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Introduction to *Ad fontes Lutheri*

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INTRODUCTION

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Renneth Hagen has long been an established expert in Luther studies and has long merited a *Festschrift*. Recently several of his past and current doctoral students conspired together to organize a *Festschrift* which would be presented to him as a surprise on a proper occasion. The key conspirators were Timothy Maschke, Franz Posset and Joan Skocir, all of whom have contributed essays as well as direction to this project. They asked me to write this Introduction, largely because I work in Reformation studies and have been at Marquette University nearly as long as Ken Hagen. I have co-operated with Ken on several projects over the years: for instance, presentations commemorating the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth and hosting an annual meeting of the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference at Marquette. I have also served on several dissertation committees which he directed and published two volumes of *Reformation Texts with Translations (1350-1650)*, which Hagen edits.

If one were to design an education for an American Luther scholar, it would be hard to better that of Hagen. He did his undergraduate work at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, a Lutheran college in America's most Lutheran metropolis. He then did a bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology at the Harvard Divinity School (1961), crowned by a doctorate in Divinity at Harvard University (1967). Most recipients of those degrees would have sought ordination; Hagen remained a lay scholar. While doing his dissertation research he spent a year at the University of Bonn. Can one be a Luther scholar without working in Germany? His dissertation, "Luther's Lectures on Hebrews in Light of Medieval Commentaries on Hebrews," did much to shape the long range direction of his scholarship. His dissertation director at Harvard was Heiko Oberman, who has done more than any scholar to trace the importance of medieval roots of Luther's intellectual development. Hagen's first teaching experience was as a teaching Fellow at Harvard. From 1965 to 1967 he taught religion at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

In 1967 two people took a chance with long range consequences. Vatican II had just ended. American Catholic universities wanted to

broaden their intellectual horizons. Most Catholic theological faculties had been restricted to Catholics. Most Protestant faculties were similar. Bernard Cooke, chair of the Theology Department at Marquette University, began looking for a Lutheran to teach Luther studies. The Department was expanding and becoming more professional. For decades most theology courses at Marquette had been taught by Jesuits who were professors in other departments. Now the Theology Department was to offer a doctorate and needed a larger, more professional, and more ecumenical staff of professors. Hagen applied for the position in Luther studies and was hired without even an on-campus interview. He has been a pillar of that Department ever since, aside from a semester of 1980 as a Fullbright Professor at the University of Oslo; the semester gave him an opportunity to renew his Norwegian ethnic roots and observe how Lutheranism has developed in a country outside of the United States and Germany.

Since one of the essays in this volume deals with Luther's family life, it is appropriate to note that during his years in the Milwaukee area Professor Hagen has enjoyed the unwavering love and support of his wife Aldy and has been blessed with their daughters Susan and Carolyn, their son Erik, and four grandchildren.

Most of Hagen's teaching at Marquette has focused on the subjects he loves: junior/senior courses on the theology of the Reformation era and on Martin Luther, and six regular graduate courses: Christian Thought in the Later Middle Ages and the Reformation, Interpretation of the Bible in the Renaissance and Reformation, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and the Council of Trent. While at Marquette Hagen has directed twenty dissertations, with more still in the pipeline. Of the twenty, ten dealt with Luther, four with exegesis, and six with other topics, largely other Reformation theologians. The essays of Burnell Eckhardt, Gordon Isaac, and James Kiecker in this volume build upon and carry forward their dissertation research under Professor Hagen.

Hagen has also published a steady stream of books and articles. Since there is a bibliography of his publications at the end of this volume, here we highlight the major directions his writings have taken. As is quite usual, his first book was a revision of the dissertation he wrote under Professor Heiko Oberman: *A Theology of Testament in the Young Luther: The Lectures on Hebrews*, published in 1974. He broadened his coverage of commentaries on Hebrews in his 1981 *Hebrews Commenting from Erasmus to Bèze, 1516-1598*. In 1993 Hagen returned to Luther's exegetical method in *Luther's Approach to Scripture as seen in his "Commentaries" on Galatians, 1519-1538*. More

popular in tone and broader in coverage was *The Bible in the Churches: How Different Christians Interpret the Scriptures* (first edition, 1985; second, 1994; third, 1998).

Less esteemed in the academy than monographs but arguably more helpful are editions of texts and bibliographies. Here with the help of his graduate students Hagen has edited three Luther bibliographies: *Annotated Bibliography of Luther Studies, 1967-1976*, (1977); *Annotated Bibliography of Luther Studies, 1977-1983*, (1985); *Annotated Bibliography of Luther Studies, 1984-1989*, (1991). Following these three volumes Hagen edited eight annual abridgments of Luther studies, the *Luther Digest*, from 1993 to 2000 and counting.

Finally Hagen has edited two *Festschriften* presented to distinguished scholars. The first was for his mentor at Harvard, Heiko Oberman, esteemed by many as the greatest living Reformation scholar: *Augustine, the Harvest, and Theology (1300-1650): Essays Dedicated to Heiko Oberman in Honor of his Sixtieth Birthday* (1990). The second was for George Tavard, the distinguished French ecumenist, who in the early 1990s held the Presidential Chair in Theology at Marquette: *The Quadrilog: Tradition and the Future of Ecumenism: Essays in Honor of George H. Tavard* (1994). Appropriately, both Professors Oberman and Tavard have contributed essays to this book in honor of Professor Hagen. Like Tavard, Hagen has contributed much to ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic traditions and drew great satisfaction when, on the anniversary of Luther's Ninety-five Theses, representatives of the Lutheran and Catholic Churches were able to sign a joint declaration on justification at Augsburg in 1999.

Many *Festschriften* share a weakness: the essays they contain often lack unity. Some seem to be kept together only "by Scotch tape and bailing wire." Often, editors simply send out invitations to established scholars to contribute an essay covering a topic as broad as the Renaissance or Reformation. Such volumes usually give reviewers nightmares. For some years, *The American Historical Review* has merely listed them at the back of the journal along with their contributors and the titles of the essays.

In contrast, this volume has a double unity. All the contributors have a real link to Professor Hagen, and the essays have a common focus. Five contributors wrote dissertations under Hagen: Drs. Burnell Eckhardt, Gordon Isaac, James Kiecker, Timothy Maschke, and Franz Posset. Joan Skocir is currently writing hers. In addition Posset worked with Hagen on the annotated Luther bibliographies; Maschke, Posset, Kiecker, Eckhardt, and Skocir are on the staff of the *Luther Digest*.

Kiecker, Donnelly, and Skocir have contributed volumes or translations to the series published by Marquette University Press, *Reformation Texts with Translation* (1350-1650), of which Hagen is the editor-in-chief. As noted above, Hagen honored Professors Oberman and Tavard by editing their *Festschriften*. Here they honor him. Patrick Carey and George Tavard were his colleagues in Marquette's Theology Department. Hagen and David Steinmetz studied together at Harvard under Heiko Oberman. Nils Bloch-Hoell became Hagen's friend during his semester teaching at Oslo. Helmar Junghans serves as editor of the *Lutherjahrbuch*. Ulrich Asendorf was the Director of the Luther Akademie, Ratzeburg, Germany, for many years, publishing Luther studies each year in a similar way to Hagen's *Luther Digest*. Gottfried Krodel recently retired as the American editor of *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* (*Archive for Reformation History*); its annual *Literaturbericht* is the best guide to recent publications in Reformation history. Despite these common links to Professor Hagen, the contributors to this volume come from many nations. Four were born in Germany, one each in France, Norway, and the Netherlands, and there are eight Americans. They thereby reflect the international scope of Luther studies. More important, the three editors of this volume have achieved a unity of subject matter unusual in *Festschriften*: twelve of the essays deal directly with Luther's life and teaching. One deals with Catholic attitudes toward Luther in the twentieth century, another with Norwegian Lutheranism. The precise aspects of Luther studies that most interest Hagen are Luther's biblical approach, its medieval background, and its continuing relevance today. The essays of Asendorf, Isaac, Kiecker, Posset, Skocir, and Tavard deal with Luther's biblical approach. Those of Eckhardt, Kiecker, Posset, and Steinmetz take up Luther's relationship to older theologians. The contributions of Krodel, Steinmetz, Oberman, Posset, and Tavard closely examine short texts from Luther. The essays of Skocir, Maschke and Asendorf show how Luther's exegetical methods and theological insights are still valuable today and transcend mere historical interest.

Just when this volume was nearly complete Professor Hagen announced his retirement from teaching, effective in May, 2000; he will continue to mentor his doctoral students and will now have more leisure for his writing and research. All of us involved in this book thank him for all he has taught us in the past and pray that his work as a scholar will continue. *Ad multos annos!*