested that Canisius used structural placement and textual omissions to reshape the sacrament of penance for his German readers. This is most obvious in his *Small Catechism*, although glimmers can be detected in the *Large Catechism*. As with the Protestant catechisms, the ambition of the secular authority influenced its composition and altered the 'knowledge' that was conveyed to the readers. These themes will continue to be developed in the following chapter on communion, where it will be suggested that lay agency and secular policies drastically impacted upon the identity of Catholic and Protestant communion.

Chapter Five: ‘Those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ, eat and drink judgment on themselves’: The Sacrament of the Eucharist

Closely connected to baptism and penance, the Eucharist played a vital role in the lives of early modern Christians.¹ Participation in this sacrament was not to be taken for granted, treated lightly, or undertaken in haste. Indeed, such was its importance to Christians that no other sacrament was the focus of as much debate during the Reformation as the Eucharist.² Though both Protestants and Catholics acknowledged its sacramental status, they were divided deeply over its doctrinal meaning, associated rituals, and the manner in which the faithful received the body and blood of Christ. Even its name was disputed.³ As with the previous two chapters, this chapter seeks to explore how the catechisms addressed these areas of doctrinal and ritual contention in conjunction with seeking to understand how the catechists responded to the concerns and expectations of the laity.

Given the centrality of the Eucharist in Christianity, it is unsurprising that it has been the focus of much scholarly attention, with myriad studies charting the geographical development of the sacrament across the Christian west, as well as providing accounts of its theological and doctrinal evolution.⁴ Theologically,

¹ See Moger, *Priestly Resistance to the Early Reformation*, especially chapter six, pp. 101-124.

² Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 262.

³ This chapter will use Eucharist when discussing the sacrament more broadly, although it will use the confessions' preferred name(s) when discussing it more specifically.

⁴ For a general overview of recent historiography on communion see Amy Nelson Burnett, 'The Social History of Communion and the Reformation of the Eucharist', *Past and Present* 211 (2011), pp. 77-119, pp. 77-80. See also Adolph Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Liturgie und des Religiösen Volksleben* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902); Edward J. Kilmartin SJ, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, Robert J. Daly (ed.) (Collegeville, 1998); Gary Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, 1999); Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the*

there are numerous studies considering the development of Protestant and Catholic doctrine regarding the Eucharist. The reasons why Protestants rejected the Catholic Mass have been outlined in great depth, yet there needs to be more research into how this theology was applied on a practical level. Nelson Burnett has suggested that research on the social and cultural history of Protestant communion is in its early stages, and those studies that do exist tend to focus on Francophone Europe rather than the German lands.⁵ Joel Amberg's recent study on the Eucharistic conflicts in Augsburg in the 1520s has gone some way to addressing this gap. A key tenet of his monograph stresses the role of the laity in the movement towards a symbolic understanding of the Real Presence: they 'formed the backbone of this movement and, where it was successful, played an instrumental role in ensuring its advance'.⁶ Alongside the need for more local studies, there is also a gap in research on how theological teachings regarding the Eucharist were imparted to the faithful. Rubin's study on the Eucharist in late medieval culture has sought to analyse 'the language of religion' which, she argues, was missing from the body of scholarship.⁷ Building on this, Palmer Wandel has argued most recently that 'sacraments could be defined by words, learned in a codex, and then received "worthily" by a Christian in possession of "true knowledge"'.⁸ Yet, this understanding is problematic. Previous chapters have demonstrated that doctrine and ritual could be altered,

Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy (Cambridge, 2006); Ian Christopher Levy, Gary Macy and Kristen Van Ausdall (eds.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2012); Lee Palmer Wandel (ed.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Leiden, 2014).

⁵ Nelson Burnett, 'Social History of Communion', pp. 78-79.

⁶ Van Amberg, *The Real Presence*.

⁷ Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 5.

⁸ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 275.

manipulated, or ignored by catechists: there were clear differences in emphasis regarding what 'knowledge' is, and how much of this 'knowledge' should be offered in the catechisms. The Eucharist, one of the fundamental pillars of Christianity, was treated in the same manner. 'True knowledge' regarding communion was diluted, or recast, in ways that were suitable for the individual location, catechist, or patron. In comparing what was taught in the catechisms, Palmer Wandel's methodology does not fully engage with how this dilution shaped the ways in which their users received, and were encouraged to understand, this knowledge. Rubin argues that 'in the making of a unitary sacramental system, the language of religion was also made to possess gaps, inconsistencies, and contradictions', thus making the matter of context vital in determining how catechetical instruction was understood and interpreted.⁹ This present chapter, therefore, aims to add to Palmer Wandel's discussion on the catechetical treatment of the Eucharist by investigating not just *what* the text of the Eucharistic questions and commentary taught, but *how* potentially this impacted on local worship, as well as the ways in which the author/patron influenced and shaped the knowledge that was imparted.

Despite recent efforts, much of the historiography on the Eucharist serves to widen the gap between the pillars of theological understanding and practical application. While this approach has its uses, it fails fully to appreciate how each pillar could affect the other. For example, a recent study on the Eucharist in the Reformation brings together the work of scholars on a broad

⁹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 8-9.

range of aspects regarding communion.¹⁰ Yet, the majority of the chapters purely focus on individual topics, for instance, Luther's theology, or Reformed liturgical practices, without offering a cross-confessional analysis of how these different faiths interacted and collided with each other, both doctrinally and at the level of praxis. However, given the importance of the Eucharist to both ecclesiastical and lay parishioners, it is crucial that studies focus on how the differences between each group were addressed and overcome.

In keeping with the previous two chapters on baptism and penance, the overarching aims of this chapter are to demonstrate that the catechisms' treatment of communion, though more explicit in their adherence to strict Catholic/Lutheran/Reformed doctrine than the other sacraments, still formed a largely united front against those groups considered fanatical, such as Zwinglians and Anabaptists. It will focus, in turn, on the theological changes introduced over the course of the century, including the controversies surrounding the doctrines of the real presence and transubstantiation, and how these developments affected the traditional role of the priest as mediator. At the level of praxis, this chapter will address how the theological changes impacted the laity's experience of communion, as far as can be determined by the catechisms and church orders. This section also will draw attention to how the Protestants, particularly in the Palatinate, made efforts to replace the assurances received through Catholic doctrine and rituals with a form of comfort that was in accordance with Reformed and evangelical doctrine, but

¹⁰ Palmer Wandel (ed.), *The Eucharist in the Reformation*.

that still appealed to the people. In particular, this will be demonstrated by looking at masses for the dead.

Secondly, the chapter will demonstrate links between the outward conformity demanded by the state and catechists, and the inner comfort offered by the sacrament, which are highlighted by the debates over worthy reception and communion in both kinds. Finally, the chapter will continue to acknowledge how the aims of individual catechists could influence the various emphases placed on certain aspects of Eucharistic theology and ceremonial practices, paying specific attention to the impact of the Protestant rejection of the sacrificial nature of Mass on the elevation of the host, and the use of priestly vestments. Collectively, these aspects will continue to argue against the viability of seeing catechisms as shapers of a uniform religious identity. The experience of receiving the Eucharist was far too varied and fraught with potential to alarm, frighten, or anger the laity living in diverse areas of the empire and beyond. Even for this most sacred of sacraments, the catechisms had to allow for accommodation in an age of confessional uniformity and, in doing so, helped to keep alive local traditions and cultures.

The methodology of the chapter will focus on particular catechisms in more depth regarding individual points. For instance, the Protestant faiths all promoted communion in both kinds, which means there is less to draw on from these catechisms, and inevitably the focus will fall far more on the differences between the Catholic catechisms in relation to how each responded to the Protestant challenges. Equally, specific catechisms will

reveal a degree of continuity in the individual messages the catechists and patrons sought to convey. For example, though evidence of his earlier departure from orthodox Lutheranism can be seen in his exposition on communion, Osiander's overarching concern to protect clerical authority in the administration of the sacrament was strengthened. For Luther, his concern to undermine his opponents was emphasised. The *Heidelberg Catechism's* questions on communion will demonstrate further Elector Frederick's ambition to unite his territory under a fairly loose interpretation of the Reformed faith, especially when comparing the catechism to the instructions provided in the church order. For Canisius, his treatment of communion had to be constructed carefully to reflect the will of his political and religious superiors. As will be discussed in greater depth below, Canisius' political superiors were keen, at various times, to make concessions regarding the Eucharist that were not in strict accordance with Tridentine doctrine. Thus, the Jesuit's words regarding communion were selected to appear to be doctrinally faithful but, in practice, possessed the potential to be interpreted in a variety of ways. This will become especially clear with a direct comparison of his catechisms to that of the *Tridentine Catechism*, which remained firm in its absolute rejection of Protestant doctrine.

In keeping with the other sacraments, the Eucharist combined doctrine with visible ceremonies and actions that served to impress God's power and mystery onto the parishioners. Further, it reminded the assembled congregation of Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross. Yet, despite its integral position in the sixteenth-century church, the Eucharist did not show

signs of becoming a fully developed sacrament until the twelfth century. Prior to then, many fundamental concepts were still to be determined, including the nature of sacramental change, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the exact moment the transformation of the Eucharistic elements occurs, and the symbolic link between matter and God.¹¹ The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) stipulated that the laity receive communion at least once a year at Easter and, by the late medieval period, regularly attending mass was a central feature of worship, although parishioners did not always receive the Eucharist. The Eucharist had very close connections to the sacrament of penance, with participants required to be contrite and humble, and to conduct themselves in a decorous fashion.¹² Indeed, the fifteenth-century catechist, Dietrich Kolde, had criticised those 'who go to church and disturb the service with chatting, laughing and other mischief'.¹³

The evolution of the Eucharist as a sacrament was not a smooth process. In the eleventh century, clashes between ecclesiastical authorities and secular counterparts had forced the Church to defend and define the sacramentality of the Eucharist, resulting in a growing emphasis on the role of priest as mediator and his ability to effect a transformation of the bread and

¹¹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 14. Useful works on the Eucharist in the medieval period include Gary Macy, 'The Medieval Inheritance', in Lee Palmer Wandel (ed.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 15-37; Anne T. Thayer, 'Learning to Worship in the Later Middle Ages: Enacting Symbolism, Fighting the Devil, and Receiving Grace', *Archive for Reformation History* 99 (2008), pp. 36-65. For a succinct overview of general Eucharistic theology before the Council of Trent see Robert J. Daly, S.J., 'The Council of Trent', in Lee Palmer Wandel (ed.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 158-182, especially pp. 160-163.

¹² Thayer has noted that the 'Mass provides the framework for the life of faith', cited in 'Learning to Worship', p. 42.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44; the quotation was taken from Dietrich Kolde, 'A Fruitful Mirror', in Deniz Janz (ed.), *Three Reformation Catechisms: Catholic, Anabaptist, Lutheran* (New York, 1982), pp. 31-130, p. 55.

wine.¹⁴ By the start of the sixteenth century, the focus of the elaborate, sensuous communion service firmly was on the power of the priest to effect the transformation of the elements, thus reinforcing the separate offices of the laity and the clergy. This was one of the many specific areas that the Protestant reformers vigorously attacked.¹⁵ This difference in status was reflected in the dispensation and reception of the elements: for instance, the laity were not allowed to touch the host in case they dropped it, or took it away with them, and the consecrated bread was placed by the priest directly into the mouth of the participant.¹⁶ By the thirteenth century, the sacrament was deemed to have a special status amongst the other sacraments and, unlike baptism and last rites, it could not be administered by the laity, even in the most extreme of emergencies.¹⁷ Protestant reformers did not attack solely the doctrine of the Eucharist, but they sought to re-fashion the associated rituals and customs that made the medieval sacrament the rich, non-uniform and vibrant service it had evolved into.

On the eve of the Reformation, the importance of votive masses had reached a peak. These were masses offered with a specific intention and, in the context of this practice, the offering of masses for the dead had developed into a lucrative business driven by a constant demand from the laity. Ratified by the second Council of Lyon in 1274, it was believed that masses for the

¹⁴ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁵ Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', p. 22.

¹⁶ Isabelle Brian, 'Catholic Liturgies of the Eucharist in the Time of Reform', in Lee Palmer Wandel (ed.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 185-204, p. 188. Scribner notes that the consecrated host could be 'sewn in one's clothes to bring riches, or crumbled and scattered over a field to ensure fertility of crops': Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion', p. 66.

¹⁷ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 36.

dead would aid those souls languishing in purgatory.¹⁸ Other masses were believed to offer specific help to the living, such as encouraging fertile crops, or a successful pilgrimage. In addition to these types of votive masses, private masses were performed. These dated to the seventh century, but gained in popularity as the medieval period progressed.¹⁹ Private masses were held by a priest with no-one else – or only a server – present. Wandel suggests that these masses increased because of the growth in clerical numbers and because priests held presiding at mass to be a function ‘essential to their office’, which they needed to undertake regularly.²⁰

Votive and private masses were attacked during the Protestant Reformation. In the *Babylonian Captivity*, Luther argued that ‘it is a great and wicked error that the mass should be sacrificed or done for sins, for satisfaction, for the needs of his own or for those of others, or to offer to apply any for the dead’.²¹ This was a clear blow to the heart of the Catholic understanding of the mass, forcing the Catholics to defend their doctrine regarding votive and private masses. Luther’s challenge further represented an attack on the status of the priest as a mediator between humans and God. The Catholic Church was compelled to clarify and to define its doctrine more tightly in response to the challenges and transformations wrought by Protestant reformers. With the development of evangelical and Reformed theologies, the practical application

¹⁸ Macy, ‘Medieval Inheritance’, p. 36.

¹⁹ Julia Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c. 800-c. 1200* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 42.

²⁰ Wandel, *Eucharist in the Reformation*, p. 31.

²¹ ‘Unde manifestus et impius error est, Missam pro peccatis, pro satisfactionibus, pro defunctis aut quibuscunque necessitatibus suis aut aliorum offerre seu applicare’: Martin Luther, *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*, WA, vol. 6, p. 521.

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of doctrine affected not only lay participation in the sacrament, but also lay people's spiritual and physical experience of the Eucharist.

Transubstantiation and the Real Presence

The issues surrounding the concept of the Eucharist as a sacrament led to a flurry of concerns and questions, many of which remained unresolved by the turn of the sixteenth century. They were brought sharply into the spotlight with the advent of the Reformation. One such problem was that of the Real Presence.²² The eleventh-century theologian, Berengar of Tours (c.999-1088), had queried how Christ's human body and blood could really be present in each and every Eucharist – especially as the host was eaten and digested.²³ Though Berengar was forced to swear that the bread and wine are both a sacrament and the true body and blood of Christ, still the concerns he had raised persisted.²⁴ Eventually, the debate over the Eucharistic transformation resulted in the emergence of three broad groups. One such group was comprised of those theologians who advocated the notion of coexistence, whereby the bread and wine exist alongside the body and blood of Christ. A second group argued for substitution: the bread and wine are replaced with the substance of Christ's body and blood. The third group

²² Studies on transubstantiation in the medieval and Reformation periods include Hans Jorissen, *Die Entfaltung der Transsubstantiationslehre bis zum Beginn der Hochscholastik* (Münster, 1965); Gary Macy, 'The Dogma of Transubstantiation in the Middle Ages', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1994), pp. 11-41; Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, pp. 73-77; Van Amberg, *Real Presence*; Thomas J. Davis, *This is my Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids, 2008).

²³ Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy*, p. 21; Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', pp. 23-25.

²⁴ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 19. For an analysis of the Eucharistic debate more broadly see *ibid.*, pp. 14-35.

emphasised transmutation: at the words of consecration, the substance of the bread and wine change into that of the body and blood.²⁵ The Church's official position adopted Aquinas' later argument for transubstantiation, but this did not prevent some theologians maintaining contrary opinions over what this meant.²⁶ Indeed, the meaning of transubstantiation for medieval writers differed to that of post-Reformation writers. For the former, transubstantiation could refer to any theory that explained how Christ's body and blood came to be present in the elements, while for later writers, transubstantiation more closely came to be associated with the theory of transmutation.²⁷ By the late-medieval period, Catholic doctrine regarding the Real Presence was comprised of two strands. Firstly, the body and blood of Christ physically was present in the bread and wine. Secondly, the bread and wine 'change in substance' to the body and blood of Christ.²⁸ This latter component was expressed in the doctrine of transubstantiation, a separate dogma, but one that closely was connected to that of the Real Presence. Lateran IV confirmed transubstantiation in 1215, although James McCue argued in 1968 that transubstantiation was only retained because of a 'mistaken reading' of the Council's decrees that occurred from 1300 onwards.²⁹ By the turn of the sixteenth century, the doctrine of transubstantiation was an acknowledged feature of Catholic Eucharistic theology. Its meaning nevertheless remained

²⁵ Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', p. 26. The third group has often been labeled as transubstantiation but Macy explains that this was different to the doctrine as defined by the Council of Trent and argues transmutation is a more suitable term.

²⁶ Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', p. 26.

²⁷ Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom*, pp. 84-85. For a discussion of the different interpretations of transubstantiation, see Jorissen, *Die Entfaltung der Transsubstantiationslehre*.

²⁸ Palmer Wandel, *Eucharist in the Reformation*, pp. 20-21.

²⁹ James McCue, 'The Doctrine of Transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent: The Points at Issue', *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968), pp. 385-430, p. 385.

unclear. While some notable theologians had interpreted Lateran IV as having ruled out the possibility of coexistence, others were less certain. William of Ockham, for instance, used Lateran IV as the basis for his rejection of coexistence, and Thomas Aquinas argued that coexistence was an error.³⁰ Yet, as Macy has demonstrated, Pierre d'Ailly, writing in the fourteenth century, believed coexistence to be an acceptable and justified understanding of the Eucharistic change.³¹ The Council of Trent 'shut out' the theory of coexistence in its condemnation of Wycliffe, although even then, Macy argues that the wording of Constance permitted some subtle forms of coexistence.³² Therefore, transubstantiation could evoke a number of different meanings, although, by the fifteenth century, coexistence was deemed to be unorthodox, despite the lack of absolute clarity in the condemnation at Constance.

By the middle years of the sixteenth century, a number of broad, but opposing, camps can be discerned regarding Real Presence.³³ Firstly, Luther agreed with the doctrine, believing that Christ is physically present in the Eucharistic elements. He rested his argument eventually on the doctrine of ubiquity, which taught that Christ was not bound by the constraints of time and space as are ordinary mortals. According to his understanding, Christ could simultaneously occupy his place in heaven and be physically present in the elements. A second group comprised Zwingli and his followers, who were utterly opposed to this literal understanding of the Real Presence. As far as

³⁰ Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom*, pp. 95-96.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-90.

³² The council decreed, 'The material substance of the bread and similarly the material substance of the wine remain in the sacrament of the altar': *ibid.*, p. 89.

³³ For a discussion of the differing views regarding the presence of Christ see Brian Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis, 1993).

Zwingli was concerned, it was idolatrous to insist that the elements are literally the body and blood of Christ and, instead, he argued that the presence of Christ was symbolic. In 1528, Zwingli maintained in his *Über Luthers Buch Bekenntnis genannt* that Christ was not physically present in the elements, but conceded that people bring him into the supper through their faith.³⁴ For Zwingli, Christ could not be in heaven and in the Eucharist concurrently. A third group included Calvin and his supporters, who rejected explicitly Zwingli's symbolic interpretation, instead preferring to steer a middle path between him and Luther. Calvin agreed that Christ's physical body is in heaven, but explained that this does not assume his absence from the Eucharistic elements. Instead, Calvin redefined what was meant by the Real Presence, ultimately concluding that there is a 'spiritual real presence'.³⁵ Essentially, this essentially meant that while Christ was not physically present – indeed he could not be present corporeally – in the bread and wine, he was spiritually present in the elements through the work of the Holy Spirit. A fourth group consisted of the Catholics, whose official definition of the Real Presence was literal and rested on the doctrine of transubstantiation, as restated by the Council of Trent.

These groups were fluid and dynamic, but broadly categorising them serves to distinguish their general understandings from each other. It is important to analyse the catechisms' treatment of the doctrine of the Real Presence because its understanding by the author/patron shaped, and even radically

³⁴ Van Amberg, *Real Presence*, p. 41.

³⁵ David C. Steinmetz, 'The Theology of John Calvin', in David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 113-129; pp. 126-127.

altered, the experience of the congregation during the communion service. As Palmer Wandel has pointed out, depending on how 'presence' was understood, the actions of the celebrant could be 'mimetic, symbolic, representative or evocative'.³⁶ The following section will focus on a systematic analysis of the catechisms' instructions regarding the Real Presence. It will become apparent that areas of serious contention received less attention in the catechisms, whilst heavier emphasis was placed on criticising the theologies of Zwingli and other 'fanatics', who operated outside the doctrines of Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism.

The section will begin with the Catholic catechisms of Canisius and Trent. These, unsurprisingly, adhered more closely to the medieval treatment of the real presence than the Protestant catechisms, but key differences between Canisius and Trent can be discerned that continue to demonstrate the Jesuit's keener appraisal of the dangers facing German Catholicism. The focus will then turn to Luther and Osiander's catechisms. Both supported the doctrines of real presence, although not transubstantiation, and it will be suggested that, because their interpretation was not outlawed definitively by the Church until the middle of the sixteenth century, their emphasis on real presence strengthens the argument that both stressed less contentious aspects of doctrine, while rejecting the ideas of Anabaptists and Zwinglians. The section will conclude with an analysis of the *Heidelberg Catechism's* treatment of the doctrine of the real presence. By the time it was published in 1563, the Council of Trent had anathematised any concept other than transubstantiation

³⁶ Palmer Wandel, *Eucharist in the Reformation*, p. 2.

to explain the real presence, Calvin had thrown his spiritualistic understanding into the mix, and the Lutherans had split into factions over the doctrine of real presence. Elector Frederick III's catechism had to tread carefully so as not to alienate either the Lutherans or the Calvinists in the Palatinate. In the analysis of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, it will be argued that a middle route was taken by the catechists, which would neither fully appeal to, nor be fully rejected by, either group, in keeping with the approach of the catechism in general. The overall discussion of the doctrines of the real presence and transubstantiation/coexistence will demonstrate that, though doctrinal understandings were more rigorously presented in the catechisms than can be seen with some other areas, the resulting teachings still allowed for varying degrees of consensus to be emphasised between and within the faiths.

The Protestants rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation outright, thus making it a critical issue for Catholics to defend. The Council of Trent affirmed transubstantiation in the thirteenth session, which ended in October 1551. It decreed that, 'after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially contained in the venerable sacrament of the holy Eucharist under the appearance of these physical things'.³⁷ In the section entitled 'The Mystery of Transubstantiation', the *Tridentine Catechism* repeated the canons and decrees, teaching that '[I]f anyone shall say that in the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, let

³⁷ Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (second edition) (Oxford, 2012), p. 164.

him be anathema'.³⁸ These statements rejected any suggestion of the bread and wine remaining after the Eucharistic change, and affirmed Aristotle's philosophical understanding of 'accidents'. This had taught that the transformed bread and wine maintained their original appearance because the 'accident' of this appearance is distinct from its substance.³⁹ These two points were direct responses to Luther, who had not rejected the concept of the real presence outright, simply the theories of transubstantiation and 'accidents', the latter of which he deemed 'absurd and pseudo-philosophy'.⁴⁰ Indeed, in 1517, Luther had rejected Aristotle's place in theology, declaring 'no one can become a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle'.⁴¹ The Council of Trent narrowed Catholic doctrine specifically to reject Luther's teachings, as well as to attempt to promote uniformity within the Catholic faith. On this latter aspect, the council faced immediate obstacles: the Dominicans and Franciscans were fiercely divided over the exact meaning of transubstantiation. Dominicans believed that it meant the theory of substitution, while the Franciscans held that it was the theory of transmutation. Unable to commit to one interpretation, the council left open the possibility for both theories to be held, whilst rejecting that of coexistence – Luther's understanding.⁴²

Whilst composing his catechisms, Canisius was well aware of the Council of Trent's decision. He taught in the *Small Catechism* that 'the bread is

³⁸ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 236.

³⁹ Palmer Wandel, *Eucharist in the Reformation*, p. 22.

⁴⁰ McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, p. 178.

⁴¹ Martin Luther, 'Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam, 1517', *WA*, vol. 1, pp. 221-228, p. 226.

⁴² Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom*, pp. 84-85.

transformed in its essence [wird *wesentlich verwandelt*] into the body and the wine is transformed in its essence into the blood of Christ our Lord, and neither bread nor wine then are or remain in this sacrament, except only in the external form'.⁴³ The *Large Catechism* expounded in greater depth on the doctrines of transubstantiation and the real presence, explaining that:

under the form [of] Bread and Wine, the true flesh and true blood [of] Christ Jesus is present in the Eucharist ... Christ Jesus exists wholly in the holy Eucharist according to his Divine and human nature ... the substance of the bread and wine is converted or ... is transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus.⁴⁴

In defending the core doctrine of Catholic Eucharistic theology, at the same time, Canisius was rejecting Protestant challenges to both the real presence and transubstantiation. He was in accordance with the Tridentine position, but in his catechisms, Canisius only briefly defended the doctrine of transubstantiation and the concept of accidents. As might be expected, Canisius presented a position distinct from that of Luther, who held that the bread and wine remain completely present in substance (or essence) and in their external form, and not only externally, as the Catholics, including Canisius, taught. Of note, however, is that both Luther and Canisius presented their positions briefly and without significant emphasis in both their

⁴³ '[Dass] das brot in den leib / unnd der wein in das blut Christi des Herren / wesentlich verwandelt werde / und also weder brot noch wein / daß allain nach der eusserlichen gestalt / inn disem Sacrament mehr sey noch bleibe': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 104. This wording also appeared in the 1563 edition of the *Kleine Catechismus*: Peter Canisius, *Catechismus. Kurze Ercklarung der fürnemsten stuck des wahren Catholischen Glaubens* (Dillingen: Sebald Meyer, 1563), p. 144.

⁴⁴ 'Unter der gestalt Brots unnd Weins / das war Fleisch / unnd das war Bluet Christi Jhesu in der Eucharistia gegenwürtig sey ... Christus Jhesus in der heiligē Eucharistia ganz nach der Gotlichen unnd menschlichen natur verhanden ... die substanz des brots un̄ weins in den Leib und Bluet Christi verkert / oder ... verwandelt wirt': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), pp. 164-167.

Large and Small catechisms. Lutheran and Catholic doctrines were simply laid out, with no polemics. For both Luther and Canisius, this lack of emphatic rhetoric probably stems from the audience of the catechisms. Indeed, Luther had raised concerns in 1522 about involving 'the ignorant multitudes in these subtleties' over coexistence, arguing that discussion of how the real presence is achieved 'sow doubts and dissensions'.⁴⁵ In directing their catechisms to a lay audience, detailing the minutiae of doctrinal instruction seems not to have been a concern for either Luther or Canisius.

In contrast, the *Tridentine Catechism* defended each aspect explicitly and unequivocally. The difference in language and tone between Canisius and the Tridentine Codex was pronounced, yet unsurprising. Canisius was often far more cautious in tone and content, being aware that persuasion rather than prescription was needed to bolster the Catholic faith. His own experiences in Germany presumably led him to take this approach. For instance, Heal notes that during his time in Augsburg between 1559 and 1567, Canisius 'instilled a new sense of self-confidence amongst Augsburg Catholics', but he did so through persuasion, not coercion. By Canisius' time, Augsburg was officially a bi-confessional city, meaning that Catholicism could not be enforced there as it could be in Bavaria.⁴⁶

However, in not discussing points of doctrine regarding transubstantiation in depth, Canisius can be seen to have been acting in accordance with the

⁴⁵ 'Rude vulgus his argutiis implicare ... scrupili seruntur et dissensiones': 'Luther an Paul Speratus in Iglau, Wittenberg 13 Juni, 1522', *WA BR*, vol. 1, pp. 559-562, p. 561.

⁴⁶ Heal, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, p. 149.

Council of Trent's view on imparting such intricate details to the laity. The *Tridentine Catechism* declared that the doctrine of transubstantiation 'should be explained with great caution, according to the capacity of the hearers and the necessities of the times', and had warned that in explaining the meaning of transubstantiation, 'those who are yet weak in faith ... might possibly be overwhelmed by its greatness'.⁴⁷ Moreover, it also insisted that regarding the 'manner in which the body of our Lord is contained whole and entire ... discussions of this kind should scarcely ever be entered upon'.⁴⁸ In Canisius' *Small Catechism*, it was perfectly acceptable – indeed, preferable – that he limit his discussions of these issues because it was directed towards a young or uneducated audience. It suited also the broader objectives of his sacramental instruction, which were to persuade, maintain peace, and entice lapsed Catholics back to the Church without stressing confessional division.

However, language was not the only way to convey meaning. Canisius' catechisms included a number of woodcuts representing the Eucharist, and an analysis of these reveals elements of a contradictory message, in relation to worthy communion, and variances in the teachings between his catechisms, especially between the Latin and German editions, which were aimed at different audiences. The change in emphasis is indicative of lay concerns, as well as those messages that Canisius felt were most important to impart to the clergy, or educated readers of the Latin catechism. The woodcut used in the 1575 Latin edition of Canisius' *Institutes*, published in Antwerp, is a good example of this. Published in Latin, this book included a

⁴⁷ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 241, p. 238.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

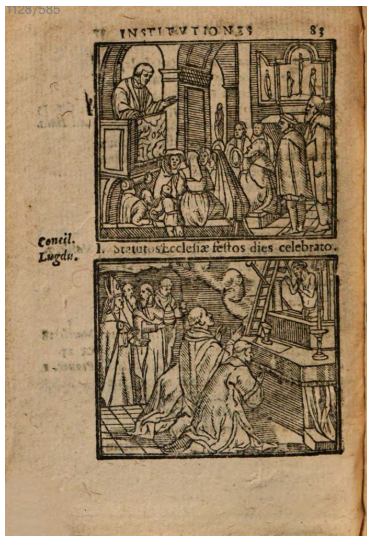
calendar, the small catechism, the Beatitudes, the vows of the religious orders, and the four stages of the new man.⁴⁹ The image illustrating the Eucharist depicted kneeling men gazing up in adoration at the figure of Christ in human form (fig. 6).⁵⁰ This was a clear portrayal of the doctrine of the real presence showing Christ on the altar, in the place of the host, an image which drew on medieval – and thus on traditional Catholic – iconography. Antwerp had a visible Lutheran presence and, as will be argued in greater detail below, the woodcuts in this edition raise intriguing questions. This particular woodcut, however, can be seen to defend the doctrine of real presence.⁵¹ It does not depict how this change occurred, thus to some degree, avoiding contentious issues between Protestants and Catholics. While it is difficult to determine authorial choice in the woodcuts, none of the German editions of Canisius' catechisms I have encountered thus far have an image defending these doctrines in the same explicit manner as his Latin editions. Instead, the 1563 and 1569 German editions of the *Large Catechism* included an oval woodcut accompanying the questions on the Eucharist (fig. 7). Two kneeling angels are depicted looking upwards towards the Host, which is housed in a monstrance. The image is framed with a Latin inscription reading '[T]he bread I will give is my flesh which I give for life: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever', although the Latin rendering may have reduced its impact on any of its clerical readers who were not as proficient in the

⁴⁹ Petro Canisio, *Institvtiones Christianae Pietatis sev Parvvs Catechismvs Catholicorvm* [hereafter, Canisio, *Institvtiones Christianae Pietatis* (1575)] (Antwerp: Johann Bellerus, 1575).

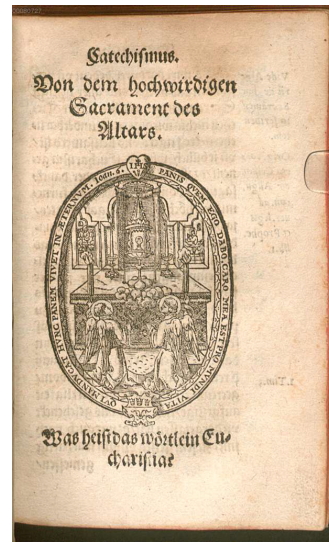
⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵¹ This woodcut drew on traditional Catholic iconography. Many Lutheran depictions of the Eucharist showed Christ's presence flowing into the bread, rather than Christ on the altar. For an example, see Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*, p. 207.

language as they were meant to be.⁵² This image does not support either the real presence or transubstantiation. However, it does illustrate that the host is to be adored. The reason for this difference in emphasis perhaps can be seen to lie in Canisius' own experiences, the intended users of his catechisms, and their concerns. Printers publishing material for their local markets would no doubt have been aware of these latter two points.



(Figure 6): Petro Canisius, *Institutiones Christianae Pietatis seu Parvus Catechismus Catholicorum* (Antwerp: Johann Bellerus, 1575), p. 38. Augsburg.



(Figure 7): Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumären* (1563), p. 160. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München. Staats- und Stadtbibliothek.

During the composition of Canisius' catechisms, Bavaria witnessed the second of three concerted efforts to spread the Lutheran faith in the duchy. Much of this renewed Protestant fervour came from the patriciate, and the magistrates in Munich were reluctant to prevent its spread or punish offenders.⁵³ Thus, Canisius was writing his catechisms whilst witnessing the spread of Protestantism first-hand. Secondly, Bridget Heal has argued that

⁵² 'Panis quem ego dabo caro mea est pro mundi vita, qui manducat hunc panem vivet in aeternum': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumären* (1563), p. 160. Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumären Christlicher Lehr* (1569), p. 194.

⁵³ Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Michigan, 2007), p. 17.

the Wittelsbach Dukes promoted rituals because they saw them as ‘an effective way of securing the spiritual welfare of their territories’ as well as a means to strengthen their own authority.⁵⁴ The German editions of Canisius’ catechisms were more likely to be read by the laity, thus the inclusion of woodcuts that emphasised ritual over doctrine fits with the political agenda of Canisius’ secular patron. On the other hand, Latin editions were aimed at the clergy and highly educated members of the laity. Thus, they were more likely to connect woodcuts with complex doctrine, while German editions and shorter catechisms placed more focus on the practice of worship, even in the German edition of the *Large Catechism*. Though the words of the catechisms were carefully constructed, the images could serve to highlight specific acts or moments of the service that were particularly important to Canisius’ teachings, and can be seen to defend doctrines that had been under attack by Luther. The 1563 and 1569 editions were published in Cologne. Whilst priding itself on being a ‘holy city’, Janis M. Gibbs has demonstrated that there was a growing concern regarding the orthodoxy of the citizens, with the 1560s witnessing increasing efforts by the city council to root out heresy.⁵⁵ In these woodcuts, there was no sign of a chalice: the angels adoring the host housed in the monstrance. Although communion in both kinds had been permitted in some German dioceses in 1564 by Pope Pius IV, Gibbs notes that in Cologne receiving communion in both kinds was regarded as a ‘mark of alien belief,

⁵⁴ Bridget Heal, ‘Mary “Triumphant over Demons and Also Heretics”’: Religious Symbols and Confessional Uniformity in Catholic Germany’, in Howard Louthan, Gary B. Cohen and Franz A.J. Szabo (eds.), *Diversity and Dissent: Negotiating Religious Difference in Central Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 153-172, p. 155.

⁵⁵ Janis M. Gibbs, ‘Immigration and Civic Identity in Sixteenth-Century Cologne’, in Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer and Roobin Barnes (eds.), *Ideas and Cultural Margins in Early Modern Germany: Essays in Honour of H.C. Erik Midelfort* (Abingdon, 2009), pp. 49-62, pp. 58-61.

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and of separation from their sacred community'.⁵⁶ The image and accompanying wording support communion in one kind, reflecting the continuing beliefs of Cologne's Catholics, as well as the on-going ritual practice of worship.

It is important to note that the German editions of Canisius' catechisms did not pictorially incorporate the doctrine of the real presence; nor, in contrast to the *Tridentine Catechism*, did he use the wording to stress the concept. The promotion of ritual in the German editions has been explained, but why was doctrine not emphasised? Surely using the concept of transubstantiation to explain the real presence could have been stressed in the wording, while the woodcuts could have promoted ritual. The doctrine of the real presence was one of the most attacked areas of Catholic doctrine in the sixteenth century and Canisius' fairly lacklustre defence of it in the catechisms is intriguing, especially in comparison to the *Tridentine Catechism*. Yet, it is the very contentiousness of the issue that explains Canisius' lack of emphasis. He had to discuss the real presence because it was a core element of Catholic Eucharistic theology and could not be ignored. His brevity in part, can be ascribed to Loyola's insistence that Canisius 'avoid contention whenever possible', but there was more to the matter simply than being obedient.⁵⁷

Canisius demonstrated an independent streak – performing exorcisms, for instance, despite Loyola's distrust of them and irrespective of General Borja's

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61. Mitchell notes that Pope Pius IV had to defend his decision in a consistory on 14 July 1564. The suppression of communion in both kinds began in Bavaria in 1571 and was followed by other areas over several decades. However, some churches in Austria retained the practice despite opposition from Rome: Nathan D. Mitchell, 'Reforms, Protestant and Catholic', in Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker (eds.), *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 307-350, p. 338, p. 350.

⁵⁷ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 124.

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direct cautions to avoid them – so ascribing Canisius' brevity on the real presence to obedience alone is not enough. Rather, he was trying to make his faith as appealing as possible in order both to retain Catholics and to entice Protestants back to the Roman fold: he was taking the path of persuasion rather than coercion.

In this, cross-confessional parallels can be detected between how Canisius, Luther and Osiander approached the Real Presence. Just as Canisius avoided contention, so too did Luther and Osiander, except they did so for different reasons. According to Luther's understanding of Eucharistic theology, if one eats the bread, one eats also the body of Christ. He accepted fully the physical presence of Christ in the elements, but rejected utterly the doctrine of transubstantiation. Instead, Luther taught, that though Christ is present in the Eucharist, that does not mean that the bread and wine has been transformed: rather, both exist together. This understanding – which is now labelled consubstantiation – was contested fiercely by fellow Reformers, including Zwingli, and, later, Calvin, thus, Luther had to clarify and defend his position against not only the Catholics, but also other Protestants. In contrast, Osiander's aim in each of his catechetical sermons on the sacraments sought to support clerical authority, and did not emphasise issues that could detract from this.

Luther's *Large Catechism* posited the question 'What is the Sacrament of the Altar?' The response was: 'it is the true body and blood of the LORD Christ, in and under the bread and wine, through Christ's Word, commanded to us

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Christians to eat and drink'.⁵⁸ At this point, it is not clear in the German whether Christ's Word brought about His real presence in the bread and wine, or whether Luther meant that Christ's Word commanded that Christians partake in the sacrament. However, as will be explained in more depth below, Luther later explained that the only reason the elements contain the real body and blood of Christ is through God's Word. However, his defence of the real presence is emphatic: the elements, without doubt, are the body and blood of Christ. He could not resist undermining critics of this belief, teaching:

If a hundred thousand Devils together with all the fanatics should come [and ask] how can bread and wine be Christ's body and blood etc. so I know that all the intellects and scholars taken together are not as wise as the Divine Majesty's smallest little finger.⁵⁹

The association of the 'fanatics' with the devil was intended to insult what Luther dismissed as the more extreme beliefs of Anabaptists and Zwinglians, who rejected a literal, corporeal understanding of the Real Presence. Zwingli believed that Christ could not be physically present in the elements because he is in heaven and will stay there until Judgement Day, while the Anabaptists held that the Lord's Supper was an act of remembrance, and a symbol of their 'corporate union with each other in the Risen Lord'.⁶⁰ Luther's ire was also aimed at his former colleague, Karlstadt, who denied the real presence, instead perceiving the bread and wine as signs of a symbolic presence.

Karlstadt had argued in his 'Dialogue' (1524) that Jesus pointed to himself

⁵⁸ 'Was ist nu das Sacrament des Altars? Antwort. Es ist der ware leib und blut des HERRN Christi / inn und unter dem brod und wein / durch Christus wort / uns Christen befohlen zu essen und zu trincken': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 107a.

⁵⁹ 'Wenn hundert tausent Teuffel / sampt allen Schwermern her faren / Wiekan brod und wein Christus leib und blut seine etc. so weis ich / das alle geister und gelerten auff einen hauffen / nicht so klug sind / als die Göttlich Maiestet im kleinsten fingerlein': *ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶⁰ Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Boston, 1958), p. 68.

when he said 'This is my body', echoing a thirteenth-century argument and one that had been raised again in Zwickau in the fifteenth century.⁶¹ Luther's emphatic tone was a direct response to critics of his theological understanding of the real presence, despite asserting earlier in his catechisms that 'we do not want to get into a fight with the heretics, nor fence with the blasphemers and abusers of this sacrament'.⁶² For Luther, the divine nature of Christ could be anywhere, and his human body could defy those natural laws that governed ordinary mortals.⁶³ Furthermore, by the time Canisius' catechisms were published, the Council of Trent had rejected the concept of 'coexistence' in favour of transubstantiation but, twenty five years earlier, Luther's position was not yet definitively beyond the boundaries of Catholic orthodoxy.

Osiander was also keen to promote the doctrine of the real presence in his catechism, teaching that 'we should believe that it is truly his body and his blood. For God is almighty, as you have learned in the Creed'.⁶⁴ Like Luther, Osiander attacked those who sought to challenge the doctrine of the real presence, warning his audience:

in these dangerous times, all those misguided people ... out of sheer devilment do not want to confess that it is the body and the blood of Christ ... only because they cannot comprehend with their blind reason how it happens ... Such people are certainly not Christians and have never learned the first article of the Creed, namely, that God is almighty

⁶¹ Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (second edition) (Oxford, 2010), p. 134.

⁶² 'Hier wollen wir uns auch nicht inn die har legen / und fechten mit den lesteren und schendern dieses Sacraments': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 107.

⁶³ Emmet McLaughlin, 'Spiritualism: Schwenckfeld and Franck and their Early Modern Resonances', in John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (eds), *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 119-162, pp. 125-126.

⁶⁴ 'Darumb sollen wir glauben / das es warlich sein leib / und sein blut sey / dann Gott ist allmechtig / wie ihr im glauben gelernet habt': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 284.

which you, my dear children, know well. Therefore, guard yourselves from their errors and believe what the Lord Christ said, even if your reason cannot comprehend it.⁶⁵

This defence has been seen as engagement with not only the broader controversy surrounding the real presence, but also as a direct response to the threat of Anabaptists and Zwinglians in Nuremberg.⁶⁶ For Luther, attacking his critics was a central aspect of his instruction on the Eucharist, whereas, Osiander was far less driven by this motivation, instead preferring to defend clerical authority. Luther's defence of the real presence along with his interpretation of the Eucharistic transformation are presented towards the beginning of his exposition on the sacrament, while Osiander's sermon emphasised first the importance of obeying Christ's command: 'if we want to truly be [Jesus'] disciples, so we should do as he instructed his disciples, that is, we shall go thither and eat and drink and not stay away from [the sacrament] for too long, without proper cause'.⁶⁷

Osiander was encouraging the receiving of regular communion, but when this sermon is read together with that on the keys, it is clear that it also reinforced his ambition to protect clerical authority. For Osiander, to receive communion,

⁶⁵ 'In disen gefarlichen zeiten / ettliche irrige leut ... aus lauter mutwissen nicht bekennē wollen / das es der leyb / und das blut Christi sey / allein darumb / das sie mit ihrer blindē vermunsst nicht begreifen können / wie es zugehe ... solche leut sein gewißlich nicht Christen / und haben noch nie gelernet den ersten artickel des glaubens / nemlich . das Gott allmechtig sey / welchen doch ihr / meine liebe kindlein / wol wist. Darumb hütet euch vor yhrem irrthumb und glaubet was der Herr Christus sagt, obs gleich ewr vernunsst nicht begreifen kan': *ibid.*, p. 285.

⁶⁶ Klemens, *Die Nürnberger Kinderpredigten*, p. 202. See also Hans-Dieter Schmid, *Täuferium und Obrigkeit in Nürnberg* (Nürnberg, 1972).

⁶⁷ 'Darumb woollen wir recht seine jungern sein/ so sollen wir thun / wie er seinen jungern beuilhet / das ist / wir sollen hinzu gehen / und essen und trincken / und nicht on redliche ursach all zu lang darvon bleyben': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 284; Luther's catechism taught the doctrine of the Real Presence in the first question, 'What is the Sacrament of the Altar?': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 107a.

one had to confess to the pastor, and his instruction to communicate regularly would therefore result in regular confessions. It is only after emphasising this point that Osiander then discussed the real presence. Here he taught that:

We should believe that it is truly his body and his blood. For God is almighty, as you have learned in the Creed. Therefore, he can do all that he wills ... When he names a thing that did not exist before, so it immediately becomes what he calls it. Therefore, when he takes the bread and says it is his body, so it certainly immediately is his body. And when he takes the chalice with the wine and says it is his blood, so it certainly immediately is his blood.⁶⁸

Both Luther and Osiander taught the doctrine of the real presence, although here Osiander does not answer the question of whether the bread and wine are still present alongside the body and blood. Elsewhere, however, Osiander did confirm that the 'sacrament of the altar ... is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus, under the bread and wine', although, like Luther, he did not dwell on how or why this occurred.⁶⁹ However, the structural difference between Luther and Osiander was small, but important, in that it reveals their individual priorities as catechists.

Turning to the Palatinate, Elector Frederick III's theologians were confronted with the problem of reconciling a Calvinist understanding of the real presence with that of the Lutherans. Calvin, in agreement with Zwingli, held that the Eucharistic elements did not contain the real, bodily presence of Christ but,

⁶⁸ 'Darumb sollen wir glauben / das es warlich sein leib / und sein blüt sey / dann Gott ist allmechtig / wie ihr im glauben gelernet habt / Darumb kan er alles thun / was er will ... Wann er ein ding nennet / das vor nicht war / so wirt es als bald / wie ers nennet / Darumb wann er das brodt nimpt / und spricht / es sey sei leyb / so ist es gewißlich als bald sein leyb. Und wann er den kelch mit dem wein nimpt / und spricht / Es sey sein blüt / so ist es gewißlich als bald sein blüt': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 284.

⁶⁹ 'Sacrament des altars ... ist der war leyb / unnd das blut unnsers Herrn Jhesu Christi / unter dem brodt uñ wein': *ibid.*, p. 291.

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unlike Zwingli, he denied that they were empty signs, instead declaring: 'Bread and wine do not merely symbolise Christ's body and blood, they hold out to us the promise of feeding on them'.⁷⁰ Calvin believed that the sacraments possessed such a close connection between the symbol and the gift which it symbolises, that we can 'easily pass from one to the other': the sacrament is a visible sign, but the thing it represents is invisible and spiritual.⁷¹ Though Calvin sought to steer a middle course between the Lutheran and Zwinglian understandings, Gnesio-Lutherans were not persuaded, and this was crystallised in their denouncement of him as a 'cunning sacramentarian' in the Formula of Concord (1577). They found that, although Calvin's language implied the real presence, his actual teaching implied a spiritual presence only.⁷²

The division in the Lutheran movement began during Luther's lifetime, but became sharper and increasingly bitter in the years after his death in 1546.⁷³ The Gnesio-Lutherans have been seen to have adopted a more radical interpretation of Luther's teaching, while the Philippists, led by Melancthon, were more inclined to compromise with governments to promote harmony in society.⁷⁴ The Gnesio-Lutheran's rejection of Calvin's sacramental theology could well have been disastrous for the Heidelberg catechists, who were keen

⁷⁰ Anthony N.S. Lane, 'Was Calvin a Crypto-Zwinglian?' in Mack P. Holt (ed.), *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe: Essays in Honour of Brian G. Armstrong* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 21-41, pp. 22-23.

⁷¹ McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, p. 191.

⁷² Lane, 'Was Calvin a Crypto-Zwinglian?', p. 25.

⁷³ For more detail see Robert Kolb, 'Dynamics of Party Conflict in the Saxon Late Reformation: Gnesio-Lutherans vs. Philippists', *Journal of Modern History* 49 (1977), pp. D1289-D1305.

⁷⁴ Robert Kolb, 'Confessional Lutheran Theology', in David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 68-79, pp. 71-72.

to promote a policy of conciliation amongst the Palatinate. Fortunately, however, the Philippist faction of Lutherans was dominant in the Palatinate, although this did not always result in continued peace, or even grudging acceptance of theological diversity. The religious policies of Frederick's predecessor, Otto-Henry, and a number of politically unwise appointments to the University in Heidelberg led to the Eucharist controversy of 1559, which began with a bitter dispute between two faculty members: Heinrich Heshusius and Wilhelm Klebitz. They had fallen out over their respective positions on the Eucharist, with Heshusius advocating firmly a Lutheran understanding of the real presence, while Klebitz adopted a Reformed position.⁷⁵ During the fiery battle between the two men, the new elector, Frederick III, intervened directly, and publically showed favour to the Reformed faction by releasing Klebitz from the excommunication imposed on him by Heshusius. He also forbade the continued use of the Lutheran Eucharistic formula of 'in the bread' and 'under the bread' in the communion liturgy on the grounds that it was divisive.⁷⁶ This formula had been included in Otto-Henry's church order and was a definite mark of Lutheranism with its promotion of the coexistence of the bread and wine with Christ's body and blood in the Eucharistic elements. In spite of this public support of Reformed sentiment, Frederick remained keen to avoid causing any further friction between the two factions, and ultimately, he dismissed both Heshusius and Klebitz from their positions at the

⁷⁵ For more detail, see Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus*, pp. 63-65. Heshusius was regularly involved in controversy throughout his career: see Chang Soo Park, *Luthertum und Obrigkeit im Alten Reich in der Frühen Neuzeit. Dargestellt am Beispiel von Tilemann Heshusius (1527-1588)* (Berlin, 2016).

⁷⁶ Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus*, pp. 63-65.

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university. Frederick then wrote to Melanchthon, rather than a Reformed advisor, for guidance on how to proceed.⁷⁷

Melanchthon, like Calvin, emphasised the role of the Spirit in his discussions on the sacraments in general, but unlike Calvin, he still defended the doctrine of the corporeal Real Presence.⁷⁸ Melanchthon believed that the Lord's Supper was centred on a real union with Christ, which is effective and substantial.⁷⁹ His interpretation of the real presence can be seen in Otto-Henry's Palatinate church order of 1556:

What is administered and received in the Supper of the Lord Christ?

Answer. The true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the Lord Jesus Christ has instituted this nourishment, as he testifies that he wills to be truly and really with us, and in us, and will live in the converted, imparting his benefits to them, and to be powerful in them.⁸⁰

Despite Melanchthon's support for the real presence, John Schofield has argued that Melanchthon was – albeit grudgingly – prepared to accept compromises over the concept of real versus spiritual presence.⁸¹

Melanchthon counselled Elector Frederick to drop any contentious wording

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66. Melanchthon replied on 1 November 1559: he commended Elector Frederick's handling of the public dispute between Klebitz and Heshusius declaring: 'I therefore approve of the plan of the Most Illustrious Elector because he commanded silence on the part of those quarreling on both sides in order that there not be a distraction in the young church and its neighbours': Lowell C. Green, *Melanchthon in English* (St. Louis, 1982), p. 25.

⁷⁸ Bierma, *Doctrine of the Sacraments in the Heidelberg Catechism*, pp. 17-18. This aspect can be seen in the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

⁷⁹ 'Loci praecipui theologici nunc denuo cura et diligentia summa recogniti, multisque in locis eopiose illustrati per Phil. Melanthonem', in Henricus Ernestus Bindseil (ed.), *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 23 (Brunsvigae, 1854), pp. 601-1106, p. 863.

⁸⁰ 'Was wirdt im Abendmal des Herrn Christi ausgeteilet und empfangen? Antwort. Warer Leib und Blut des Herrn Jesu Christi. Denn der Herr Jesus Christus hat dise niessung eingesezt / das Er bezeuget / das Er warhafftiglich und wesentlich bey uns / und in uns / sein wil / und inn den Bekerten wonen / inen seine gutter mitteilen / und inn inen krefftig sein': *Kirchenordnung* (1556), p. 191.

⁸¹ John Schofield, *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 184.

regarding the real presence in his catechism, and instead recommended the adoption of the Pauline formula, which taught that the bread was the fellowship of the body of Christ.⁸² This was reflected in question 76, which explained ‘through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us, we are united more and more to Christ’s blessed body. And so, although he is in heaven and we are on earth, we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone’.⁸³ This would appeal to a Reformed audience and, though the answer to question 79 reiterated the fellowship and the work of the Spirit, it taught also that ‘we, through the work of the Holy Spirit, share in his body and blood, as surely as we receive these holy signs in his memory with the bodily mouth’.⁸⁴ This was not too far removed from Melancthon’s understanding of the Eucharist.

Bierma’s careful analysis of the language employed in the catechism’s questions on communion has concluded that it ‘appears to avoid issues and language related to the sacraments that could have identified it too closely with one or two parties and give offence to the other(s)’.⁸⁵ Questions 76 and 79 certainly support Bierma’s conclusion, with the answers containing aspects that would have been acceptable to both Lutherans and Calvinists. Further, the catechism included a question regarding the basic differences between the Protestant and Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, and the answer

⁸² Gunnoe, *Thomas Erastus*, p. 66.

⁸³ ‘Durch den heiligen Geist / der zugleich in Christo und ins uns wonet / also mit seinem ebenedeyten leib je mehr und mehr vereiniget warden: daß wir / obgleich e rim himmel / uñ wir auff erben sind: dennoch fleisch von sinem fleisch / und bein von seinen beinē sind’: *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Underricht*, pp. 51-52.

⁸⁴ ‘Wir so warhafftig seines waren leibs und bluts durch wirckung des heiligē Geists teilhafftig warden / als wir diese heilige warzeichen / mit dem leiblichē mund zu seiner gedechtnuß empfangen’: *ibid.*, p. 55.

⁸⁵ Bierma, *Doctrine of the Sacraments in the Heidelberg Catechism*, p. 21.

served to highlight areas of agreement between the two factions. It asserted that 'the [Catholic] Mass is basically nothing other than a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and an accursed idolatry'.⁸⁶ The catechism's language was designed to downplay doctrinal differences between the Calvinists and Lutherans but, at the same time, it drew attention to areas of agreement between the two groups. Frederick was playing two connected games here. Firstly, he was using his catechism to foster a sense of uniformity that enabled features of the Reformed faith to be taught without alienating the Lutherans. Secondly, if successful, the elector would be rewarded with increased personal authority.

This section has argued that, despite a strengthening of doctrinal boundaries, the catechisms still demonstrated a degree of acceptance and unity over certain aspects of the real presence. The *Heidelberg Catechism*, in particular, reflected local concerns, attempted to unite its users, and pointed out areas on which the two factions could agree, such as the denouncement of a purely symbolic presence as favoured by Zwinglians, or the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Osiander, Luther and Canisius also emphasised areas of agreement regarding the real presence, and there is evidence to suggest that where there was disagreement, the German catechisms passed over it fairly quickly. Canisius taught an orthodox understanding of the real presence, but neither emphasised it emphatically, nor condemned directly the Lutheran or Calvinist interpretations. The *Tridentine Catechism* was more rigid in its

⁸⁶ 'Die Meß [ist] im grund nichts anders / denn ein verleugnung des einigen opffers uñ leidens Jesu Christi / und ein vermaledeite Abgötterey': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 56.

approach, but this is not unexpected given that its authors were not overly familiar with conditions in Germany. The implication is that teaching doctrine was less of a concern than the promotion of unity and concord at both grassroots level and cross-confessionally. Contentious aspects of doctrine between the Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists were taught, but were not emphasised, in order to permit a more inclusive membership of a church, taking into account local concerns, the independence of local clergy and parishioners, as well as local politics.

Much of the scholarship on the theology of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation has focused on highlighting and explaining the differences between the various faiths, or has looked at the changes between medieval and Reformation Eucharistic doctrine.⁸⁷ There is very little research into how education was shaped by the doctrinal controversies. Catechisms bridged the gap between theology and pedagogy, and this analysis of how key doctrinal issues – transubstantiation and the real presence – were treated in the texts has revealed that there was an effort to promote a degree of harmony between the Catholics and Lutherans, and, in the Palatinate, concord was sought between the Lutherans and Calvinists. Simultaneously, each of the catechisms denounced and discredited the views of the fringe groups. Far from the bitter, passionate words of the polemicists, this section has argued that such heated feelings between the Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists were not just absent from the catechisms, but that the doctrine itself was

⁸⁷ For example, Daly, 'The Council of Trent'; Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation*; G.R. Evans, *The Roots of the Reformation: Tradition, Emergence and Rupture* (Downers Grove, 2012), especially chapters six and seven.

presented in a manner designed to reconcile rather than to antagonise.

Further, there are striking parallels with the Latin version of the Augsburg Confession regarding the presentation of the doctrine of the real presence.

Formulated in 1530, the brief section regarding the Eucharist declared 'On the Supper of the Lord, it is taught that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat the Lord' Supper; and they reject those that teach otherwise'.⁸⁸ However, in the German version of the Augsburg Confession, it was declared that 'On the Supper of the Lord, it is taught that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and are there distributed and received. Therefore, the contrary teaching is rejected'.⁸⁹ Palmer Wandel suggests that both the Latin and German versions did not engage with any contentious aspects of the doctrine of real presence. Instead, they 'allowed space for differentiated faith, for a range of understandings', which is an approach that can be discerned also in the catechisms.⁹⁰ However, it is clear that in the German version, the bread and wine are understood as remaining in the elements. This is an explicit rejection of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which did not appear in the Latin version. It is the Latin version, rather than the German, that supports Palmer Wandel's suggestion that Melancthon retained 'ecumenical hopes' because a divisive area of

⁸⁸ 'De Coena Domini docent, quod corpus et sanguis Christi vere adsint, et distribuuntur vescentibus in coena Domini, et improbant secus docentes': *Confessio Fidei exhibita inuictiss. Imp. Carolo V. Caesari Aug. in Comicijs Augustae, Anno M.D.XXX* (Witebergae: Georgius Rhau, 1531), p. biii.

⁸⁹ 'Von den Abeñmal des Herren wirt also gelert / das warer leib und blut Christi / warhafftiglich under der gestalt des brots und weins ym Abentmal gegenwertig sey gegeben / und da ausgeteylt und genomen werde / derhalb wirt auch die gegenleer verworffen': *Anzeigung und bekantnus des Glaubens unnd der lere*, p. 13.

⁹⁰ Palmer Wandel, *Eucharist in the Reformation*, pp. 110-111.

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doctrine was omitted.⁹¹ This supports the suggestion that, far from being divisive, the catechisms were created in a period where unity was not only sought, but was still believed to be possible.⁹²

Priest as Mediator

The role of the priest as mediator was closely entwined with the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Gregorian reform movement of the eleventh century had insisted that only a properly consecrated priest could effect a transformation of the Eucharistic elements. This claim had its roots in the ninth century and, by the sixteenth century, it was an accepted feature of Catholic orthodoxy and impacted broader areas of doctrine, including penance.⁹³ The belief that the clerical office served to bridge the gap between the laity and God was reflected both in doctrine and in ritual practices, such as the elevation of the host. The entire notion of mediation bound together doctrine and practice, but this connection resulted in suspicion being cast on the efficacy of intercessory prayers and acts by lax or immoral priests.⁹⁴ Catholics were aware of how dangerous these thoughts could be, and sought to stress that the sacraments worked despite the moral condition

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁹² In 1540, Melancthon published a revised version of the Augsburg Confession, known as the *Variata* (the 1530 version subsequently came to be known as the *Invariata*): 'Art. X: De Coena Domini (Of the Lord's Supper) De coena Domini docent, quod cum pane et vino vere exhibeantur corpus et sanguis Christi, vescentibus in Coena Domini'. (*Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that with bread and wine the body and the blood of Christ are really presented to those that eat in the Lord's Supper*): *Confessio fidei exhibita invictiss. imp. Carolo V. Caesari Aug. in comiciis Augustae Anno MDXXX* (Viterbergae: Georg Rhau, 1540), p. 17. This wording proved less divisive than the 1530 *Invariata* had been for Lutherans and Catholics, although the Reformed Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate could not accept it.

⁹³ In the ninth century, Paschasius Radbert had argued that Christ's body was present in the Eucharist through the operation of the priest's words: Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 15.

⁹⁴ This was a problem in Augsburg during the early years of the sixteenth century: Van Amberg, *Real Presence*, p. 24.

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of the officiating priest. This concern had developed in the *ex opere operato* understanding of the sacrament's efficacy, which was rooted in Augustine's theology of sacramental causality, and was defended by Pope Innocent III in the late twelfth century.⁹⁵ This understanding of sacramental efficacy maintained that the sacraments worked by the grace of Christ, rather than resting on the character of the priest. In the thirteenth century, the Church developed further its concept of sacramental efficacy, and asserted that the power to make Christ present in the Eucharist derived from the minister's 'canonically valid ordination', emphasising the difference in status between the laity and clergy.⁹⁶

By the sixteenth century, then, there were two generally accepted features of clerical mediation: the moral character of the priest was firmly disconnected from the efficacy of the sacrament, and the status of the priest gave him the power to effect the Eucharistic change. Luther objected to both of these points. He claimed that the *ex opere operato* understanding of sacramental efficacy made too little of the importance of faith in successfully receiving the benefits of communion.⁹⁷ His *Large Catechism* emphasised faith, teaching 'because He offers and promises forgiveness of sin, it cannot be received otherwise than by faith'.⁹⁸ Secondly, Luther sought to break down the barriers between human beings and God. As McGrath notes, Luther's concept of the

⁹⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 406.

⁹⁶ Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', p. 18.

⁹⁷ Jane E. Strohl, 'Luther's Spiritual Journey', in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 149-164, pp. 162-163. 'The benefits of the sacrament are given indiscriminately, but faith must be present to receive the benefits', cited in Jordan Cooper, *The Great Divide: A Lutheran Evaluation of Reformed Theology* (Eugene, 2015), p. 110.

⁹⁸ 'Und weil er vergebung des sünde anbeutet und verheisset / kan es nicht anders denn durch den glauben empfangen werden': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 110a.

'Priesthood of all Believers', developed in the early years of the Reformation, argued that 'there was no place in Christianity for any notion of a professional class within the Church which is in a closer spiritual relationship to God than their fellows'.⁹⁹ Luther agreed that there was a difference between the secular and spiritual offices, but this was only in terms of function. Priests were the office holders on account of their ability to perform that office, but they were no closer to God as a result and, as soon as a priest left his office, he reverted back to being an ordinary member of the laity.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Luther recognised the office of the clergy but removed the traditional Catholic distinction between it and the temporal realm. Calvin also disagreed with the concept of mediation. His sacramental theology taught that pastors are instruments of God's grace when they dispense the sacraments, but that the sacraments derive their efficacy from the Holy Spirit working through outward means to create faith and to convey sanctification on those who receive this grace.¹⁰¹ Irrespective of these variances, as a collective, Protestants challenged the Catholic concept of mediation, but the catechisms did not always faithfully adhere to these differences. This can be seen most clearly with Osiander's catechism, which, as we have seen, was concerned with protecting the office and authority of pastors.

Previous chapters have discussed how Osiander reacted to the potential loss of authority he and his fellow pastors faced in Nuremberg as a result of Luther's challenge to the concept of clerical mediation, and have argued that

⁹⁹ McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹⁰¹ Dawn De Vries, 'Calvin's Preaching', in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge, 2004), pp.106-124, p.109.

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he went to great lengths to protect the power of the clergy. The problem facing Osiander in his sermon on the 'Sacrament of the Altar' was how he could promote the role of the priest without contradicting two core aspects of Lutheran sacramental understanding: that God's Word alone gave sacraments their power, and that there was no barrier between the laity and God. Luther's treatment of the Lord's Supper in his *Large Catechism* was peppered with references supporting the connection of God's Word to sacramental efficacy, teaching:

the power lies [with] ... God's Word and order or command. For it is neither conceived nor introduced by any human being but instituted by Christ without anyone's council or consideration ... the bread and wine are comprehended in and linked with God's Word. The Word (I say) is that which makes and distinguishes this sacrament ... It is true that if you put away the Word or regard it without the Word you have nothing but mere bread and wine.¹⁰²

Luther explained that the sacrament can work only because of God's Word: 'even if a knave takes or gives the Sacrament, he takes the true sacrament, that is, Christ's body and blood, just as truly as he who ministers it most worthily. For it is not founded in man's holiness, but in God's Word'.¹⁰³ Indeed, seven pages of the 1540 edition of the *Large Catechism* were devoted to impressing the connection between the Word of God and sacramental efficacy.

¹⁰² 'Da die macht an ligt ... Gottes wort / und ordnung oder befehl / Denn es ist von keinem menschen erdacht noch auffbracht / sondern on jemand's rath und bedacht / von Christo eingesetzt ... brod und wein inn Gottes wort gefasset / und daran gevunden. Das wort (sage ich) ist das / das dis Sacrament machtet und unterscheidet ... Das ist wol war / wenn du das wort davon thust / oder on wort ansihest / so hastu nicht denn lauter brot und wein': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p.107-108.

¹⁰³ 'Ob gleich ein bube das Sacrament nimpt oder gibt / so nimpt er das rechte Sacrament / das ist / Christus leib und blut / eben so wol als der es auff's aller wirdigst handelt. Denn es ist nicht gegründet auff menschen heiligkeit / sondern auff Gottes wort': *ibid.*, p. 108a.

In contrast, Osiander reiterated his defence of pastoral authority, albeit in a much less overt fashion than in his sermon on the keys. He reminded his audience that ‘whether we through sin and unbelief fall away from Christ, or through public vice we are isolated from the Christian community ... through the use of the keys or through absolution one is again brought back in and reunited with the body’.¹⁰⁴ This reminded Osiander’s listeners of the role pastors play in aiding the faithful to achieve salvation through their ability to pronounce absolution, as well as the association between being obedient and being able to receive the sacrament. The connection between the role of pastor and receiving forgiveness was made again slightly later in the sermon, where Osiander explained that to receive the sacrament worthily, one must follow the command of the Lord and ‘believe what he said to us, that is listen properly’.¹⁰⁵ Echoing the similar exhortation present in the sermon on baptism, Osiander was indicating that the pastor had an obligation to teach, and the faithful were entreated to give him their full attention. Osiander repeated Luther’s teaching on the Word, explaining that the body and blood of Christ are ‘not made by the minister but Christ himself gives us his flesh and blood as his Word clearly reveals’.¹⁰⁶ However, Osiander was not as emphatic or repetitive on this point as Luther, probably because it would draw attention away from his objective of defending clerical authority. Indeed, to reinforce the emphasis on clerical authority, Osiander included three substantial

¹⁰⁴ ‘Und ob wir durch sund und unglouben wider von Christo abfielen / oder durch offentliche laster von der Christlichē gemain angesondert ... man durch dē brauch der schlüssel / oder durch die absolution / wider angenommen und eingeleybt wirt’: Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, pp. 280-281.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Glauben / was er unns sagt / das solt yhr fein ordenlich hören’: *ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Dann es machts ja nicht der diener / sonder Christus selbs gibt uns sein flaisch und blut / wie sein wort klarlich außweyset’: *ibid.*, p. 287.

paragraphs on the importance of examination before receiving the sacrament, cautioning that 'he who will not acknowledge his sins will be judged and punished by God with many plagues so long until he must finally confess and repent them, so that they be forgiven him'.¹⁰⁷ He reinforced further the connection between the pastor's words and forgiveness, emphasizing that 'through such words, the sacrament, gives us forgiveness of sin, life and salvation, for where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation'.¹⁰⁸ The striking difference in length between his explanation of the subsequent punishment of receiving unworthy communion and that connecting the efficacy of the sacrament to God's Word is striking. Osiander did not stress the vital role pastors played in dispensing communion, but with its lengthy reminder about the importance of examination and obedience, the sermon resounded very strongly with that on the keys, which did stress the importance of pastors. Thus, Osiander can be seen to have been championing the authority of the pastors, but he did so in a way that avoided undermining Luther's teachings on communion.

The Heidelberg catechists also faced problems in how to reconcile their aims with Lutheran and Calvinist doctrine. Elector Frederick III was keen to promote outward conformity – at the very least – but, while Osiander was concerned with protecting clerical authority, the elector was interested more in moulding a citizenry obedient to his authority. Therefore, he and his

¹⁰⁷ 'Wer sein sund nicht erkennen will / den richtet unnd straffet Gott / mit mancherley plagen / so lang / biß erz zu letst bekennen unnd berewen muß / das sie yhm warden vergeben': *ibid.*, p. 289.

¹⁰⁸ 'Das uns in Sacrament vergebung der sundē / leben und seligkeit durch solche wort gegeben wirt / dann wo vergebung der sunden ist / da ist auch leben und seligkeit': *ibid.*, p. 292.

theologians were presented with a conundrum: how could correct doctrine be taught and the removal of a separate, distinct concept of the spiritual and temporal estates be achieved without undermining the ultimate goals of obedience and conformity? If the idea of mediation was lost, what could be used to encourage and foster respect for the sacraments and the power of God's grace contained within them? The Palatinate church order is particularly enlightening regarding these questions. It indicated that, despite the removal of the traditional distinctions between the clergy and the laity that were applied so emphatically in Catholic doctrine, the clergy alone remained responsible for assessing and examining the credibility of each would-be-communicant. The church order required a preparatory service to be held on the 'Saturday before the Supper', which was to convey 'the correct understanding and use of the Holy Supper'.¹⁰⁹ The pastor then was to require 'the young folk who have not gone to the Table of the Lord before' to recite the 'Ten Commandments and the Our Father, and to answer questions from the catechism on communion'.¹¹⁰ Should anyone not be able to recall the correct words 'they should be reminded by the minister of the principal articles of the Christian faith'.¹¹¹ The overarching role of the pastor was to provide for the parishioners: provide instruction, provide the opportunity to confess, and provide the sacrament. The role was vital, but functional, as preferred by both Luther and Calvin. Without the pastor, communion could not be received, but

¹⁰⁹ 'Den Sambstag für dem Abendmal soll die Fürbereitung gehalten werden / das ist eine Predig von rechtem verstand uñ brauch des heiligen Abendmals anleitung finden': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 43a.

¹¹⁰ 'Junges volck ... / die zuvor nicht zum Tisch des Herrn gangen sein ... die zehen Gebott und das Vatter unser lassen auff sagen / darnach auß dem Catechismo vom Nachtmal fragen': *ibid.*, p. 43a.

¹¹¹ 'Sonst aber nicht stafflich weren / sollen sie der fürnembsten Artickel Christlichen glaubens vom Kirchendiener erinnert werden': *ibid.*, p. 43a.

its dispensation was not a mark of the pastor's special status, except in terms of knowledge. Therefore, despite the traditional distinction between the secular and ecclesiastical estates being removed, the clerical office was still a potential barrier in terms of receiving communion. The minister did not mediate in the same way as Catholic priests did, but he played a central role in the provision of communion to the communicants, thus encouraging a measure of respect both for his office and the sacred nature of the sacrament.

Although there was consensus regarding the removal of the role of priest as mediator, the Protestant catechisms have revealed that this emphasis shifted to reflect the purposes of catechist and patron. This can be seen also in the Catholic catechisms. The concept of mediation was a firm feature of sixteenth-century Catholicism, and the Eucharist service had evolved to showcase the special status of the priest. Both Canisius and the Council of Trent addressed the role of mediation in their catechisms, but they displayed differences in their respective approaches. As on so many other points, Canisius' *Large Catechism* adopted a far less rigid position to that of the *Tridentine Catechism*. The *Small Catechism* mentioned clerical mediation, teaching that the transformation of the bread and wine came about because of the will of God 'through the word of the Priest who effects the Mass'.¹¹² This catechism, however, did not dwell on mediation, while the *Large Catechism* touched on it more frequently. In it, Canisius taught that Jesus is present in the Eucharist 'through the service and office of the Priest, but especially

¹¹² 'Durch die wort des Priesters / der massen da würcke': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 104.

through the strength and power of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ'.¹¹³ He recognised the role of priest as mediator – he was the link between man and God, effecting the elemental transformation that the laity were not able to do – but he stressed also the power of the Word, as Luther had done. Further, he explained that priests had to receive communion in both kinds, 'without which they cannot properly consecrate, nor offer up in sacrifice, this Sacrament'.¹¹⁴

In contrast, the *Tridentine Catechism* was much more emphatic in stressing the role of mediation. It devoted an entire section to explaining that 'only priests have power to consecrate and administer the Eucharist'.¹¹⁵ The catechism pointed to the fact that, not only has this 'been the unvarying practice of the Church', but also it has been confirmed by the Council of Trent.¹¹⁶ A section devoted to explaining that the laity cannot touch the Eucharistic vessels immediately followed this paragraph, reiterating that the power of dispensing communion was 'entrusted exclusively to priests': 'Priests themselves and the rest of the faithful may hence understand how great should be the piety and holiness of those who approach to consecrate, administer or receive the Eucharist'.¹¹⁷ The *Tridentine Catechism* was much more direct in its insistence of the distinction of office between the clergy and laity than were those of Canisius. Yet, the *Tridentine Catechism* recognised

¹¹³ 'Durch dem dienst unnd ambt des Priesters / besunder aber durch die maacht und gewalt unsers lieben Herren Jhesu Christi': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 164.

¹¹⁴ 'On welche sy auch nicht recht cōsecriern / noch auffopffern kunten diß Sacrament': *ibid.*, pp. 175-176. Lutherans and Calvinists totally rejected the concept of the mass as a sacrifice.

¹¹⁵ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 253.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

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that the transubstantiation of the elements occurred by the 'power of God'.¹¹⁸

In stressing the latter in his catechism, Canisius was not deviating from Tridentine Catholicism, but merely altering its emphasis.

Dispensing the Sacrament

The role of mediation in the sacrament affected how it was dispensed. The following two sections will focus on the practical administration of the sacrament and associated rituals. The first part will address worthy and unworthy communion, its connection to consolation, and communion under both kinds. Current historiography offers numerous descriptions of how, and explanations of why, the communion service was performed, but there has been very little research directly assessing what the catechisms taught regarding the administration of the sacrament.¹¹⁹ Catechisms were not designed – usually – to provide guidance on how to perform services but, given that how the sacrament was administered depended on one's faith, the catechisms can provide vital clues into how the catechists intended the service to be conducted. Thus, an analysis of these three points will add to the body of scholarship on communion practices, and will narrow further the divide between theological understanding and practical application of the sacrament.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹¹⁹ Palmer Wandel (ed.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, especially Part Two: Liturgical Practices.

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Impressing the importance of worthy communion is a feature the catechisms all shared. However, there were key differences between the tone and language each catechist employed. Luther, shaped by his own anxieties, offered a far more reassuring and comforting tone. In contrast, Osiander's mission to preserve clerical authority led to a much starker warning regarding receiving communion unworthily, despite his teaching the same doctrine as Luther. The *Heidelberg Catechism* and church order sought to tread a middle path between the attitudes of Luther and Calvin, the latter of whom strongly encouraged the individual to be sure of their faith as key to the worthy reception of communion. The discussion on worthy communion will conclude with an examination of the Catholic catechisms, and how each sought to teach the traditional understanding of how to receive communion worthily. It will become apparent that, despite doctrinal lines being drawn more clearly in their catechetical treatment of communion than in the other sacraments, there remained significant overlaps and silences regarding very contentious issues, and increased emphasis on matters that were important on local and secular levels.

The risk of receiving communion unworthily translated into efforts to shape the outward conformity and behaviour of parishioners. As the potential for spiritual comfort through the traditional Catholic sacrament of penance had been reduced in Lutheran territories, and virtually removed in Calvinist strongholds, Reformers had to find another way to console the laity. Communion was one of the ways in which comfort could be offered to the faithful worthy or, conversely, withdrawn from the faithless unworthy. During the 1520s,

theologians argued that the Eucharist offers spiritual strength and builds faith. The Augsburg Confession encapsulated these teachings, declaring that the sacraments are 'intended to arouse and strengthen faith in those who use them correctly, one receives faith in them and thereby faith is strengthened.'¹²⁰ The act of receiving the sacrament was an act of spiritual succour. Catholic catechisms used the opportunity to instruct on the dangers of receiving the Eucharist in an unworthy state, and they stressed the connections to the traditional sacrament of penance. The Protestant catechisms and church orders worked in tandem to promote obedience – both to God's Word and the secular authorities – and withholding communion from those deemed unworthy could be a powerful tool in the process of confessionalization and social control.

Luther's challenge to the Catholic belief that one could contribute to one's own salvation through performing good works impacted his treatment of communion. Penance and confession were key preparatory actions for Catholics wishing to receive the Lord's Supper, and successful completion was intended to affirm one's worthiness for partaking in the sacrament. However, Luther was aware that a person could not know whether their good works were sufficient or if they had confessed each and every sin, and this meant that there was an acute danger of receiving communion in an unworthy state, thus angering God. Therefore, his *Large Catechism* devoted a substantial portion of its questions on communion to teaching pastors how

¹²⁰ 'Dardurch zu ewecken und zustrecken / derhalb sy auch glaubē vorderend / uñ den recht gebraucht werdend / so man die ym glaubē empfach / uñ den glaubē dardurch stercket': *Anzeigung und bekantnus des Glaubens unnd der Iere*, p. 14.

they can reassure parishioners that a true desire for forgiveness made them worthy recipients of communion: 'our sacrament rests not on our worthiness ... but the opposite, as poor miserable people ... [who] are unworthy'.¹²¹

Luther condemned the rigour and invasiveness with which Catholics forced communicants to confess before receiving communion, explaining that in 'the old way under the Pope, one tortured oneself so that one became wholly pure and God could find no blemish in us'.¹²² The people 'wait until they are prepared [for communion] so long that one week turns to another and a whole year into the next'.¹²³ Consequently, Luther repeated that 'those who feel their weakness and want to lose it, and desire help, should not regard and use [the sacrament] as [anything] other than a valuable antidote against the poison they have in them'.¹²⁴ For Luther, communion was a way to 'refresh, comfort and strengthen', and one was neither expected, nor required, to be faultless before receiving it; he thus inverted the Catholic concept of worthiness.¹²⁵

Luther's emphatic and repeated insistence that the sacrament's power is derived from the Word of God made it easier for him to deflect concerns about both the worthiness of the celebrant and the parishioner, explaining that an 'evil priest could minister and give the sacrament' because God's Word could not be invalidated.¹²⁶ He explained that 'the word does not become false on account of a person or lack of belief ... for [Jesus] did not say, if you believe

¹²¹ 'Unser Sacrament stehet / nicht auff unser wirdigkeit ... sondern das widerspiel / als arme elende menschen ... [wer] unwirdig sind': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 114.

¹²² 'Aus dem altenwesen her / unter dem Bapst / das man sich so zumartert hat / das man ganz rein were / und Gott kein tedlin an uns fünde': *ibid.*, p. 113a.

¹²³ 'Harret bis sie geschickt werde / so lang das eine woche die andern / und ein hald jar das ander bringet': *ibid.*, p. 113a.

¹²⁴ 'Aber denen / so ir schwachheit fülen und ir gerne los weren / und hülfte begeren / sollens nicht anders ansehen und brauchen / denn als ein kostliche tyriat / wider die giff / so sie bei sich haben': *ibid.*, p. 115.

¹²⁵ 'Erquicken / trosten und stercken': *ibid.*, p. 115a.

¹²⁶ 'Ein böser Priester künde das Sacrament handeln und geben': *ibid.*, pp. 108-108a.

or are worthy you will have my body and blood ... God gives whether you are worthy or unworthy'.¹²⁷ This was reassuring and was intended to be so. It echoed the overarching theme of Luther's catechetical questions on penance and private confession. It was also in stark contrast to Osiander, who wanted to promote lay reliance on pastors for comfort and reassurance.

Osiander's sermon on the Eucharist was full of warnings against receiving communion unworthily. The opening paragraph employed the metaphorical image of the branches of a vine, commenting that just as the branch – humankind – of the vine – Jesus – does not live 'but withers and is thrown in the fire when it is cut from the vine, so we cannot become blessed, but must be damned if we fall away from Christ the Lord'.¹²⁸ Osiander outlined how individuals were to prepare themselves to receive communion, teaching that '[we] must do what he [God] tells us, then believe what he says to us'.¹²⁹ These two points are separated into further sub-categories throughout the remainder of the sermon. As a summary, Osiander exhorted that one should communicate often, and obey Christ's command to 'take this and eat ... all drink of this'.¹³⁰ Secondly, the communicant was to believe that the elements are 'truly his body and blood', taking care not to fall into the same blindness as those 'misguided people ... [who], out of sheer devilment, do not want to

¹²⁷ 'Denn umb der person oder unglaubens willen / wird das wort nicht falsch ... Denn [Jesu] spricht nicht / Wenn ir gleubt oder wirdig seit / so habt ir mein leib und blut ... Gott gebe du seiest unwirdig oder wirdig': *ibid.*, p. 108a.

¹²⁸ 'Sonder verdorret / und wirt ins fewr geworffen / wann sie vom weinstock abgeschnitten ist / also köndten wir auch nicht selig werdē / sonder müsten verdampft sein / wann wir von Christo dem Herrn abfielen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 280.

¹²⁹ 'Thun was er uns haisst / unnd darnach glauben / was er unns sagt': *ibid.*, p. 283.

¹³⁰ 'Nempt hin und esset ... Trinckt alle daraus': *ibid.*, p. 283.

confess that it is the body and blood of Christ'.¹³¹ Thirdly, the individual had to recognise that they receive communion as sinners, but that they are saved by virtue of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Fourthly, parishioners should 'do exactly as he commanded us to do' and receive communion in both kinds.¹³² Fifthly, throughout the service, Christ's death and promise of forgiveness of sin should be remembered which, in turn, prompted parishioners to consider 'that he has died not [just] for us but for all believing people. Therefore ... we also shall have love [for] them for his sake ... as Paul said, we are all one body and one bread, as we all share in one bread'.¹³³ Osiander did not explain in any great detail in this sermon how this love is expressed, although part of this love involves an individual praying that God forgives the sins of a neighbour 'has done to him, and [that] he will have love for Christ's sake, as when he does that, he receives his worthiness'.¹³⁴ Osiander then explained that a would-be-communicant must 'examine himself', and part of this self-examination ought to reflect on neighbourly relations and encouraged that any wrongs on the part of one's neighbours be forgiven them, by extension promoting civic harmony.¹³⁵ Finally, steadfast belief in the knowledge that Christ has paid the price of human sin will allow the sacrament to 'work fruit in us and spiritually give us power and might, that we increase and do not languish or wither, but stay succulent, green, and fruitful like the branches on

¹³¹ 'Das es warlich sein leib / und sein blut sey'; 'ettliche irrige leut ... aus lauter mutwillen nicht bekennē woollen / das es der leyb / und das blut Christi sey': *ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

¹³² 'Sollen thun eben das / das e runs zu thun bevolhen het': *ibid.*, p. 286.

¹³³ 'Das er nicht für uns allein gestorben ist / sonder für alle glaubige menschen. Darumb ... so sollen wir sie auch lieb haben umb seinen willen ... [wie] Paulus spricht / wir alle seine in leyb / und ein brodt / die wir alle eins brodts teilhaftig werden': *ibid.*, p. 288.

¹³⁴ 'Was er wider euch gethon hat / uñ in umb Christus willen lieb haben / dann wann ir das thut / so empfaht yhrs wirdiglich': *ibid.*, p. 289.

¹³⁵ 'Euch ... brüfet': *ibid.*, p. 289.

a vine'.¹³⁶ Thus, there were seven points to be aware of prior to and during the communion service, with the overall theme of worthiness echoing throughout the entire duration of the sermon. The sermon was centred on what needed to be done, or acknowledged, by the parishioner to receive communion, rather than the promotion of consolation which was achieved by faith, as favoured by Luther. As he did in his sermon on baptism, Osiander promoted an active preparation for the reception of the sacrament and this placed him at odds with Luther.

For Osiander, the Lord's Supper maintained and strengthened 'as we stand and fight against sin and the Devil's kingdom', implying that, without it, the individual would succumb to temptation.¹³⁷ This did not conflict with Luther, who had explained that communion 'is given as a daily pasture and feeding, that faith may recover and be strengthened, that it does not retreat in such a fight but becomes always stronger and stronger'.¹³⁸ However, rather than offering comfort in his catechism, Osiander directed his audience to the pastors, reminding them that 'through baptism we become new born, through penance and [the] keys, or acquittal, we become upright again, when we fall again into sin after baptism'.¹³⁹ It was the power of the keys used to release individuals from sin and which were wielded by the pastor that contributed to

¹³⁶ 'Es werd frucht in uns würcken / und uns gaistliche krafft und macht geben / das wir zunemē / und nicht verschmachten / noch verdoren / sonder wir die rebē an dē weinstock / safftig / grun / und fruchtbar bleibē': *ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

¹³⁷ 'Und durch des heylig abendmal warden wir erhalten / und gesterckt / wann wir stehn / und wider sie sunde / unnd Teuffels reych fechten': *ibid.*, p. 281.

¹³⁸ 'Ist es gegeben zur teglichen weide und fütterung / das sich der glaube erhole und stercke / das er inn solchem kampff nicht zu rückfalle / sondern immer ie stercker und stercker werde': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), pp. 109-109a.

¹³⁹ 'Dañ durch die tauff werden wir new geporn / durch die buß und schlüssel / oder entpindung / werden wir wider auffgericht wañ wir nach der tauff widerumb in sund sein gefallen': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 281.

their ability to partake in communion. Osiander taught that, ultimately, faith in the Word of Christ, spoken to the congregation by the pastor, was crucial for worthy reception. The connection between the role of pastor as preacher, teacher, and dispenser was maintained and, in keeping with the sermons on the keys and baptism, Osiander encouraged the faithful to 'listen properly and mark diligently' the words and command of Christ as expounded to them by the minister.¹⁴⁰ In contrast to Luther, Osiander made no reference to 'evil priests' and their impact on the efficacy of the sacrament.¹⁴¹ The focus fully was on the personal worthiness of the individual communicant, reminding parishioners throughout to look to their pastor for succour when required, be that to hear the Word of God, 'become upright' through the keys, or simply to receive communion from him.¹⁴² The office of pastor was not only one of function, as Luther saw it, but in Osiander's teachings, it was afforded more responsibility and authority.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* also was keen to encourage worthy communion but, unlike Osiander, the goal was not to protect clerical authority, rather it was to promote obedience to secular rule. It will become apparent that, in pursuit of this aim, the Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate was prepared to concede to the Lutherans on certain points and in his catechism he employed a similar tone to that of Luther. When it came to worthy communion, Calvin had taught that:

¹⁴⁰ 'Ordenlich hören / und mit fleis mercken: *ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁴¹ 'Boser Priester': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 108.

¹⁴² 'Werden ... auffgericht': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 281.

if we would worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper, we must first with firm heart-felt reliance regard the Lord Jesus as our only righteousness, life, and salvation, receiving and accepting the promises which are given us by him as sure and certain ... our souls must have ... a desire and ardent longing to be fed, in order to find proper nourishment in the Lord's Supper.¹⁴³

Essentially, this meant that in order to receive communion worthily, all that was required was complete faith in the redeeming powers of Jesus. It was an internal belief that only the individual could know he truly possessed. Calvin's communion liturgy for Geneva cautioned 'whosoever eats and drinks indignantly, takes his condemnation, not discerning the body of the Lord', again reiterating the responsibility of the individual.¹⁴⁴ The *Heidelberg Catechism* echoed this theme but, amongst other differences, extended the danger of unworthy communion to more than the individual. It impressed the hazards posed to the entire community if anyone within it did not conform to the ideals professed in the catechism.

Luther and Calvin disagreed on the consequences of receiving communion unworthily. The doctrine of predestination is incompatible with the notion of bringing about one's own damnation: as an individual cannot influence their salvation, in like manner, they cannot cause their own damnation.¹⁴⁵ However, Jeffrey Watt's analysis of the Genevan Consistory records indicates that there is evidence that not only did the laity believe they risked eternal damnation if they participated in communion unworthily, but that this fear was encouraged

¹⁴³ *Calvin's Tracts Relating to the Reformation*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1844), p. 176.

¹⁴⁴ James L. Codling, *Calvin: Ethics, Eschatology, and Education* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010), p. 30.

¹⁴⁵ Jeffrey R. Watt, 'Reconciliation and the Confession of Sins: The Evidence from the Consistory in Calvin's Geneva', in R. Ward Holder (ed.), *Calvin and Luther: The Continuing Relationship* (Göttingen, 2013), pp. 105-120, p. 115.

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by Calvin and his colleagues. For instance, in late 1555, Ami Favre apologised for his sinful behaviour, and asked to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. Calvin was not entirely convinced of Favre's sincerity and, while the Consistory granted Favre his request, they warned that 'we leave him to his own conscience that he will not take it to his own damnation, seeing all his faults and that we know he is guilty; he must think about it'.¹⁴⁶ Watt suggests that the threat of damnation was a justified means of promoting reconciliation and the 'interiorization of the Reformed morality'.¹⁴⁷ Theologically, unworthy communion could not result in damnation, but the threat remained a useful method by which to promote aspects of Reformed morality and social control.

For Luther, an individual should not feel discouraged from receiving communion, even if they feel unworthy. He taught that those people who are 'naughty and wild', and are 'unwilling to be pious' should remain away, 'but the others, [who] are not such crude and loose people and are pious, should not remain away, even if they are otherwise weak and infirm'.¹⁴⁸ In the years after Luther's death, however, Lutheran territories began to alter their understanding of the consequences of unworthy communion. David Sabeau comments that the 1559 Württemberg Church Order demonstrates that communion was intended to strengthen the individual's conscience, but on the evening before the communion service, the pastor was to warn his parishioners of the dangers of receiving communion without showing remorse

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁴⁸ 'Freche und wilde', 'sie ... ungerne wolten from̄', 'Die andern aber / so nicht solche rohe und lose leute sind / und gern from̄ weren / sollen sich nicht davon sondern / ob sie gleich sonst schwach und gebrechlich sind': Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus* (1535), pp. 113a-114.

and repentance for their sins.¹⁴⁹ Lutheran principles remained, but as in Calvin's Geneva, the threat of damnation was used to persuade parishioners to live godly lives. The *Heidelberg Catechism* embodied the tendencies of both Calvinists and Lutherans in its teachings on worthy communion.

Question 81 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* taught that the supper was open also to 'those who are displeased with themselves because of their sins'.¹⁵⁰ This answer would appear to have suited both Lutherans and Calvinists: it required inner reflection and acknowledgement of sins, without forcing an individual to confess them verbally. The next question explained that ungodly people were to be excluded from communion, otherwise 'the covenant of God would be profaned and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation'.¹⁵¹ The punishment was not directed towards the individual, but the whole body of the faithful. Therefore, it was not just a matter of one's own salvation that was at stake, but also potentially that of one's neighbours, family, and friends. Of course, the danger of this approach was that it could foster a sense of doubt, or fear about, receiving communion at all if the risk of receiving it unworthily could result in such dire consequences. To combat this, after listing a litany of sins that would prevent worthy communion – including 'those who desire to inflict splits and mutinies in church and secular government ... [and] all those who are disobedient to their parents and superiors' – the church order sought to offer comfort, exhorting 'we do not come to this supper to

¹⁴⁹ David Warren Sabean, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 45.

¹⁵⁰ 'Die inen selbst umb irer sünden willen mißfallen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 56.

¹⁵¹ 'Wirdt also der Bundt Gottes geschmecht / und sein zorn uber die ganz gemein gereizet': *ibid.*, p. 57.

testify that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves, but go there because we are looking for our life outside ourselves in Jesus Christ ... and that God will make [us] worthy partakers of this heavenly meal and drink'.¹⁵²

The catechism warned of the dangers of unworthy communion, while the words spoken by the pastor, reading verbatim from the model sermon provided in the church order, balanced this danger by offering comfort and reassurance. There was a parallel with Luther's *Large Catechism* which, as we have seen, also sought to offer comfort through the words of the pastor, and the *Heidelberg Catechism* echoed Luther's reassurance that feeling unworthy should not prevent one partaking in communion.

The *Heidelberg Church Order* and catechism worked together to warn against unworthy communion, provided reassurance to parishioners alarmed by the prospect of bringing about their own and their community's damnation, and informed them of how to achieve worthiness. However, the responsibility of avoiding communal damnation did not lie entirely with the individual. The *Heidelberg Catechism* taught that, should the pastor be concerned about the worthiness of a parishioner, 'the Christian Church is obliged, according to the command of God and his apostles, to exclude such persons through the

¹⁵² 'Alle die spaltüg und meuterei in Kirchen unnd weltlichen Regiment begeren anzurichten ... alle die iren Eltern unnd oberkeiten ungehorsam sind ...'; 'wir kommen nicht zu diesen Abendmal / damit zubezeugē / daß wir volkōmen und gerecht seind in uns selbst / sonder dargenen / weil wir unser leben ausserhalb uns in Jesu Christo suchen ... Gott [uns] dieser hiñlichen speiß und tranck würdig und theilhaftig mache': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 47a.

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ministry of the keys, until they amend their lives'.¹⁵³ The notion of worthy communion was linked to the concept of the keys, clerical power to use them to bind and loose sins, as well as the promotion of the bonds of community. It was for the benefit of everyone that individuals think beyond the impact their actions have on their own salvation, and instead look to that of the greater good. In so doing, the themes of obedience and civic harmony were maintained, which, in turn, supported Frederick's political objectives.

The analysis of Protestant catechisms has revealed that, while each sought to distance themselves from the perceived rigour of Catholicism and its seemingly unreasonable demands regarding worthy communion, there were still efforts to use the dangers of unworthy communion to shape the parishioners' behaviour. Traces of this approach can be detected also in the Catholic catechisms. Like the Protestants, Canisius and the Council of Trent were keen to promote the worthy reception of communion. Canisius used the opportunity to encourage civic harmony and obedience – as did the *Heidelberg Catechism* – while the Tridentine Catechism was in line more with Osiander's approach, in that it reinforced the role of examination and clerical authority in permitting the enjoyment of communion. Further, in keeping with the suggestion that Canisius deliberately altered the tone, emphasis and language regarding the real presence depending on his audience, the same pattern can be discerned regarding worthy communion. The *Large Catechism* was much more explicit in its defence of traditional Catholic practices, and

¹⁵³ 'Derhalben die Christliche Kirch schuldig ist / nach der ordnung Christi uñ seiner Aposteln / solche / biß zu besserung ires lebens / durch dz ampt der Schlüssel außzuschliessen': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 57.

openly reinforced clerical authority, whereas the *Small* and *Smaller Catechisms* were virtually silent on these same issues, instead focusing on the behaviour of the parishioners.

Canisius' *Large Catechism* had a question dedicated to explaining 'what pertains to worthy reception and to attaining the fruit of this sacrament'.¹⁵⁴ It was the very last question on the Eucharist before Canisius turned to penance, the structuring of which reinforced the connection between the two sacraments. This structure was very different to Luther's catechism, in which Luther addressed the question of worthy communion throughout his exposition on the Lord's Supper.¹⁵⁵ This reflected his concern to remove doubt and fear from his parishioners, while Canisius was concerned more with outlining the main points of Catholic Eucharistic doctrine, which was done briefly and succinctly in his *Small Catechism*. In the *Large Catechism*, Canisius explained the doctrine of real presence, followed by the 'transformation', the adoration, the sacrificial nature of the mass, and then, finally, its reception.¹⁵⁶ Canisius taught his readers that a person must prove themselves before being in a worthy condition to receive communion, and 'this proving of himself ... mostly consists of four things, namely that there is faith, penitence, attention of mind, and honest demeanour of the Christian person'.¹⁵⁷ If anyone receives communion unworthily, 'they do not take life,

¹⁵⁴ 'Was gehört zu würdiger empfangung und zu erlangung der frucht dieses Sacraments': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 185.

¹⁵⁵ Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 108a, p. 109, pp. 110-111, pp. 113a-114a.

¹⁵⁶ Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 163.

¹⁵⁷ 'Aber diese probierung sein selbs ... stehet am meisten in vier dingen / nemlich / das der sey der Glaub / Bußfertigkeit / Auff merckung des gemüts / uñ ehrliche zier der Christen menschen': *ibid.*, p. 185.

but judgement, and are guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord'.¹⁵⁸ Canisius reminded readers that part of preparing for communion requires 'cursing one's sins, explicit confession to the Priest and obtaining absolution'.¹⁵⁹ In contrast, both the *Small* and *Smaller Catechisms* mentioned nothing about receiving absolution from the priest, although the *Small Catechism* taught that confession is a part of penance and listed a litany of sins that would prevent worthy communion, including being 'an unbeliever, godless, unrepentant, excommunicate, sectarian and heretic'.¹⁶⁰ The focus of the *Small Catechism* was on outward behaviour, rather than doctrine or a defence of the clerical office and, in this, there were strong parallels with the *Heidelberg Catechism*. The question is, why were there such marked differences between Canisius' catechisms? In line with arguments made throughout this thesis, there are two connected reasons that serve to answer this. Firstly, the *Large Catechism* was a guide to best practice; its intended users were not ordinary laypeople, and it most likely would have been used by Catholic clergy. On the other hand, the more popular *Small Catechism* had a broader audience comprised mainly of the laity and older school children. Its readership base afforded Canisius and his patrons the opportunity to use worthy communion as a way to instruct on outward behaviour. At the same time, in the *Small Catechism*, Canisius acknowledged the laity's desire for comfort regarding communion. In this, it can be seen to have had connections to Luther's catechism, which

¹⁵⁸ 'Welche aber das heilig Sacrament unwürdig empfangen / die nemen inen nit das leben / sonder das gericht / und sein schuldig des Leibs und Bluts unsern Herren': *ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁵⁹ 'Erfordert verflüchung der sünden / außstrückliche beicht vor dem Priester / und erlangten ablaß': *ibid.*, p. 186. Ablass was also understood as 'indulgence', thus Luther would not have employed this word for absolution in his catechism. Canisius' use of it here is perhaps intentional: it is an acknowledgement of the confessional differences between Catholicism and Lutheranism.

¹⁶⁰ 'Ein ungläubiger / Gotloser / unbußfertiger / verbannter / Sectischer und Kezerischer': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 107.

sought to reduce feelings of anxiety. Canisius' *Small Catechism* included a question on 'how should one receive this sacrament?'. The answer reassured readers that 'just as the faith, authority and power of the Christian Church requires', relieving, in part, some of the burden felt by the faithful regarding their own certainty.¹⁶¹ While, of course, Luther emphasised faith alone and Canisius promoted the authority of the Church, both catechists aimed to encourage participation in communion and to reduce parishioner anxiety.

By way of contrast, the *Tridentine Catechism* was unequivocal in its approach to worthy communion. It instructed that 'no one conscious of mortal sin and having an opportunity of going to confession, however contrite he may deem himself, is to approach the Holy Eucharist until he has been purified by sacramental confession'.¹⁶² The catechism reiterated the need to attend communion often, and definitely at least once a year at Easter, instructing 'that neglect of this duty should be chastised by exclusion from the society of the faithful'.¹⁶³ The catechism acknowledged that fear may prevent the faithful from partaking of the sacrament but, rather than offering the clergy guidance on how to provide comfort to the parishioners, it simply reiterated the laity's Christian duty to communicate. It explained how the faithful should prepare themselves for the reception of the Eucharist, separating the preparation of the soul from that of the body. The former required firm belief 'that there is truly present the body and blood of the Lord ... We should venerate the greatness of the mystery rather than too curiously investigate its truth by idle

¹⁶¹ 'Wie soll man dieses Sacrament empfangen?'; 'Eben wie der Glaub / autoritet und gewalt der Chrislichen Kirchen vermag': *ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁶² *Tridentine Catechism*, pp. 247-248.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

inquiry'.¹⁶⁴ Secondly, peace and love towards one's neighbours was required, along with an examination and confession of mortal sins, reflection on one's unworthiness, and to have conviction in one's love of God. In order to prepare physically, the catechism required fasting and abstinence from 'the marriage debt for some days previous to Communion'.¹⁶⁵ While Canisius' *Large Catechism* echoed the spiritual preparation, it did not mention the physical preparation. Luther and Osiander had both rejected the salvific benefits of fasting in their catechisms, with both teaching that, although fasting might be a useful and 'a fine external discipline', faith in God's promise is the only required act of preparation.¹⁶⁶ Canisius did not engage in this debate in his catechisms, instead focusing on spiritual preparation, which was much less divisive. Even Canisius' instruction that people confess to a priest was not entirely divisive: Rittgers notes that by the mid-1540s, Lutheran areas such as Regensburg, Anhalt and Brandenburg had accepted that the evangelical version of private confession was a prerequisite to worthily participating in communion.¹⁶⁷

Worthily receiving communion was important to all the catechists, but it was not necessarily born of the same concerns, and there is clear evidence of doctrinal manipulation and cleverly phrased emphases in the different catechisms. The individual motives of the catechists and patrons certainly shaped how worthy communion was communicated. Canisius did not offer

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

¹⁶⁶ 'Ein feine eusserliche zucht': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 293; 'ein eusserliche bereitung': Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus* (1535), p. 111.

¹⁶⁷ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, pp. 175-176.

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uniform teaching across the spectrum of his catechisms, responding to the individual audiences of the texts. Luther emphasised comfort and reassurance, while the *Heidelberg Catechism* and that of Osiander used worthy communion to impress the need for civic harmony and concord.

Communion in Both Kinds

Communion under both kinds originally was permitted to the laity in the early years of the sacrament's evolution. However, efforts to withdraw the chalice from general consumption began in the twelfth century, and this was made official at the Council of Constance in 1415.¹⁶⁸ Luther and his fellow Protestants took issue with the Catholic practice of withholding the chalice and reinstated it for their congregations. The granting of the chalice was a bone of contention between not only Protestants and Catholics, but it caused tension within the fold of German Catholicism also where there was a significant degree of inconsistency surrounding the practice. The Augsburg Interim (1548) compounded the inconsistent approach to communion in both kinds. Agreed by Charles V, this allowed for communion in both kinds as a temporary measure until the Council of Trent promulgated an official decree.¹⁶⁹ Canisius' letters describe the demand for the lay chalice, even among the 'best Catholics' in Germany.¹⁷⁰ This section will investigate more fully these tensions, focusing on the specific wording used by Canisius in his

¹⁶⁸ Reasons for the withdrawal of the lay chalice included reinforcing the special status of the clergy who were the only ones permitted or able to perform the sacrament. See Noble, *Lucas Cranach the Elder*, p. 109; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 71-72.

¹⁶⁹ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 178.

¹⁷⁰ 'Optimi quique Catholici': *Beati*, vol. 1, p. 552.

catechisms to help explain his actions in the political sphere. It considers the lasting impact of the Augsburg Interim on the expectations of German Catholics, suggesting that Canisius' eventual position on the issue was influenced by his daily interactions with ordinary Germans. Given the consensus amongst the Protestants regarding the lay chalice, far less attention will be devoted to how the issue was approached in their catechisms, albeit briefly to draw attention to their subdued tone in its promotion.

In the 1560s, Duke Albrecht of Bavaria became alarmed by Protestant demands for the chalice in his territory and, believing his authority to be under direct threat, intensified his effort to confessionalise his duchy according to Tridentine principles, including its laws on the lay chalice.¹⁷¹ In 1568, the faculty of Ingolstadt University had to swear an oath to follow the Tridentine policy, and this was extended to all teachers, clergy and officials in the duchy the following year.¹⁷² Yet, earlier in his reign, Albrecht's religious policy was far less rigid. At the second Colloquy of Regensburg in 1556-7, Albrecht was prepared to allow communion in both kinds.¹⁷³ Moreover, after Trent's ruling against communion in both kinds in 1562, in 1563, a territorial diet in Bavaria granted communion in both kinds as part of a broader package of conciliatory measures designed to reconcile dissenters with the Catholic faith, which was followed up a year later by the Pope Pius IV's conditional decision to allow

¹⁷¹ Thomas, *A House Divided*, p. 107.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁷³ Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, Vol 1: Maximilian I to the Peace of Westphalia, 1493-1648* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 383-384.

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communion in both kinds in the German dioceses.¹⁷⁴ Additionally, Emperor Ferdinand was keen for the chalice to be granted to the laity as a concession to the powerful Protestant princes, whose political and financial support he so desperately needed. Canisius addressed the Council of Trent in 1562, where he proposed that Catholics living in a Protestant area should be allowed both the bread and the wine if they were unable to attend a Catholic church.¹⁷⁵ Thus, while in a letter to Bishop Friedrich of Wurzburg of April 1567, Canisius declared 'conciliation brings forth the destruction of religion', in public he adopted a position regarding communion in both kinds that can be seen to reflect the policies of both the Bavarian Duke and the Emperor.¹⁷⁶

This attitude can be seen in his catechisms' teachings regarding the lay chalice. The *Small Catechism* taught that communion under one kind is sufficient for the laity, explaining that 'under one, as under both kinds, Christ is received, true God and man, together with his entire body and blood'.¹⁷⁷ Equally, the very first edition of the *Large Catechism*, published in Latin in 1555, promoted heavily the usual Catholic practice of offering only the consecrated host to communicating parishioners.¹⁷⁸ Later German editions of the *Large Catechism*, translated from the Latin, adopted the same attitude.¹⁷⁹

Canisius' answer to whether or not a priest should 'receive the sacrament

¹⁷⁴ Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*, p. 57. Pius IV permitted the laity to receive the chalice in communion only as long as the priest adhered to the liturgy of an otherwise Roman Catholic mass: David M. Luebke, *Hometown Religion: Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia* (Charlottesville, 2016), p. 89.

¹⁷⁵ Haub, *Petrus Canisius*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁶ 'Conciliationes exitium adferunt religionij': *Beati*, vol 5, p. 410.

¹⁷⁷ 'Daß under einer so wol / als under baiden gestalten / ist und empfangen wirdt / Christus wahrer Got und Mensch / sampt seinem ganzen leib und blut': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 107.

¹⁷⁸ Peter Canisius, *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* (Vienna: Michael Zimmerman, 1555), pp. 71a-73.

¹⁷⁹ See, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), pp. 175-182.

under one kind, namely the Bread, or give it under two kinds as the Bread and Wine' was lengthy.¹⁸⁰ It began by confirming that 'for priests or sacristans, it is indeed obvious that they should take both kinds, without which they cannot properly consecrate nor offer up [*auffopfern*] this sacrament'.¹⁸¹ It acknowledged the inconsistencies of Scripture, which is ambiguous regarding whether communion ought to be given under one or two kinds, as it 'mention[s] now the bread and chalice, now only the bread ... We have the example of Christ [who] himself served the two Apostles in Emmaus [the] sacrament under one form only'.¹⁸² However, he defended the practice of giving communion under one kind to lay people on the grounds that not only did Jesus himself dispense it in this manner, but he permitted those 'to whom he gave the power not only to receive but also to consecrate and offer this Sacrament' to decide the 'manner and order of communicating this Sacrament to the faithful'.¹⁸³ Acknowledging that the laity may feel 'a sense of unfairness', he reasoned:

in this case, as in many others, they are not compared to the Priest ... Christ is not divided in two parts according to the two signs of the Sacrament, but is really under one as two forms ... they receive as much under one as ... under both.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ 'Soll man das Sacrament nemen under einer gestalt / nemlich des Brots / oder geber under zweierlei gestalt als des Brots und Weins?': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 175.

¹⁸¹ 'Von Priestern zwar oder Sacristicanten ist es offenbar / das si sollen beide gestalt nemen / on welche si auch nicht recht cōsecriern / nich auffopffern künnten diß Sacrament': *ibid.*, pp. 175-176. The language of 'auffopffern' indicates that Canisius conceived the mass as a sacrifice, a position rejected by the Protestant reformers: see below on p. 397.

¹⁸² 'Meldung ... jezt des Brots uñ Kelchs / jezt allein des Brots / So habē wir auch das Exempel Christi / welcher selbs mit denn zwei Jungern inn Emaus handlent / inen solchs Sacrament under einerlei gestalt allein hat gereicht': *ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁸³ 'Welchen er gewalt geben nit allein zunemen /sonder auch zu wandeln un zu opffern diß Sacrament'; 'zur weiß und ordnung außzuspenden den glaubigen diß Sacrament gehörig ist': *ibid.*, p. 178.

¹⁸⁴ 'Ein einige unbilligkeit'; 'so si / wie dann in vielen anderedn / in diesem faal den Priestern nit werdē vergleicht ... Christus nit zertheilt ist in zwei theil nach dem zweien zeichen dieses

This indicates two things. Firstly, it demonstrates that Canisius stressed the differences between the laity and those involved in presiding at the mass. They were not spiritually equivalent, as many Protestants following Luther claimed – with, perhaps, the exception of Osiander – but instead were distinct and had been granted that distinction by Jesus himself.¹⁸⁵ Secondly, Canisius defended the doctrine of concomitance, which had been formulated in the early thirteenth century and decreed that Christ became present in the elements after the first consecration – of the Bread – and was complete in every part, that is, both body and blood in both the bread and the wine.¹⁸⁶ Concomitance was not a major point of contention between Luther and the Catholics, since Luther agreed that Christ is fully present under the bread, and fully present under the wine.¹⁸⁷ There was therefore no real problem in defending the idea in Canisius' catechisms.

It is clear that Canisius promoted communion under one kind in his catechisms from the very beginning of his catechetical career but, in accordance with the Emperor's political objective, he was prepared to be

Sacraments / sonder so wol under einerlei als zweierlei gestalt ... diese nemen so viel under einerlei / als ... under zweierlei entpfinghen': *ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁸⁵ Osiander believed that the office of the clergy bore great responsibility and that pastors were to discharge their duties efficiently. He saw the role of the clergy as vital in achieving salvation, as discussed in chapter four. In his 'Sermon on the Three Sacraments' delivered in July 1535, Osiander exhorted his audience to show respect to 'the priest who sits in the place of God and the apostles, who acts according to the word of God, so [when] a person laments his sins to them he is pleased thereby' (Darumb sol man sich erzaigen dem priester, der an Gotes statt und der apostel statt siczent, die noch dem wort Gotes thun, so sich ein mensch beklagt seiner sünde, so er darein ist gefallen.): Andreas Osiander, 'Predigt über die drei Sakramente', *AOGA*, vol. 6, pp. 61-66, p. 62. There are indications that Osiander saw the clerical office as spiritually distinct from the laity, but far more research is needed to determine this conclusively.

¹⁸⁶ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁸⁷ Killan McDonnell, *John Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist* (Princeton, 1967), p. 72.

flexible under certain conditions, as demonstrated by his actions at the Council of Trent. Whilst this flexibility may be explained by suggesting that the *Large Catechism* was designed to teach Catholic clergy how to defend against Protestant challenges to the principle of communion under one kind, there is another, less obvious, explanation of his contradictory approach. A close textual analysis of the precise wording employed by Canisius in the *Large Catechism* reveals that there was a degree of flexibility in the Jesuit's discussion of communion under both kinds, despite a cursory glance suggesting the opposite.

In the same question on whether one or two kinds of communion should be offered, Canisius explained:

The faithful laity ... are not obliged [*verbunden*] by the command of God receive the sacrament in two kinds ... the custom [i.e. that the laity to receive under one kind] was established by the Church and the Holy Fathers, not without reason and has been so long held, [that] it is to be regarded as a law which may not be overturned or the Church's authority changed at the behest of a single person.¹⁸⁸

There are two intriguing suggestions in this extract, which, taken together, suggest that Canisius was prepared, if necessary, to accommodate Catholics who received communion in both kinds. Firstly, Canisius challenged the Protestant argument that divine law requires communion in both kinds, drawing on extensive support from the teachings of the Church to argue that

¹⁸⁸ 'Die glaubigen Leien ... sein nit verbunden auß dem gebot Gottes zu der empfangung des Sacraments under zweierlei gestalt ... die gewonheit (den Leien zu peisen unter einerlei gestalt) von der Kirchē und heiligen Vattern nit on ursach eingefurt und gar lang gehaltē ist / ist si fur ein gesaz zubehalten / welchs nit mag um̄ gestollen / oder an der Kirchen Autoritet nach eins jeden wolgefallen verkert werden': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), pp. 180-181. Verbunden can be translated as 'bound'.

communion in one kind 'is established not without reason'.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, Canisius expressed astonishment towards those who conspired with the 'new despisers of the Church' regarding communion in both kinds and he taught that the fruits of the sacrament are available only to those who 'persist in the unity of the Church', emphasising that those who insisted on 'the external signs of the sacrament' would make themselves unworthy partakers and would not receive its fruits.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless, he taught that divine law did not 'oblige' the laity to receive communion under both kinds. In contrast, the *Tridentine Catechism* explicitly forbade the laity to receive the chalice. This is a subtle difference: Canisius here defended the practice of administering only the bread to the laity without expressly forbidding the wine. Similarly, in Canisius' *Small Catechism*, his preference for communion under one kind was made clear. Canisius taught that the laity should 'content themselves with only the form of the bread' and that Christ is received wholly 'under one as well as under both kinds'.¹⁹¹ However, he did not expressly forbid communion in both kinds in this catechism either.

Secondly, Canisius taught that the 'law' of communion in one kind could not be changed 'at the behest of a single person'. While this can be seen as a direct challenge to Luther and other reformers – and it probably was – it may also reflect Canisius' context. The policies adopted by the Emperor and the Bavarian dukes indicate that there was a demand for the lay chalice from the

¹⁸⁹ 'Nit on ursach eingefurt': *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁹⁰ 'Die eusserlichen zeichen dieses Sacraments' 'Mit den newn verachtern der Kirchen'; 'bestendigen in der einigkeit der Kirch': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 182.

¹⁹¹ 'Lassen sich billich benügen mit einerley gestalt des brots'; 'under einer so wol / als under baiden gestalten': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 107.

laity and, in 1564, Pope Pius IV allowed bishops in five German provinces to administer the sacrament in both kinds, including Bavaria.¹⁹² Moreover, the legalisation of Lutheranism in the Empire after the Peace of Augsburg (1555) meant that Catholics could find themselves living in areas where they had little choice but to receive communion in both kinds.

Thus the question of audience becomes significant. Canisius' *Large Catechism* was intended primarily for the clergy who were expected to have a better understanding of points of theology than the laity, and it was designed, in part, to provide them with a defence against Protestant doctrines. Therefore, in his *Large Catechism*, Canisius provided a robust defence of communion in one kind, which could be used to support a priest in their administering of communion to the laity, but which stopped short of expressly forbidding communion in two kinds. The *Small Catechism*, however, was designed for the laity, some of whom could be living in Lutheran territories, or in a Catholic area where receiving communion in two kinds had been declared the normal practice. David Luebke has demonstrated that it was not unusual for Catholic parishioners to receive ablution wine in sixteenth-century Münster and he suggests that there are signs that this had occurred in Cologne in the fourteenth century. Luebke suggests that receiving the ablution wine – which was not consecrated – could confuse parishioners into thinking that they were receiving communion in both kinds, especially when the ablution wine was distributed to the parishioners in the same chalice from which the clergy had received consecrated wine, as happened in the parish of St Aegidius in

¹⁹² Michael A. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (London, 1999), p. 57.

Münster.¹⁹³ However, other Catholics in Westphalia recognised the difference between ablution wine and consecrated wine. In Haltern, for instance, the priest permitted those who wished to receive communion in both kinds to do so.¹⁹⁴ Luebke argues that lay people 'were fully equipped to pick and choose among the ritual offerings available to them', despite their adherence to an otherwise orthodox Roman Catholicism.¹⁹⁵ In the *Small Catechism*, Canisius taught that unbelievers, sectarians and heretics would not receive the sacrament worthily, so that only a Catholic would be a worthy partaker.¹⁹⁶ However, Canisius was faced with a conundrum: if he excluded those Catholics who received communion in both kinds by prohibiting the lay chalice this could potentially alienate loyal Catholics from the fold. However, in not expressly forbidding communion in both kinds in the *Small Catechism*, Canisius left open the possibility for an individual who identified as a Catholic and participated in the sacrament as a repentant believer to receive the fruits of that participation. In this way, Canisius' *Small Catechism* seems to have been designed to promote inclusivity within Catholicism.

While Canisius may have been prepared to accept communion in both kinds, this does not mean that he was an 'ecumenicist before his time', as Hilmar Pabel has accused modern historians of suggesting.¹⁹⁷ Rather, it demonstrates that the catechisms could offer a more fluid expression of confessional identity than existing scholarship claims. Canisius' audience was

¹⁹³ Luebke, *Hometown Religion*, p. 91.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93. In other cases, priests who did not want to administer communion in both kinds to the laity delegated the task of offering the laity the chalice to sacristans, as Sundag Strick did in Werne in the late sixteenth century: *ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁹⁶ Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 107.

¹⁹⁷ Pabel, 'Peter Canisius and the Protestants', p. 373.

Catholic, but the practical expression of Catholic faith was not uniform across Germany. The subtleties in Canisius' catechisms acknowledge and reflect this confessional fluidity within German Catholicism, which arose from the political and social realities of being a Catholic in a bi-confessional Empire, as well as from the pre-existence of local practices that were not all consistent with the developing Tridentine Catholicism of the later sixteenth century. Canisius' approach to communion in both kinds suggests that he tailored his catechisms to include as many as possible of those who identified as Catholic. In so doing, he made space to accommodate the experience of those Catholics living in areas where receiving the chalice was an established practice.

Further evidence for this willingness to tolerate local lay practice can be seen in the woodcut accompanying Canisius' 1575 Latin edition of the *Institutiones* in which there was a very small woodcut depicting the priest offering not just the host to the kneeling laity, but the chalice as well (fig. 8).¹⁹⁸ This image was replicated neither in the 1575 German edition, nor in any other vernacular edition, and it stood in direct contrast to a superficial reading of the text. Only when the language and broader context of the catechism's publication location are scrutinised does the woodcut begin to make sense. At no point did Canisius utterly reject communion in both kinds in his catechisms, but neither did he condone it. Rather, his choice of wording allowed for a measure of flexibility, and this was reinforced by the 1575 woodcut.

¹⁹⁸ Canisio, *Institvtiones Christianae Pietatis* (1575), p. 40, and repeated again on p. 46. See also, Palmer Wandel, 'Catechisms', p. 72.



Figure 8: *Petro Canisio, Institvtiones Christianae Pietatis sev Parvvs Catechismvs Catholicorvm* (Antwerp: Johann Bellerus, 1575), p. 40. Augsburg, Staats-und-Stadtbibliothek.

The 1575 edition of his catechism, published in Antwerp, outside of the Holy Roman Empire, is an example of how Canisius' catechisms were implemented beyond German boundaries. Antwerp was a renowned centre of publishing in the sixteenth century, becoming rich on the back of the flourishing European book trade. Victoria Christman's study on religious heterodoxy has revealed that a number of Antwerp printers produced works for multi-confessional clients and markets.¹⁹⁹ Jean Belere appears to have been an exception, printing solely Catholic works. This makes the choice of woodcuts used in the catechism even more intriguing. Essentially, a Catholic printer chose an image that promoted communion in both kinds to be used in a Catholic catechism, the text of which only hinted at communion in both kinds being an acceptable practice. Far more research is needed, but van Dael suggests that the woodcuts pre-dated this edition and were combined from a variety of sources.²⁰⁰ This suggests several things: that Belere did not comprehend fully what the woodcuts might convey to the catechism's readers;

¹⁹⁹ Victoria Christman, *Pragmatic Toleration: The Politics of Religious Heterodoxy in Early Reformation Antwerp, 1515-1555* (Rochester, 2015), p. 69.

²⁰⁰ Dael, 'Two Illustrated Catechisms from Antwerp', p. 286.

that he was motivated by financial concerns because he did not commission woodcuts that reflected accurately the catechism's text; or that the local market preferred these images. Given that Belere produced only Catholic works, in a city that was known for its heterodoxy in printing, and that he published numerous works by Catholics from Italy and France, it is likely that Belere was a Catholic himself and did understand what he was printing. It is probable that the image depicting communion in both kinds was an acknowledgement of preferred local practices, indicating that Catholic identity in Antwerp perceived communion in both kinds as acceptable, or that it was a common occurrence. Certainly, the influx of Protestant migrants into the city and the establishment of Lutheran and Calvinist churches suggests that receiving communion in both kinds was a familiar practice.

The Protestant catechisms were all in agreement that communion in both kinds was the correct way to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Luther had first raised concerns regarding communion in one kind in the *Babylonian Captivity*, yet Loewen notes that after the radicals in Wittenberg made a 'major issue' of communion in one kind, Luther stopped emphasising his own objection to it.²⁰¹ Communion in both kinds had to be mentioned in his catechisms, but Luther did not want to emphasise its importance because he wanted to disassociate himself from the 'fanatics'. In fact, other than teaching that parishioners should eat and drink according to the manner that Jesus instructed during the Last Supper, Luther did not discuss the issue in any depth at all in the *Large Catechism*. The *Small Catechism* encouraged

²⁰¹ Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals*, p. 41.

parishioners to eat and drink, but offered no explanation as to why they should do both, other than to refer to the words of institution spoken by Christ.²⁰² Osiander instructed parishioners to eat and drink in his catechism, but his argument was more emphatic than Luther's. He explained that Jesus 'has decreed with particular words [that] we should all drink from the chalice. Now, one should be more obedient to God than to people. Therefore, we should also receive in both kinds, as he commanded'.²⁰³ In contrast to Luther, who had argued in the *Babylonian Captivity* that it was not lay people's fault if the priest only gave them communion in one kind, Osiander engaged directly with, and rejected, the practice of communion under one kind.²⁰⁴ Osiander emphasised the requirement for Christians to follow the Word of God throughout his sermon on the Lord's Supper – it underpinned his defence of clerical authority – therefore, his argument that Christians follow God's command in receiving communion in both kinds is an extension of his existing argument. The *Heidelberg Catechism* promoted communion in both kinds also, but did not dwell on it, simply teaching 'I receive from the hand of the minister and physically enjoy the bread and chalice of the Lord'.²⁰⁵ Receiving communion in both kinds was not a contentious issue in the Palatinate, but the nature of Christ's presence in the elements was problematic. This brief instruction to receive communion in both kinds avoided engaging with disputed points of doctrine.

²⁰² Luther, *Enchiridion* (1537), p. 73.

²⁰³ 'Er hat mit besondern worten gepoten / wir solle alles aus dem kelch trincken. Nun sol man ye Got mehr gehorsam sein / dann den menschen. Darumb sollen wirs auch empfangē in baidereley gestalt / wie er bevolhen hat': Osiander, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig*, p. 287.

²⁰⁴ 'Culpa non est in laeicis, sed sacerdotibus': Luther, *De captivitate Babylonica*, WA, vol. 6, p. 507.

²⁰⁵ 'Ich auß der hand des Dieners empfangē / und leiblich niese das brod und den Kelch des Herrn': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, p. 22.

Indulgences and masses for the dead

The Catholic doctrine regarding the sacrificial nature of the mass was connected to the belief that the merits gained by Christ's death could help not just the living, but also the dead. It was believed that the sacrifice of the mass, performed by the priest, was a good work and that the credit for its performance could be transferred to the person in whose name it was done.²⁰⁶ This led to the popular practice of private masses, paid for by an individual or their family, which could be performed after their death. Luther did not approve of masses for the dead: following on from his belief that the mass was not a sacrifice, he criticised both the belief that they constituted a good work and the fact that the Church made money from them.²⁰⁷ In his *Babylonian Captivity*, he rejected the practice of viewing the Eucharist as a good work, a conception he saw as the third captivity of the mass. In 1521, Luther published a tract on *The Misuse of the Mass*, in which he rejected the practice of private masses paid for by endowments. In 1524, he wrote a letter to Bartholomew von Staremburg, an Austrian nobleman, in which he explained that the mass was 'instituted not for the dead, but as a sacrament for the living'.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (Cambridge, 2000), p.315. *WA*, vol. 8, pp. 477-563.

²⁰⁷ Gordon A. Jensen, 'Luther and the Lord's Supper', in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and Lubomír Batka (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 322-332, p. 324.

²⁰⁸ Luther, *De captivate babylonica*, *WA*, vol. 6, p. 512; 'die Meß hat nicht für die todten / sunder zum Sacrament für die lebendigen eingesetzt': *WABr*, vol. 3, p. 397.

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However, Luther did not base his rejection of masses for the dead – a form of indulgence – solely on the fact that they were perceived as a good work and, thereby, possessing salvific virtues. He rejected them because they were not needed: purgatory had no place in Lutheran theology because it lacked any scriptural justification, and it was incompatible with the doctrine of justification by faith alone.²⁰⁹ Therefore, according to Luther, the Catholic belief that souls in purgatory could be aided by indulgences and masses was an impossible concept.

Luther had retained the concept of purgatory in his Ninety-Five Theses, but over the following decade, his theological position changed and, in 1530, he published a denial of the existence of purgatory.²¹⁰ This was published in the same year as the Augsburg Confession, drawn up by Melanchthon in advance of the Diet of Augsburg. This confession did not address in any detail the contentious issues of purgatory or indulgences.²¹¹ However, Melanchthon's *Apology*, written after Emperor Charles V rejected the Augsburg Confession, dismissed categorically the notion that 'souls are freed from purgatory through indulgences'.²¹² Clearly, Luther and Melanchthon did not agree with concept of purgatory, or the effectiveness of indulgences in

²⁰⁹ McGarth comments that 2 Maccabees 12: 39-46 refers to Judas Maccabeus 'making propitiation for those who had died, in order that they might be released from their sin'. Protestants saw this text as apocryphal, thus lacking in authority: McGarth, *Christian Theology*, p. 441.

²¹⁰ Martin Luther, *Ein Widderruff vom Fegefeyr* (Georg Rhaw: Wittenberg, 1530), WA, vol. 30, pp. 360-390. For an overview of the development of the doctrine of purgatory and its evolution, see Tingle, *Indulgences after Luther*, pp. 1-5.

²¹¹ Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Rasmussen (Minneapolis, 1987), pp. 21-22; see also Sachiko Kusakawa, 'Melanchthon', in David Bagchi and David Steinmetz (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 57-67, pp. 63-65.

²¹² 'Apology of the Augsburg Confession', in Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert and Charlels P. Arand (eds.), *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, 2000), pp. 107- 293, p. 191.

aiding the souls languishing there, thereby nullifying the practice of masses for the dead.

Nonetheless, Luther avoided discussing masses for the dead explicitly in his catechisms. Osiander's catechism, likewise, did not specifically mention them, although he had defended their abolition in Nuremberg in 1524.²¹³ Both catechists emphasised the living in their catechisms, an emphasis that was reflected in the respective church orders for Nuremberg and Wittenberg, with the former encouraging mourners at a funeral to not be sad 'as those who have no hope are', but to take comfort from the belief that 'Jesus died and is resurrected'.²¹⁴ The focus was geared towards comforting the living by reminding them of the power of faith, rather than engaging in activities, such as requiem masses, that helped the dead.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* was the boldest and most explicit in its rejection of masses for the dead. The question discussing the differences between Reformed and Catholic understandings of Communion explained:

The Lord's Supper testifies to us, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins, through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself fully accomplished once on the cross. And that we, through the Holy Spirit, are allied with Christ, who is now with his true body in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and who wants to be adored there. But the mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the suffering of Christ, he is still offered for them daily by the priests. And that Christ is bodily in the form of bread and wine, and should be worshipped in them: and therefore, the Mass is basically no

²¹³ Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys*, p. 87.

²¹⁴ 'Wie die andern die kein hoffnung haben'; 'Jesus gestorben unnd aufferstand ist': *Kirchen Ordnüg* (1533), p. 354.

different than a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.²¹⁵

This is the most overtly polemic answer in the *Heidelberg Catechism*, refuting directly key components of Catholic doctrine. It was not included in the first edition of the catechism, but was added in the second version on the express command of the Elector.²¹⁶ It is evident Frederick wanted to delineate between Catholic 'idolatry' and proper Christian practice. With regards to the ability of the living to affect the status of the dead, the first part of this answer did not reference specifically the living and the dead, simply referring to parishioners in the collective. The second part did distinguish between them, denouncing the Catholics belief that the mass is a sacrifice, but not condemning masses for the dead. Clear Protestant doctrine was asserted, regarding not just the mass as a sacrifice, but the real presence and the nature of forgiveness, whilst not condemning outright the practice of masses for the dead.

Trevor Johnson has suggested, however, that, though 'the complex structure of late medieval charity towards the dead had been effectively demolished in the Upper Palatinate, it is unlikely that either the flames of Purgatory or compassion for the suffering of its current and future residents were

²¹⁵ 'Das Abendmal bezeuget uns / daß wir volkommene vergebung aller unserer sünden haben / durch das einige opffer Jesu Christi / so er selbst einmal am creuz vol bracht hat. Und daß wir durch den H. Geist Christ werdē eingeleibt / dz jetūd mit seinē waren leib im himel zue Rechten des Vaters ist / und daselbst will angebetet werden. Die Meß aber lehret / daß die lebendigen und die todten nicht durch das leiden Christi vergebung der sünden haben / es sey denn daß Christus noch täglich für sie von den Meßpriestern geopffert werde: Und ist also die Meß im grund nichts anders / denn ein verleugnung des einigen opffers un̄ leidens Jesu Christi / und ein vermaledeite Abgotterey': *Catechismus Oder Christlicher Unterricht*, pp. 55-56.

²¹⁶ Maag, 'Early Editions and Translations', p. 104.

extinguished'.²¹⁷ The *Heidelberg Church Order*, like the catechisms of Osiander and Luther, sought to emphasise the importance of individual faith, whilst making redundant any attempt at intercession by the living. It exhorted 'those who die without belief in Christ will be cast into eternal damnation and, therefore, they may not be helped by us'.²¹⁸ It instructed the pastors that 'papist and superstitious ceremonies should be left out of the funeral [service]', although it did not state what these were, nor expressly refer to works for the dead.²¹⁹ In this respect, Otto-Henry's Lutheran church order (1556) had been rather more direct, commanding that 'everyone should guard against all those superstitious and pagan services thought to be useful not for ourselves but only to the dead'.²²⁰ Though, again, not expressly referencing requiem masses, it implied that these were forbidden. Frederick III changed the wording in his church order, resulting in a less prescriptive tone. This lends weight to Johnson's argument, and, combined with the catechism's lack of condemnation towards masses for the dead, a form of indulgence, suggests that lay recourse to traditional avenues of comfort may still have been happening despite over forty years of Protestant rule. Indeed R. Weiß

²¹⁷ Johnson, *Magistrates, Miracles and Madonnas*, p. 190.

²¹⁸ 'Die aber one glauben in Christum sterbē / werden in die ewige verdamnus geworffen / unnd mag ihnen derwegen von uns nicht geholffen werdē': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 82.

²¹⁹ 'An der Begrebus sollen alle Papistische und abergleubische Ceremonien vermitten werden': *ibid.*, p. 82.

²²⁰ 'Hierauf sole sich menigklich vor allen denen Abergläubischen und Heidnischen diensten / so nicht uns selbs / sonder allein den abgestorbnen für nuzlich erdacht sein / hietten': Ottheinrich, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 67a. This was repeated in Ludwig's Church Order: *Kirchenordnung. Wie es mit der Christlichen Lehre / Administrierung der heiligen Sacramenten / und Ceremonien / inn des Durchleuchtigsten / Hochgebornen Fürsten unnd Herren / Herrn Ludwigen Pfalzgrauen bey Rhein / des heiligen Römischen Reichs Erztruchsässen unnd Churfürsten / Herzogen in Bayern / ic. Chur : und Fürstenthumb gehalten werden soll* (Heidelberg: Jacob Müller, 1577), p. 92.

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has noted that, even as late as 1600, the communion-certificates given to parishioners were referred to as an *Ablaßbriefe* – letter of indulgence.²²¹

On the other side of the debate, the Catholic catechisms were careful to avoid offering strong encouragement for masses for the dead. The *Tridentine Catechism* defended requiem masses in a short paragraph entitled ‘the Mass profits both the living and the dead’, in which it drew on Apostolic tradition for support.²²² However, it was not emphatic, unlike other aspects of the catechism. Canisius referred to the benefit masses bring to the dead twice in his *Large Catechism*, but each time this was mentioned only in passing. He taught that the forgiveness of sins brought about by the sacrifice of the Altar benefitted ‘not only the living, but also the dead’, and repeated this again later in the same answer.²²³ The *Small Catechism* did not address the issue at all in the questions on the Eucharist, and the *Smaller Catechism* was equally silent. The lack of force in defending their practice probably stems from Canisius’ awareness of hostility towards masses for the dead in his German context. Indeed, in a sermon delivered in the bi-confessional city of Augsburg in 1566, Canisius declared:

We Catholics in no way deny but freely admit that in past years many and great churchmen have dealt evilly with indulgences, by granting them too readily ... Yea, in this matter they sought their own advantage

²²¹ R. Weiß, ‘Die Reformation in die Pfarrei Niedermurach’, *Oberpfälzer Heimat* 30 (1986), pp. 59-76, p. 68. Canisius had used ‘Ablaß’ to mean absolution, indicating that the word could be used in different contexts. However, as people were only admitted to communion if they were held to have repented, there is a connection between the use of ‘Ablaß’ in these contexts.

²²² *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 259.

²²³ ‘Nicht allein den lebendigen / sundr auch den gestorben’: Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumärien* (1563), p. 170.

and cultivated infamous advice, gravely sinning against God whose gifts they put up for sale and rendered contemptible to the multitude.²²⁴

A report describing a Jesuit mission to Lower Austria in 1564 found opposition towards masses for the dead, explaining that the people believed they were of no use, being used by the church solely as a means to bring in revenue.²²⁵

Concerns regarding indulgences did not surface solely in Germany: Elizabeth Tingle's study on pardons in counter-Reformation France has suggested that the omission of indulgences from other mid-sixteenth century catechisms, such as that of Bartolomé Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo, published in 1558, is indicative of a general lack of confidence in their effectiveness that was felt across Catholic Europe.²²⁶ Likewise, in many French catechisms published in the mid-sixteenth century, 'the same side-stepping or downplaying of indulgences can be seen'.²²⁷ Thus, Canisius' brief reference to masses for the dead, a form of indulgence, was not unusual and reflected the concerns of the laity and clergy regarding the effectiveness of the broader system of indulgences.

This analysis has sought to demonstrate that the catechisms, both Protestant and Catholic, addressed the concept of the living intervening on behalf of the dead, but none of them, including the *Tridentine Catechism*, condemned roundly or promoted enthusiastically masses for the dead. The entire concept of intervening for the dead, either by humans directly, or through the intercession of the saints, was one fraught with controversy. It was not simply

²²⁴ *Beati*, vol. 5, pp. 571-572, trans. Brodrick, *Peter Canisius*, p. 644.

²²⁵ Brodrick, *Peter Canisius*, pp. 606-607.

²²⁶ Tingle, *Indulgences after Luther*, p. 27.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

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a doctrinal problem, wrapped up with arguments over predestination and justification, but impacted immensely on the emotions and practices of the laity. It was in this climate of uncertainty regarding indulgences and the efficacy of intervening on behalf of the dead that the catechisms of Luther, Osiander, Canisius, Trent and Frederick III were published. It was not until the Formula of Concord (1577) that 'the papist misuse of the sacrament as an abomination of the sacrifice for the living and the dead' was rejected expressly.²²⁸ Yet, this was published many years after the publication of Luther's and Osiander's catechisms, and over a decade since the appearance of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. As has been argued throughout this chapter, the catechisms downplayed contentious issues, and the lack of verve in either the Protestant or Catholic catechisms to attack or defend the concept of Masses for the dead is further evidence for this interpretation.

Rituals and Ceremony

The actions of the priest during the communion service came under fierce attack by reformers during the sixteenth century. This section will address how the symbolic movements, actions, and vestments of the priests and ministers were refined, reinforced or refuted in the catechisms during the sixteenth century. Heal reminds us that Eucharistic rituals were not uniform across Germany, with local areas experiencing and taking different meanings

²²⁸ 'Papistische misbreuch / dieser Sacraments / als den grewel der Opffermess für die Lebendigen und die Todten': *Concordia. Christliche Widerholete, einmütige Bekentnis nachbenanter Churfürsten, Fürsten vnd Stende Augspurgischer Confession, und derselben Theologen Lere, und Glaubens* (Johann Meißner und Joachim Walden Erben: Magdeburg, 1580), p. 352.

from them.²²⁹ Therefore, catechists had to offer instruction on an aspect of the religious experience that was diverse, personal, and highly divisive. Thus, the text itself is often devoid of ceremonial instruction, but an analysis of the accompanying woodcuts can be more revealing in relation to ritualistic actions.

The variation in Eucharistic rituals fuelled discussions pertaining to the understanding of *adiaphora*. Summarised by Markus Friedrich, this was the recognition 'that some religious matters are indifferent, neither forbidden nor recommended'.²³⁰ During the Augsburg Interim (1548) these questions came to occupy a more prominent position in Protestant discourse. The Interim was intended to be implemented across the Holy Roman Empire, but it was altered by the Elector of Saxony, who issued his own version in late 1548: the Leipzig Interim. Melanchthon defended the Saxon Elector's text, perceiving it as consistent with core Lutheran theology, and only compromising on matters of indifference, or *adiaphora*.²³¹ Long before the Augsburg Interim, Luther had designated both the practice of elevating the host and vestments as *adiaphora*.²³² Both could be interpreted as indifferent, although Nischan has demonstrated that the continued practice of elevating the host became less about *adiaphora* and much more about demonstrating confessional identity

²²⁹ Heal, 'Mary Triumphant', p. 156.

²³⁰ Markus Friedrich, 'Orthodoxy and Variation: The Role of Adiaphorism in Early Modern Protestantism', in Randolph Conrad Head and Daniel Eric Christensen (eds.), *Orthodoxies and Heterodoxies in Early Modern German Culture: Order and Creativity 1550-1750* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 45-68, p. 45.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²³² Bodo Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host in the Age of Confessionalism: Adiaphoron or Ritual Demarcation', in Bodo Nischan (ed.), *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 1-20, pp. 7-11. Luther defined the elevation as a matter of free choice in his 1525 tract *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*, WA, vol. 18, pp. 126-214.

during the second half of the sixteenth century, and it is this practice that we will turn to first.²³³

i. Elevation of the Host

The laity's desire to see the host grew during the fourteenth century as a way to compensate for not regularly receiving communion, although the ritual initially began in France during the early twelfth century.²³⁴ The priest's elevation of the host at the moment of consecration was accompanied by a multitude of highly evocative actions, including the ringing of bells, burning of incense, lighting of candles, and mouthing of supplications.²³⁵ The elevation of the host served four functions. Firstly, it connected the mass to Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and each movement of the priest was engineered to serve as a visual re-enactment of the crucifixion.²³⁶ Secondly, it served as a visual representation of transubstantiation, being raised after the words of institution when Christ's real presence came into the elements.²³⁷ Thirdly, according to Rubin, by the fourteenth century, it demonstrated 'the essence of clerical office, the focus of the liturgy, the epitome and justification of clerical privilege'.²³⁸ The thirteenth-century theologian, William of Auxerre, had explained that 'the priest elevates the body of Christ so that all the faithful

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²³⁴ Brian, 'Catholic Liturgies', p. 192; Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host', p. 1; See also P. Browe, 'Die Elevation in der Messe', *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* (1929), pp. 20-67; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, 1992), especially pp. 91-109.

²³⁵ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 58.

²³⁶ Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, p. 113.

²³⁷ Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host', p. 2.

²³⁸ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 132.

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might see and seek what is profitable for salvation'.²³⁹ Finally, gazing on the elevated host was believed to be a good work that would contribute to salvation.²⁴⁰ In spite of the various and complex theological debates surrounding the notion of transubstantiation, for the laity it was certain that at the moment the words of consecration were spoken by the priest, Christ came into the elements; through the elevation, they were eye-witnesses to this special moment and could worship Christ.²⁴¹

Luther's Eucharistic doctrine and broader theology challenged each of these points, yet he permitted the practice of elevation to continue in Lutheran churches. He declared it should be maintained because its 'elimination has lessened the Sacrament's authority and made it more contemptible'.²⁴² He wrote in 1544, 'I kept the elevation in opposition to and to irritate the same devil [Karlstadt], which I was inclined to drop in opposition to the papists'.²⁴³ As a result, he relegated the ritual to the realm of *adiaphora*.²⁴⁴ Calvin rejected the elevation outright and, as the sixteenth century progressed, the question of the elevation evolved from being a dispute over accepted forms of *adiaphora* into a debate over the real presence. Calvinists and the Philippist branch of Lutherans viewed the elevation as affirmation of the Catholic

²³⁹ Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', p. 19.

²⁴⁰ Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host', p. 5. Nischan notes that people would run from church to church in order to see repeated elevations, perceiving each viewing as a meritorious act.

²⁴¹ Macy, 'Medieval Inheritance', p. 31.

²⁴² Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host', p. 10.

²⁴³ 'Für ich zu / unnd behielt die Elevation demselben Teuffel eben zu wider unnd zu verdries / welche ich doch geneigt war / fallen zu lassen / wider der Papisten': Martin Luther, *Kurz bekentnis Doctor Martini Luthers / vom heiligen Sacrament* (Nürnberg: Johann Petreius, 1544), p. 45; WA, vol. 54, pp. 119-167, p. 164.

²⁴⁴ Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host', p. 11. Karlstadt believed that the elevation should be rejected because it formed part of the Old Testament sacrificial ritual: Ronald J. Sider, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt* (Leiden, 1974), p. 143.

doctrine of the Real Presence – a doctrine that, resting on transubstantiation, meant neither faction could subscribe to it. In contrast, Gnesio-Lutherans maintained the practice, arguing that to remove it would be to deny Christ's physical presence in the Eucharist. In the second half of the sixteenth century, many Lutheran church orders decreed explicitly that the elevation should occur, while those orders that eliminated it were seen as (crypto-) Calvinist.²⁴⁵

The elevation connected the Eucharist to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Protestants rejected the Catholic belief that the mass is a sacrifice, and, once challenged, Catholics were forced to define their doctrine more precisely. The issue of the Mass as a sacrifice was not the focus of debate for medieval theologians and, according to Francis Clark, 'if one thing seems clear it is that there was no original speculation about the Eucharistic sacrifice in the "autumn" of medieval scholasticism'.²⁴⁶ Protestant challenges to the concept that the Mass could provide help for the dead by virtue of its sacrificial nature forced Catholics to address its sacrificial nature. Since the third century, it had been maintained that Jesus was both victim and priest in his sacrifice, but the Council of Trent's failure to distinguish 'between the historical self-offering of Christ and the ritual liturgical offering' resulted in a number of Catholic theories gaining momentum in the decades after Trent.²⁴⁷ All of these centred on the question of how there can be a victim of Mass – as required by the

²⁴⁵ Nischan, 'The Elevation of the Host', pp. 15-26; Church orders that eliminated the Elevation included, amongst others, the Palatinate (1546), Regensburg (1553), and Amberg (1576): Bjørn Ole Hovda, *The Controversy over the Lord's Supper in Danzig 1561-1567. Presence and Practice – Theology and Confessional Policy* (Göttingen, 2017), p. 259.

²⁴⁶ Francis Clark, S.J., *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1967), p. 78.

²⁴⁷ Daly, 'The Council of Trent', p. 168.

definition of a sacrifice – when Jesus, though really, bodily, and spiritually present in the Mass, was beyond being destroyed by any further sacrifice.²⁴⁸

The *Tridentine Catechism* was clear that ‘the holy Council of Trent ... condemns under anathema all those who assert that in [the Mass] is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice; or that to offer means nothing else than that Christ is given as our spiritual food’.²⁴⁹ It reaffirmed that the Mass is the same sacrifice as that which occurred on the cross and is not ‘a mere commemoration’ of that sacrifice.²⁵⁰ However, the catechism did not explain how the sacrifice made on the cross and that offered in communion were connected. On the other hand, in his *Large Catechism*, Canisius taught that the sacrifice of the altar is ‘a meal, [a] drink of life, a living bread ... it has for a long time been called a Host, sacrifice, a victory sacrifice, oblation, and Holocaust’.²⁵¹ His language indicates that Canisius saw the mass as a sacrifice, employing the word ‘auffopfern’, which can be translated as ‘offer up’. This rejected Protestant doctrine and was in accordance with Tridentine Catholicism. Canisius explained that ‘it is offered for steady remembrance and thanksgiving of the holy suffering of our Lord, and so it helps the faithful to

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168. Daly discusses in detail the four main theories under the following subheadings: ‘The Sacrifice does not require a real change in the victim; the mass contains only a figure of immolation of Christ’; ‘The sacrifice requires a real change of the material offered: in the mass the change takes place in the substance of the bread and wine’; ‘The sacrifice requires a real change in the material offered: in the mass, the change affects Christ himself’; ‘The sacrifice requires a real change: nevertheless, there is in the mass a change only in the species of the sacrament’, *ibid.*, pp. 169-179.

²⁴⁹ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 256.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

²⁵¹ ‘Es daß ein speiß / tranck daß lebens / ein lebendigs brot ... wie es dann jez vor langer zeit genent ist worden / ein Hostien / opffer / ein sigopffer / oblation und Holocaust’: Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumarien* (1563), pp. 169-170.

expel evil from this and [their] future life and to obtain goodness'.²⁵² Thirdly, 'the sacrifice of the Mass is a conciliatory sacrifice'.²⁵³ He separated the sacrifice into two, 'namely a bloody and an unbloody' sacrifice.²⁵⁴ Jesus' death on the cross was a bloody sacrifice – he was the 'true lamb without spot'.²⁵⁵ The Mass is the unbloody version and served as a 'continual remembrance of his death'.²⁵⁶ Canisius' definition of the Mass as a sacrifice has been seen to have both distinguished and linked the representation of the sacrifice on the cross with its oblation during Mass.²⁵⁷ Canisius' *Small Catechism* of 1574 taught the Mass was 'a pure, worthy, holy and powerful sacrifice of the New Testament which Christ, the high priest ... ordered that priests maintain in continual memory of his most holy life and death'.²⁵⁸ Nothing was mentioned regarding the connection or distinction between the two types of sacrifice in this catechism, although Canisius did explain that the sacrifice was made 'for all living and dead Christians'.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless, far less attention was devoted to contentious aspects of doctrine in the *Small Catechism* than in the *Large Catechism*.

²⁵² 'Wirt aber auffgeopffert zu stettiger gedechtnuß und dancksagung des heiligen leidens unsers Herrn und damit es den glaubigen helffe zuuertreiben dises und des zukünfftigen lebens ubel und guets zuerlangen': *ibid.*, p. 170.

²⁵³ 'Des Meß opffer ein versüne opffer [ist]': *ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁵⁴ 'Nemblich ein bluetigs unnd ein unbluetigs': *ibid.*, p. 173.

²⁵⁵ 'Das warhafftig Lamb on mackel': *ibid.*, p. 174.

²⁵⁶ 'Statiger gedachtnuß seines todts': *ibid.*, p. 175.

²⁵⁷ Michon M. Matthessen, *Sacrifice as Gift: Eucharist, Grace, and Contemplative Prayer in Maurice de la Taille* (Washington, 2013), p. 102.

²⁵⁸ 'Sie sey ein rains / wirdigs / heiligs und krafftigs opfer des neuen Testament / welches Christus der hohe Priester ... [hat] den Priestern zu steter gedechtnuß seines Heiligsten leydens unnd sterbens zuhalten befohlen': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), pp. 105-106.

²⁵⁹ 'Für alle lebendige und abgesorben Christen': *ibid.*, p. 106. The 1555 edition of the *Small Catechism* did not include this instruction regarding the sacrificial nature of the mass.

Canisius' teachings on the Mass as a sacrifice and the elevation of the host were, if not contradictory, then at least inconsistent across the catechisms. His *Large Catechism* devoted a whole question to explaining the necessity of honouring and adoring the Eucharist, teaching that proper adoration demonstrates 'that we believe Christ is there in the Sacrament, that we creatures and servants praise him as the Creator, Lord and Redeemer with proper honour as the Scriptures attest'.²⁶⁰ The *Small Catechism* taught a similar lesson, explaining that 'it is proper and Christian that we, by and in this Sacrament, honour and adore Christ, true God and man, inwardly and outwardly'.²⁶¹ The *Smaller Catechism* did not discuss adoration of the sacrament at all, although, given its audience, this brevity is unsurprising. Canisius clearly sought to protect the tradition of adoring the sacrament, but he did not specifically mention the practice of elevation. The majority of woodcuts accompanying the German editions of his catechisms did not depict the elevation either. It was suggested earlier in this chapter that woodcuts could be chosen to reflect the preferences of the audience of the individual catechisms. The woodcut that accompanied Canisius' questions on the Eucharist in the 1563 and 1569 German editions of the *Large Catechism* is an example of this. The image depicted two angels kneeling before an altar, gazing up at the host housed in a delicately wrought yet impressive monstrance occupying the centre of the altar. This woodcut primarily defended the adoration of the host and linked the communion of the saints

²⁶⁰ 'Das wir glauben Christum da zusein in dem Sacramēt / das wir creature und knechte in als denn Erschopffer / Herrn und Erlöser mit gebürlicher ehrlobē / von welchem die Schriftt also bezeugt': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 168.

²⁶¹ 'Darum̄ ist recht und Christlich / daß wir bey unnd inn disem Sacrament / Christum wahren Gott unnd Menschen / von innen und aussen ehren und anbetten': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 105.

with that of humankind. There is no image of the officiating priest elevating the bread at the moment of consecration, although the host clearly was intended to be adored and was held above eye level, forcing viewers to look upwards towards it.

A 1563 edition of Canisius' *Small Catechism* included one woodcut at the start of the chapter on the sacraments. It depicted Christ's death on the cross with a man and a woman flanking him. The woman is looking down with her hand to her head in a gesture of sorrow, while the man looks up at Christ. Jesus is looking downwards towards the distressed woman. This image served to remind readers of Christ's sacrifice on the cross which, in itself, was closely connected to sacraments of baptism, penance, and communion.²⁶² Jesus' gaze towards the distressed woman indicates compassion and his desire to offer reassurance. Yet, another woodcut from the same edition of the *Small Catechism*, placed as an accompaniment to the Decalogue's command to keep the Sabbath holy, depicted mass.²⁶³ This image displayed a traditional Catholic mass with a priest wearing the vestments associated with High Mass, holding the host aloft with his back to the congregation. To his right stood an attendee about to dispense the circular host to a kneeling man. The communicant's hands were clasped in the prayer position, while he was gazing upwards in adoration towards the elevated host. The Priest was celebrating High Mass with all the pomp that entailed: rich, costly vestments, an elaborate altar, and the physical elevation of his own position, standing two

²⁶² Petrus Canisius, *Catechismus. Kurze Erklärung der fünfemsten stuck des wahren Catholischen Glaubens. Auch rechte und Catholische form zu betten* [hereafter, *Catechismus. Kurze Erklärung* (1563)] (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1563), p. 138.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

steps above the congregation. The elevation of the host held a central position in the image, and the overall message conveyed by the woodcut was one depicting a traditional scene of adoring the host. Yet, despite its ostentation, this image was actually not that contentious: Luther maintained the elevation but objected to the Mass as a sacrifice and this image did not promote this latter aspect.

An example from Canisius' time in Bavaria may explain why he avoided promoting the concept of the Mass as a sacrifice in the *Small Catechism*. In early 1558, Canisius spent six weeks in the Bavarian city of Straubing, which had witnessed the successful introduction of Lutheranism. Yet, after an intensive programme of frequent sermons, he persuaded the majority of the citizens to communicate at Easter, and recounted his success in increasing attendees at his sermons in a letter of March 1558.²⁶⁴ However, shortly after his departure, people gradually began to desert Straubing's churches in favour of attending services in neighbouring Lutheran territories. John Frymire argues that, as parishioners could receive communion in both kinds at their local churches, their desertion was a theological rejection of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist.²⁶⁵ Canisius openly acknowledged the heretical faith and lack of Catholic devotion in his sermons delivered at Straubing.²⁶⁶ Thus, Canisius had first-hand experience of the strength of lay conviction, and the lack of emphasis on the Mass as a sacrifice in the *Small Catechism*,

²⁶⁴ *Beati*, vol. 2, p. 816.

²⁶⁵ John M. Frymire, 'Demonstrationes Catholicae: Defining Communities through Counter-Reformation Rituals', in Michael J. Halvorson and Karen E. Spierling (eds.), *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 163-183, pp. 170-171.

²⁶⁶ *Beati*, vol. 2, p. 816.

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published after his time in Straubing, probably was influenced by his interactions with ordinary Germans.

Late medieval piety had come to associate the adoration of the elevated host as a good work which, according to sacramental theology, would count towards efforts to achieve salvation. Luther objected to this because it impacted on his concept of justification by faith alone. John Donnelly has suggested that Canisius' catechisms stressed good works in order to directly oppose Luther's emphasis on faith, and that this defence shows little compromise compared to that demonstrated by Catholic contemporaries such as Georg Witzel.²⁶⁷ Yet, in fact, the *Small Catechism* did not definitively link good works with the sacrament. One question asked directly: 'What are the principal good works that a Christian should practise?' The response was: 'They are fasting, praying, and giving alms or being merciful': nothing about the sacraments at all.²⁶⁸ The *Large Catechism's* questions on communion offered equally subdued answers. Canisius discussed the benefits that the sacrament brings to worshippers using, like Luther, the analogy of a sick person being healed by a doctor – 'the sacrament is a medicine ... to heal the sick' – but he said virtually nothing on how the individual's actions in worshipping the sacrament constituted a good work.²⁶⁹ The closest Canisius came to making this association in the *Large Catechism* was a single sentence which taught that the words of institution enabled the 'fruit of this

²⁶⁷ Donnelly, 'Peter Canisius', pp. 174-148.

²⁶⁸ 'Welche seind die fürnembsten guten werck / so ein Christ üben soll?' Es sein fasten / betten / unnd allmüsen geben / oder barmherzig sein': Canisius, *Kleine Catechismus* (1574), p. 128.

²⁶⁹ 'Diß Sacrament sei ein Erznei ... zu heilen die kranckheiten': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 173.

sacrificial offer' to come to 'us and all believers'.²⁷⁰ In contrast, the *Tridentine Catechism* linked the sacrament with the accrual of merit explicitly, teaching that 'as often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation being done'.²⁷¹ Canisius' caution seems to contradict Donnelly's assertion that 'disputed questions suffer the elephantitis so common in Reformation polemics' in Canisius' catechisms.²⁷² In fact, it has been the continued argument of this thesis that Canisius deliberately shaped his catechisms to appear to be in accordance with Tridentine principles but, in reality, they permitted a significant degree of latitude and individual interpretation.

ii. Vestments

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the use of vestments in the communion service. Contributing to the sense of the dramatic in Eucharist services, the elaborate vestments worn by the officiating priests were a didactic tool used to convey particular messages regarding the type of Mass being celebrated, and to inspire the congregation to consider and to reflect on specific aspects of the Passion. During the Middle Ages, the various garments had evolved to represent different theological convictions; for example, the amice on the head represented divinity wrapped up in humanity, and the stole around the neck represented Christ's obedience to God in dying to save

²⁷⁰ 'Die frucht diser auffopfferung'; 'uns und allen glaubigen': *ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁷¹ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 259.

²⁷² Donnelly, 'Peter Canisius', p. 148.

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mankind.²⁷³ Vestments were seen as *adiaphora* by Luther: his German Mass of 1525 stated 'we allow mass vestments, altars and candles to remain, until they are all used up or it pleases us to change this, but whoever wants to do otherwise, we let it happen'.²⁷⁴ However, the later division of his followers resulted in conflicting interpretations, with Gnesio-Lutherans rejecting vestments, while the Philippists permitted them to be worn as long as scripture was not contravened.²⁷⁵ In 1520, Luther had declared in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* that vestments and other external things should be abolished in the Eucharist because they detracted from the worship of God.²⁷⁶ However, Luther soon softened his position, declaring that one should be guided by one's own convictions regarding vestments.²⁷⁷ Calvin did not like the concept of vestments, not because they were contrary to scripture, but because he believed the Church had abused them so much that it was better to abolish their use completely. Even so, 'Calvin opposed fighting over this issue'.²⁷⁸ The use of vestments could draw attention to the separation between the two states, the role of mediation, distract parishioners from focusing on the worship of God, as well as served as a reminder of the kind of papal pomp the Reformers wanted to discourage. Discussing vestments potentially could cause all manner of problems, as could any attempt to be too prescriptive. Therefore, most of the catechisms did not mention vestments in

²⁷³ Thayer, 'Learning to Worship', p. 47.

²⁷⁴ 'Da lassen wyr die Messegewand / altar / liechter noch bleyben / bis sie alle werden / odder uns gefellet zu endern / wer aber hie anders will baren / lassen wyr geschehen': Martin Luther, *Deutsche Messe und ordnung Gottis diensts* (Wittenberg, 1526), p. Biii.

²⁷⁵ Evelin Wetter, "'On Sundays for the laity ... we allow mass vestments, altars and candles to remain": The Role of Pre-Reformation Ecclesiastical Vestments in the Formation of Confessional, Corporate and "National" Identities', in Andrew Spicer (ed.), *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 165-196, p. 169.

²⁷⁶ Luther, *De captivitate Babylonica*, WA, vol. 6, p. 512.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁷⁸ James B. Jordan, *The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction* (Eugene, 1986), p. 267.

any depth in the text, but the woodcuts were revealing in how they depicted the priest or pastor.

Canisius did not discuss vestments directly other than to explain in the *Large Catechism* that to 'adorn holy clothing' contributes to the observance of 'this unbloody sacrifice'.²⁷⁹ Woodcuts filled the textual gap. For example, a woodcut from the 1563 edition of the *Small Catechism* depicted the priest wearing a stole, amice, and cope with a circular, embroidered IHS on the back. He was raised up from the congregation slightly, standing at the base of the altar two steps up from ground level to indicate the distinction between him and the lay congregation.²⁸⁰ Visually, the user was encouraged to acknowledge the authority of the priest and the use of elaborate liturgical vestments. The text itself was devoid of any ceremonial description, but the message portrayed by the woodcut supports Palmer Wandel's comment that, while Canisius' questions on the Eucharist 'did not engage directly with Evangelical positions, implicitly, the catechumen learned answers to Evangelical challenges'.²⁸¹

However, the lack of ceremonial description in Canisius' catechisms did not go unchallenged by fellow Catholics. In 1594, a tract was published in the Bavarian town of Thierhaupten, elaborating on Canisius' *Small Catechism*, possibly intending to act as a supplementary guide to pupils familiar with the catechism. Written in question and answer format, it included specific details

²⁷⁹ 'Zier heilige kleider'; 'dise unbluetigen opffers': Canisius, *Catholischer Catechismus oder Sumārien* (1563), p. 172.

²⁸⁰ Canisius, *Catechismus. Kurze Erklärung* (1563), p. 119.

²⁸¹ Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, p. 242.

surrounding a number of ceremonial practices. Included within the book was a section entitled 'questions on the main ceremonies of the Mass', in which there were three questions relating to the liturgical vestments – 'special clothes' – used by priests.²⁸² The author explained that there are three reasons for the use of vestments:

Firstly, because of honour. Second, because of their meaning and for prayer: indeed to honour God as people also used special clothes in the Old Testament in the service of God, according to his command ... Third, that we should prepare ourselves spiritually and imagine his suffering.²⁸³

The second question clarified what the vestments symbolised, emphasising their connection to the suffering and ultimate sacrifice of Christ; for example: 'the stole means the rope with which [Jesus] is bound to the column [and] also the bearing of his cross ... The maniple on the arm means the rope and chain with which he was captured and bound on the Mount of Olives'.²⁸⁴ The third question explained what 'the various colours of the vestments mean' with, for instance, red representing 'the blood shed of the Apostles and martyrs ... black ... means sorrow and compassion ... green on Sunday indicates that [which] will become green on the Last Day ... gold bits, velvet and silk to praise God and his saints'.²⁸⁵ This level of detail was never discussed by

²⁸² 'Fragen von den fürnembsten Ceremonien der H. Meß'; 'besondere klaidung': *Catholische Fragstück über den ganzen Klainen Catechismus / deß Hochgelerten Herren Petrus Canisii der H:geschrift Doctorn* (Thierhaupten: 1594), p. 45; p. 47.

²⁸³ 'Zum ersten: von wegen der erbarkait. Zum andern: von wegen der bedeutung und andacht: ja auch Gott zu ehren / dann man auch im alten Testament besondere klaidung zum Gottes dienst gebraucht hat / auß beuelch Gottes ... Zum dritten: das wür uns geistlicher weiß sollen also darzu beraitten / unnd einbilden sein leiden': *ibid.*, p. 98.

²⁸⁴ 'Die stol bedeut die strick / mit welchen er an die selbig feu ist gebunden worden [und] auch die tragung seines Creuz... Das Manipul am Arm / bedeut die strick unnd ketten / mit welchen er ist am Oelberg gefangen und gebunden worden': *ibid.*, p. 47a.

²⁸⁵ 'Was bedeuten die mancherlay farben der Meßgewander?'; '[rot] das blut vergiessen der H. Apostel un̄ Martirer ... Schwarz ... bedeut auch trawrigkait und mitleiden ... Am Sonntag

Canisius, even in those of his tracts specifically centred on the Mass, such as his book on the Consecration of the Canon published in 1557, his book offering instructions on how to partake in Communion published in 1560, his booklet on penance and communion published in 1567, or the appendix to the 1574 edition of the *Small Catechism*, which included further instructions on penance and communion. Canisius avoided commenting in any depth on such ceremonies, presumably because to do so would have been rife with political and social pitfalls. Clearly, the author of this 1594 tract felt that this gap needed to be filled: by keeping their own identity anonymous, they probably avoided any political or social repercussions as a result of their additions to Canisius' text.

In fact, the 1594 edition was not the first copy of this book to appear. It was printed originally in 1592 in Thierhaupten, although further bibliographical details are sketchy. The 1594 edition included the same text, but with the addition of Canisius' name to both the preface and title page. The addition of his name has wrongly led the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* to attribute authorship of the tract to Canisius, a mistake that may have also occurred at the time of publication. The foreword reassured the user that the text was 'corrected by the author [of the catechism] himself in many places', that is Canisius. However, as the wording was the same as in the 1592 edition, which did not mention Canisius, there is sufficient reason to believe that it was not written by him and that he did not endorse it.²⁸⁶ This is further reinforced

grien / anzusaigen / das wür werden herfür grunen am Jungsten tag ... guldenstuck / Samet und Seiden / Gott und seinen Heyligen zu lob': *ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

²⁸⁶ 'Jezunder vom Author selbst an vilen orten corrigiert': *ibid.*, p. 1.

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by Canisius' preface to the 1596 edition of his *Smaller Catechism*, in which he wrote disparagingly of others who 'under my name, forever multiply this my catechism and tinker [with] all sorts of questions therein. I, for my part, cannot approve'.²⁸⁷ The question, then, is why did the 1594 edition try to connect itself so closely with Canisius? Two reasons appear plausible. Firstly, his name may have been appropriated in order to boost sales of the tract. However, secondly, it suggests that, even amongst the ranks of Bavarian Catholics, there was a degree of dissatisfaction with the level of detail provided by Canisius in his catechisms and the resulting freedom of choice it could entail. Of course, both suggestions are pure speculation; it is not possible to ascertain the exact reasoning behind the author and publisher's decision, but it is evident that Canisius did not approve of such actions, whatever the motive. Canisius' response also lends authority to the argument that, as far as ritual practices of individual parishes went, the Jesuit was prepared to allow a degree of autonomy, an attitude maintained in his catechisms.

The *Tridentine Catechism*, like Canisius' catechisms, was fairly non-committal regarding vestments. It taught that they were part of the 'holiness' of the Old Law but did not elaborate on them in any depth.²⁸⁸ However, the canons and decrees denounced as anathema those who claimed 'that the ceremonies,

²⁸⁷ 'Unter meinem Namen diesen meinen Catechismus mehren / und allerley andere Fragen darein stecken, kan ich meines Theils ... nicht gut heissen': Canisius, *Kleiner Catechismus*, p. A2a. Twenty years earlier in 1575, Canisius wrote in his preface to the *Betbuch und Catechismus* that 'I continue to hear [from] many good-hearted people who could not be satisfied using the previous editions. So I have taken on this work to read over the whole book again, to better appoint, increase and correct it': Canisius, *Betbüch und Catechismus*, p. Aii.

²⁸⁸ *Tridentine Catechism*, p. 105.

vestments and outwards signs, which the Church makes use of in the celebration of Masses, are incentives to impiety, rather than offices of piety'.²⁸⁹ The council endorsed, and required, the wearing of vestments, but did not offer any guidance as to what should be worn, and when, in either its canons or its catechism. In contrast to Canisius and the Council of Trent, Osiander's church order instructed specifically that where items such as 'chasuble [and] altar cloths' are available 'one should look after and use them, particularly the clothes'.²⁹⁰ The catechism did not discuss or mention vestments directly and the woodcuts did not reveal any guidance either. The only reference to vestments came in the church order, the document specifically aimed at pastors. We saw a similar situation in Osiander's disinclination to discuss ritualistic aspects of the baptism service in his catechism, and it was suggested then that this was a deliberate attempt by him to separate the knowledge needed by the laity from that possessed by the clergy. Throughout the catechism's text on communion, Osiander encouraged his audience to listen to, focus on, and obey the pastor's words and actions. The apparel worn by the minister was neither mentioned, nor given the opportunity to be questioned in the catechism, thus the authority of the pastor would have been visually, rather than verbally, impressed onto the parishioners.

Both Luther and Calvin were prepared to accept the use of vestments in the administration of the sacraments, but the *Heidelberg Catechism* did not offer

²⁸⁹ Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees*, p. 159.

²⁹⁰ 'Meßgewandt / Altardeck'; 'soll man sie behalten und brauchen / sunderlich die klayder': *Kirchen Ordnüg*, pp. 263-264. Palmer Wandel misreads the German text and suggests that Osiander rejected vestments: *The Eucharist in the Reformation*, p. 126.

any guidance at all. The church order had a small paragraph on clerical clothing, instructing that pastors should wear 'honourable and chaste' attire, but offered no further information.²⁹¹ There was some room for manoeuvre here, but this was restricted by Frederick's instruction to order the banning of vestments in the Palatinate.²⁹² In 1568, Frederick became involved in the Vestiarian Controversy and requested the Italian exile, Grindal Zanchi, to write to Elizabeth I of England encouraging her to rid her church of all 'popish ceremonies and trickeries', including vestments, which he saw as idolatrous and superstitious.²⁹³ Clearly, Frederick had firm views on the use of vestments, but these were not incorporated into his catechism or church order, both of which maintained a level of neutrality. This serves to reinforce one of the central tenets of this thesis: that catechisms were designed to appeal, downplaying or ignoring contentious issues to encourage peace and conformity. There may have been a concern also to avoid addressing controversial topics in the catechisms that the laity had no control over. Irrespective of the reason(s) for the lack of direction, the catechisms of Canisius, Osiander, Luther, and Frederick III were united in avoiding the contentious matter of vestments.

²⁹¹ 'Ehrbarer und züchtiger': Frederick III, *Kirchenordnung*, p. 74a.

²⁹² Bodo Nischan, 'Germany after 1550', in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *The Reformation World* (London, 2000), pp. 387-409, p. 392.

²⁹³ Graeme Murdoch, *Beyond Calvin: The Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches, c. 1540-1620* (Houndmills, 2004), p. 117.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that, despite the confessional boundaries regarding the Eucharist being more firmly defined in the catechisms, there remained a degree of flexibility regarding the sacrament's application – both doctrinally and practically. The catechisms also have been shown to have continued to reflect the concerns of the catechists and political aims of their patrons, as well as revealed hints of a conciliatory attitude towards the laity's need to keep reassuring aspects of the Eucharist. The catechisms were united in their rejection of doctrine and practices endorsed by the 'fanatics', while mostly avoiding a deep discussion of areas of contention between Lutherans and Catholics and Calvinists and Lutherans. There are exceptions to this, however. Of all the sacraments analysed here, the Eucharist was the most overt in its challenges to rival practices, with the *Heidelberg Catechism* rejecting categorically core aspects of Catholic doctrine. There are significant differences between the catechisms of Canisius and Luther in terms of how the reader learned about the sacrament: Luther's concern to remove feelings of doubt and anxiety regarding the worthy reception of the Lord's Supper underpinned his entire exposition on the sacrament, while Canisius dealt with the core aspects of Catholic doctrine in turn. Equally, in Canisius' *Large Catechism*, a clear defence was put forward of the sacrificial nature of the mass. This was a response to Protestant challenges, and as has been mentioned, his explanation of the difference between a bloody and unbloody mass was far more detailed than that offered by the Council of Trent.

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Yet, other areas of contentious doctrine were not dealt with in depth in the catechisms. The lack of references to indulgences and purgatory in the Catholic catechisms reflected the broader tensions within the Catholic fold, as well as the uncertainty caused by Protestant theology. Likewise, Luther did not advocate forcefully the practice of receiving communion in two kinds because he wanted to distance himself from Wittenberg 'fanatics', such as Karlstadt, who condemned communion in one kind, and he was concerned about the potential ramifications of implementing change too quickly. The result of such concerns translated into catechisms that can be seen to advocate concord, rather than discord. As such, they cannot be conclusively seen as shapers of religious identity. Rather they imparted knowledge that was influenced by and grounded in the geographic locality in which they were composed.

Chapter Six: 'Everyone babbles the words, but few obtain thereby a stronger faith'¹: Conclusions and Future Directions

Though a central feature of Christian life for centuries, on the eve of the Reformation the sacraments occupied a somewhat enigmatic position. They were accessible, visible, and emotive, but the doctrinal truths that formed their substance largely remained beyond the reach of the faithful parishioners. Catechisms provided a verbal and literary structure to the sacraments that enabled their audiences to come to know them on a level they had not necessarily had access to before. The sacraments were no longer contained within a church setting; they were learned about in the home, in schools, and in exile. The knowledge that formed the sacred was disseminated in a potentially uncontrollable environment and, in an age of confessional conflict, it was vulnerable to challenge, derision, scorn, and abuse.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to reassess the scholarly perception of catechisms. It has rested its discussion on two main points: that the knowledge imparted in sacramental instruction was too limited to delineate effectively along confessional lines; that catechisms should be seen as facilitators of concord rather than division. Both of these points question their efficacy in shaping or creating religious identities. Instead, it has been suggested. Certainly, the catechisms promoted the key features of their faith; the Protestant catechists encouraged communion in both kinds, while Catholic catechisms held to the concept of the mass as a sacrifice, for instance. Yet, on the whole, the sacramental instruction included in the catechisms did not

¹ Johann Valentin Andreae (1622) cited in Sabean, *Power in the Blood*, p. 1.

emphasise doctrinal differences too energetically. The exception to this was to discredit the beliefs and practices of fringe groups, which threatened established and shared practices, such as infant baptism. The arguments put forward in this thesis are rooted in the undisputable fact that the catechisms, particularly the *Small Catechisms*, were intended for a lay audience, either directly, or indirectly. It has been suggested that the needs of the audience meant that, in terms of how the sacraments of baptism, penance and the Eucharist were taught overall, continuity rooted in a shared Christian faith rather than change was promoted.

These claims require a degree of qualification, however. The catechisms did teach Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed doctrine. A reader exposed to Luther's catechisms probably would consider himself or herself a Lutheran, even if their lived experience of this Lutheranism differed from that of another Lutheran in another part of Germany. Yet, the point remains that in not dwelling on areas of heightened tension between the confessions, or prescribing in detail how to perform outward devotional practices, the sacramental instruction included in the catechisms permitted a degree of accommodation and individual interpretation between and within Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism. In this, the catechisms can be seen to have embodied Erasmus' suggestion that human laws and customs be somewhat protected and left to the discretion of local parishes or ruling princes. Significantly, Erasmus' advice did not imply that the laity ought to have any influence in their religious edification. Yet, it is recognised that the laity did have a degree of direction over their religious lives: official approval

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notwithstanding, they could attend or not attend church services, or in biconfessional cities they could choose whether to go to a Lutheran or Catholic church. Visitation reports from across Germany indicate the vibrancy of local rituals and practices, suggesting that success in imposing uniformity in belief and practice remained elusive. Strauss perceived catechisms to have failed in their efforts to indoctrinate, but to see catechisms as tools of indoctrination is a narrow interpretation of their overall objectives. At no point do the catechisms suggest that 'indoctrination' was their purpose. Rather, they wanted to create peaceful, orderly citizens, who had a grasp of fundamental Christian knowledge. In diffusing the potential for religious conflict, the catechisms were intended to promote a peaceful coexistence between the laity. However, the extent to which the laity directed the content of catechetical instruction remains difficult to ascertain, although the findings of this investigation have suggested two possible theories.

Firstly, the brevity of the sacramental instruction provided in the catechisms can be seen as a response to the diversity of religious practice across sixteenth-century Germany. Canisius' report on the religiosity of Straubing's citizens, as well as various letters sent over the course of his lengthy career in Germany, indicate that even those people who identified as Catholics did not necessarily subscribe to the same vision of Catholic devotional practice or doctrine. In Canisius' case, it has been suggested that his *Small Catechism* sought to appeal to a diverse audience, with his preference being to persuade, rather than coerce. Of course, the legality of Lutheranism after 1555 made Canisius' task far harder: he did not always have the choice of

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coercion when ministering to bi-confessional cities, such as Augsburg. His continued concern that Catholicism be preserved, whilst his recognition that the nature of German Catholicism could not easily be quantified in or directed by a catechism, is made apparent through his catechisms, and broader activities, such as his response to the Index of Forbidden Books. In his recognition of the distinct nature of German Catholicism, and subsequent activities in the light of this, the argument that the laity could influence catechetical content is strengthened.

Canisius' example suggests that the laity actively impacted the content of the catechisms through their religious practices. However, the second theory suggested here illustrates the ways in which catechists shaped their catechisms based on their perception of the laity's abilities and preferences. Essentially, by virtue of their intellectual capabilities, the intended audience necessitated the avoidance of in-depth sacramental doctrine. In the same way that Luther's catechetical sermons of 1528 were designed for an audience that comprised the 'simple', so too were his catechisms, particularly the *Small Catechism*. In avoiding becoming embroiled in theological conflict, which would be too complex for young or uneducated readers to comprehend, the resulting instruction was brief, simple, and delivered clearly. Similarly, Osiander's catechism was intended to encourage (or revive) lay dependence on the clergy. In his catechism, in-depth doctrinal disputes were avoided because access to such knowledge was the preserve of the clerical office. Osiander's catechism sought to defy the city council's efforts to reduce the authority of the pastors, and, in keeping to a minimum complex doctrinal

subtleties in his catechism, Osiander protected the office of the pastor. Both of these examples demonstrate how the catechists' perception of the laity influenced catechetical content. Luther's interpretation of the laity's intellectual ability and degree of religious knowledge was shaped by the Saxon visitation results, as well his concern regarding the influence of radical sects. The result was a catechism that rejected heretical teachings, whilst minimising the degree of complexity on areas of disagreement between Lutherans and Catholics. Osiander perceived the city council and the citizens of Nuremberg to be threats to the clerical office consequently he sought to increase reliance on the role of the pastor in an individual's journey towards salvation. In both of these cases, the laity served as a passive, rather than an active, influence on the content of the catechisms.

The avoidance of theological diversity in the catechisms has led to suggestions that the texts were designed to promote a degree of harmony, not only *between* confessions, but also *within* them. This harmony should not be understood in terms of attempting to merge together doctrinal beliefs: rather, the catechisms intended to help people to live together. Discord easily could turn into open displays of hostility that threatened secular authority and political control. It was important that people learn to live together, and, in the absence of religious unity, coexistence was accepted. Similarly, the language of 'peace-making' employed throughout this study does not represent a rejection of the development of discrete confessional identities. Such identities were formed during the sixteenth century, but this thesis has queried the association of confessional identity with social control, suggesting that to view

catechisms as tools of control is not as straightforward as has been suggested in current scholarship.

Moreover, the nature of the confessional identity created through the catechisms has been considered. The avoidance of theological subtleties is compounded by the lack of ritual direction, suggesting that the end result could permit degrees of individual interpretation. This was highlighted, in particular, by Canisius' treatment of communion in both kinds, in which the *Small Catechism* did not seek to exclude those Catholics who received communion in both kinds. While confessional churches emerged in the sixteenth-century, it should not be assumed that the role played by catechisms in their development is assured. A Protestant could be taught Luther's catechism, but still hold onto 'superstitious' practices. Nischan has related an incident that occurred in Wittenberg during the 1590s, which saw a butcher threaten to 'split the minister's head' if he did not perform an exorcism during his daughter's baptism.² Perhaps if the butcher had been taught in the catechism why exorcisms were unnecessary, he might have left his knife at home. The point is that confessional identity was fluid: a person might identify with Lutheranism, or Catholicism, or Calvinism, but the lived experience of their faith and associated devotional practices could be fundamentally incongruous with this identity. Surely, the absence of ritual direction, combined with the avoidance of theological complexity, contributed to this confessional fluidity, rather than grounded religious identity in fixed terms.

² Nischan, 'The Exorcism Controversy', p. 39.

The analysis of woodcuts has further complicated the issue of identity: discrepancies between the text and visual accompaniment raise questions over how the audience was intended to 'read' the images. Should those images that depict a contemporary scene be understood as representing how the practice of faith should be carried out? The realities of the early-modern book trade did not permit the creation of new woodcuts to suit each individual publication. Thus, woodcuts often were designed to be heterodox and, when included in catechisms that did not provide detailed textual direction, perhaps resulted in the further diversification of religious practice. The discussion of the woodcuts depicting communion in different editions of Canisius' *Small Catechism* suggests that the printers' choice of contemporary woodcuts reflected actual practice of the local Catholics in Augsburg and Cologne. It is beyond the remit of this thesis to investigate this link fully, but the argument for catechisms being tools by which fixed confessional identities were created is weakened nonetheless. Indeed, while Karant-Nunn has suggested that catechisms afford us insight into not just theology, 'which is well known, but into the religious feeling that they enjoined upon the masses',³ these chapters have argued that this also was true in reverse; catechisms were products of individual circumstance, shaped by the religious feeling and demands of the laity. Palmer Wandel, most recently, has argued that catechisms grounded their reader in their faith and acted as a portable tool designed to promote conformity to and allegiance with a given doctrine. However, the exploration of sacramental instruction has demonstrated that, ultimately, 'universal' doctrinal

³ Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling*, p. 118.

'truth' was framed to suit the political, social, and religious climates they were published in.

While raising several points regarding the catechetical genre more broadly, this thesis has put forward a number of arguments regarding the individual catechisms. It has been suggested that Luther's catechisms represented a concerted attempt to delineate between the heresy of the fanatics, and the truth of the evangelical faith. In promoting the latter, Luther emphasised, to a degree, continuity of thought with the Catholics. This was not consistent throughout his sacramental instruction: Luther did separate some of his doctrines from Catholicism, but his focus remained on rejecting radical teachings. With regards to Osiander's catechism, it has been suggested that there are connections between his catechetical sermons and the later controversy over justification. This link between Osiander's early career and his perceived dissent has been alluded to only briefly in the scholarship, but it suggests that a keener appraisal of Osiander's sermons and his other publications may prove useful in comprehending more fully his theological development.

The examination of the sacramental instruction offered in the *Heidelberg Catechism* has strengthened Bierma's suggestion that it sought to associate itself with the Lutheran tradition. It did so by employing language that served to unite rather than separate the Lutheran and Reformed factions in the Palatinate. Significantly, Elector Frederick III though inclined to the Reformed faith and finding support in the Heidelberg court and university, the majority of

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his citizens were Lutheran. Moreover, Calvinism was illegal in the Empire, and remained so until 1648. Diffusing doctrinal disunity was a politically prudent measure and was an attempt to increase Frederick's personal authority.

The findings from Canisius' catechisms have revealed that he promoted a form of Catholicism that was designed for his Bavarian context, rather than attempted to implement rigorously the universal Catholicism envisioned by the Council of Trent. Harro Höpfl has commented on the reality of early-modern Catholic obedience: while, in theory, the papacy expected secular authorities to be subordinate to them, in practice, this goal was unattainable and incompatible with the increasing secularisation of German states. The result was that Christians owed obedience to two sets of authorities whose demands could, and did, conflict with each other.⁴ In avoiding overtly prescriptive content, Canisius' catechisms permitted him to be seen as obeying both the pope, as well as his German secular authorities.

The content of catechetical instruction was designed for the laity. Small catechisms were accessed directly, while the clergy passed the knowledge offered in large catechisms to the laity. In viewing the catechisms primarily as tools of the church and state, the influence of this audience is overlooked. Yet, in grounding this study within the context of local society, politics, and religion, it has been argued that the intended audience impacted the nature of the religious teachings imparted in the catechisms. Its overall conclusions suggest that confessional identity cannot be measured easily through the catechisms,

⁴ Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540-1640* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 54.

despite their universal appeal. Instead, any effort to understand the nature of confessional development must be rooted in its local context: it was driven by local dynamics and the lived experiences of local parishioners.

Future Directions

The sacraments comprised one part of a wider corpus of instruction contained within the catechisms. As such, more work needs to be done to compare the catechisms as a whole to determine whether the findings from this analysis of the sacraments can be applied more broadly. The question that probably always will elude historians is how much of an impact catechetical instruction had on their users. Visitation records, official documents and promulgations, and secular and ecclesiastical court records can only tell us so much about the mentalities and actions of the ordinary laity. However, comparing the content of the catechisms with the instructions contained in the church orders, along with visitation reports and weekly sermons – which probably explored the teachings offered in the catechisms – may well enable us to construct a better picture of religious practices, experiences, and expectations. This thesis has pointed towards discrepancies between the catechisms and church orders, suggesting that these can be seen as indicative of a degree of lay agency that was able to direct the administration of the sacraments, either consciously or unconsciously. It is accepted that the laity could and did shape their religious experiences and loyalties, but it has been telling to discover that the catechisms, designed to educate and teach doctrinal truths to the faithful, were not more forthcoming about either the doctrine or the rituals that

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comprised sacramental knowledge and practice. Combining an analysis of catechetical instruction with an examination of visitation reports may provide the empirical evidence needed to determine how far this pedagogical approach impacted the religious lives of early-modern Germans.

The concept of identity and meaning is one that is central to an understanding of the actions and events in early modern Germany and wider Europe. Part of what enabled people to identify with a given faith was the ritual that accompanied the sacraments. For instance, for Catholics and some Lutherans, the elevation of the host was a crucial feature in the Eucharist service and its omission served to distinguish them from Calvinists later in the century. Records indicate that an affiliation to traditional rituals and customs was a problem that remained unresolved despite almost a century of catechetical instruction. Luther and Canisius continued to amend their catechisms throughout their lives, but the lack of ritual direction remained a consistent feature and this omission undermines any attempt to see the catechisms analysed here as shapers of a fixed identity. However, those catechisms that rooted themselves in the Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist faith, but were adapted to suit local areas may prove to be useful case studies on the emergence of confessional identities in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, a closer analysis of the 1574 catechism published in Lower Austria, mentioned in chapter four, may provide further detail regarding the nature of Lutheranism identity in that area.

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The print history of catechisms also would be a rewarding study and could reveal illuminating evidence regarding reading preferences, and heavy circulation of specific catechisms in certain areas at certain times. Equally, such a study could investigate the provenance of catechisms, as well as analyse the marginalia. This latter angle may reveal hitherto unknown details regarding how catechisms were used, how they were amended by individuals, particularly of successive generations, and may draw attention to passages that were deemed of special import. Investigations of this sort would add to the growing field of print history, and would allow us to assess more fully the impact catechisms had on individual users.

The analysis of woodcuts has raised intriguing questions regarding whether the choice of woodcuts by the printer was a conscious reflection of local religious feeling and practice. An interdisciplinary study drawing on the fields of art history, theology, book history, and social and cultural history to examine the provenance, purpose, and use of woodcuts in catechisms, would contribute valuable knowledge to each of these disciplines. If the findings suggested in this thesis were reinforced by such a study, then the importance of situating the printer's choice of images within the contours of local faith would be made clear, and would question further how catechisms designed for a broad readership could be used to anchor readers in a specific faith. If the meaning of the text could be altered by the accompanying image, the printer's role in the creation of confessional identities becomes significant.

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Catechisms remained a core feature of religious education for centuries.

Those analysed in this thesis had an impact across the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. Missionaries took the catechisms of Luther and Canisius to the New World and the far East, the *Heidelberg Catechism* became one part of the triad that comprises the 'Three Forms of Unity' confessed by Reformed churches, and Osiander's catechism was translated by his nephew by marriage, Thomas Cranmer, for dissemination in England. Local issues that had influenced their original formation were imposed onto geographically diverse areas and were incorporated within a broader corpus of educational tools and platforms. Their widespread appeal can be ascribed partly to their lack of prescription. Individual motives and agendas were pursued, but in varying degrees, each of the German catechisms was shaped by its audience. In acknowledging this, catechisms can be seen as representing a collision between theological vision and political and social reality.

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