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EARLY LUTHERAN EDUCATION IN THE LATE REFORMATION IN MECKLENBURG

by

Anna Ruth Lynch

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Arts degree in Religious Studies
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2013

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

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CHAPTER I

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF EDUCATION IN THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY

Over the past forty years many have attempted to interpret history to ask who in Germany during the reformation period had the authority to teach children. Calvin's consistory in Geneva found a "savior" and advocate in Robert Kingdon and some of his students, while the history of education in Germany remains one divided between confessional and "secular" historians.[1] The inflexibility on each side has led to a relative stagnation of scholarly study—at least when compared to Reformed consistories. Gerald Strauss's 1975 article in *Past and Present* entitled "Success and Failure in the German Reformation," and even more so, his 1978 behemoth, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation*, challenged the way in which people think of education in the German Reformation.[2] Both the article and the book inspired a torrent of criticism. In studying Strauss's book, the criticism it inspired, and the evolution of the study of education in early modern Germany since his book, the limitations of existing scholarship and the division between social historians and historians who include theology in their research is revealed.

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[1] I would be remiss if I did not admit to having a Lutheran education myself. According to my alma mater's mission statement, "Inspired by Lutheran scholarly tradition and the liberal arts, Augustana provides an education of enduring worth that challenges the intellect, fosters integrity and integrates faith with learning and service in a diverse world" (http://augie.edu/about/mission-values-and-vision). I was also a member of the inaugural class of the honors program, entitled Civitas. This program is even more steeped in Lutheran pedagogy than the general college mission statement, "For students who desire an even more academically rigorous experience, our honors program, *Civitas*, bridges disciplines with an exploration of the values associated with leading a responsible life. Civitas students complete various projects about vocation…" (http://www.augie.edu/academics/civitas-honors-program).

[2] Gerald Strauss, "Success and Failure in the German Reformation," *Past & Present* 67 (May 1975): 30–63; Professor Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

Luther's House of Learning

Although the majority of Strauss's book was focused on Lutheran pedagogues' opinions of childhood and their chosen methods of indoctrination (by which, he later claimed, he meant nothing pejorative), the last fifty pages of his book, entitled "Consequences" brought the most controversy. In the final pages of his book, Strauss argued that if the Reformation is understood as an attempt at widespread Christianization, it must be understood as a failure. Furthermore, it was provocative statements such as the following that garnered the most attention by critics: "Protestantism had brought about little or no change in the common religious conscience and in the ways in which ordinary men and women conducted their lives."[3] Most controversial was Strauss's conclusion that the Reformation failed "to make…all people think, feel, and act as Christians, to imbue them with a Christian mind-set, motivational drive, and way of life."[4] The following section will explore in more detail the criticisms leveled against Strauss's work and, where possible, his specific response to that criticism.

Criticism

Several historians objected to Strauss's use of the Visitation Records, mainly because they found it unfair and perhaps obvious that the visitors had such negative reports, given that they set out to find problems. Lewis Spitz described the Visitation Record as "almost by virtue of their purpose apt to emphasize abuses and failures."[5] He questioned Strauss's seeming omission of "devotional booklets for families, aids for catechetical instruction in the household (not just by the state), hymnbooks, prayerbooks, well-thumbed extant copies [which suggest] a vital religious life among the common

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[3] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 299.

[4] Ibid., 307.

[5] Lewis W. Spitz, "Review: Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation by Gerald Strauss," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (February 1, 1980): 143.

people."[6] In other words, even though several historians commented on the incredible amount of source material utilized by Strauss, some were still dissatisfied by the kind of sources upon which he based his most controversial arguments.

In a historiographical piece entitled "Success and Failure during the First Century of the Reformation," Geoffrey Parker briefly discusses several of the criticisms leveled at Strauss's book, including the problems involved in using the Visitation Records as a source.[7] Parker gives three critical short-comings of the Visitation Records. First, the visitors rarely went to cities, "where other sources often reveal a learned and diligent clergy serving an enthusiastic and well-informed congregation."[8] Secondly, echoing earlier criticisms, Parker argues that the visitors may have emphasized the shortcomings they found "in order to persuade their governors of the need for remedial action."[9] Thirdly, Parker points to James Kittelson's 1988 study on Strasbourg, which found that some rural areas covered by visitors experienced great successes.[10] As for Strauss's contention that the Visitation Records prove the Reformation failed to create a pious public, Parker modifies it in the following manner, "The evidence of 'failure' is certainly not universal, but it was enough to depress the reformers, and it is also enough to require some tentative explanations from historians."[11] Apparently for Parker, Strauss's explanation was not tentative enough.

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Geoffrey Parker, "Success and Failure During the First Century of the Reformation," *Past & Present*, no. 136 (1992): 43–82.

[8] Ibid., 47.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 48.

[11] Ibid., 51.

Strauss was protected in one sense from the criticisms brought against him considering the use of the Visitation Records, for he covered many of the inherent problems in the context of his analysis. As he wrote, "One would be less than prudent if one failed to speculate about the intentions visitors brought to their task. Was it not their job to find fault? And, having found it, did they not then exaggerate its gravity in order to drive their governments to prompt and decisive remedial measures?"[12] In other words, Strauss agrees the perhaps his sources were biased, but this was a bias that he was aware of while researching, so he feels it did not overly impact his study. The criticism that Strauss devotes much more time responding to is the attack upon his lack of theology as informing the reformers' pedagogy in his study, which is the next topic considered here.

The debate over the lack of comment regarding theology in Strauss's interpretation of Lutheran pedagogy is perhaps the most vehemently argued of all the criticisms. This first comes from historians like Robert Kolb, who wrote that Strauss's book "could have profited from a clearer delineation not only of Luther's law/gospel dynamic but also of his two kingdoms analysis of service to God in both spiritual and temporal realms: these two concepts are basic to an understanding of Lutheran pedagogy."[13] The other form of criticism came mostly from Steven Ozment, in which he not only accused Strauss of misunderstanding Lutheran theology, but also accused him of "modishly romanticize[ing] the superstitions of folk religion."[14] These criticisms are valid; for how could Strauss claim to get at the pedagogical motivations of people like Luther without first taking into account critical pieces of his theology?

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[12] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 264.

[13] Robert Kolb, "Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation by Gerald Strauss," *The Journal of Library History* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 510.

[14] Steven Ozment, "Review: Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation by Gerald Strauss," *The Journal of Modern History* 51, no. 4 (December 1979): 839.

Strauss responded to the criticisms of his general omission of theology in *Luther's House of Learning* in a 1988 collection of essays edited by R. Po-Chia Hsia.[15] Strauss believes that critics extended this omission to argue that his entire study proceeded from a false premise: "This premise contends that it was the Reformation's 'central purpose to make people—all people—think, feel, and act as Christians.'"[16] Strauss further explains that "[r]eaction to the book does indeed appear to have been governed by a writer's opinions on the place and weight to be given to theology in interpreting the Reformation….this is also the issue on which the social historian parts company with the older scholarship."[17] It seems too easy for Strauss to say that he need not spend time talking about theology in the context of the Reformation. It is important to interpret history using an interdisciplinary lens that incorporates both the theological concepts that informed the reformers and that takes seriously lay people and their perhaps less than theological motivations.

As stated earlier, it was Strauss's thesis that the Reformation failed that sparked the most vehement criticism. As Susan Karant-Nunn would write as recently as 2005, "The kerfuffle over Strauss's conclusion, culminat[ed] in a highly charged session devoted to the question of 'failure' at the American Historical Association in 1980."[18] Karant-Nunn writes further that this session unfortunately devolved into "the open confessional views that only the Protestant devout ought to undertake Reformation

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[15] R. Po-Chia Hsia, ed., *The German People and the Reformation* (Cornell University Press, 1988).

[16] Gerald Strauss, "The Reformation and Its Public in an Age of Orthodoxy," in *The German People and the Reformation* (Cornell University Press, 1988), 197–198.

[17] Ibid., 196.

[18] Susan C Karant-Nunn, "Changing One's Mind: Transformations in Reformation History from a Germanist's Perspective," *Renaissance Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 1112.

scholarship."[19] This view in particular, however is not readily apparent in most published criticisms of Strauss's failure thesis. Parker voices the opinions of many historians regarding Strauss's book that "the criteria for measuring 'success' and 'failure' were, to say the least, narrow."[20] Parker points to the testimony of contemporary Catholic leaders such as Ignatius Loyola, "who believed that only the strongest counter-measures would halt the triumphant advance of Protestantism." [21] Thus, it seems the main issue critics had with Strauss's failure thesis was why he felt he was able to answer such a subjective question in the first place.

In response to the claims that the question of success or failure of the German Reformation was a question that Strauss should not have been asking, Strauss replies that people are forgetting that his success or failure question was based first and foremost on the "pedagogical experiment" of the Reformation. In his opinion, the critics that focused their energies on his failure thesis created "an impression that the intent of my book was negative when…its chief purpose had been to call attention to an important though flawed and ultimately failed undertaking…: the German reformers' experiment in mass pedagogy."[22] Furthermore, Strauss says, he meant no judgment on the reformers by explaining their failure.

Some reviewers, perhaps, take their criticism one step too far. James Kittelson went so far as declaring Strauss's book "a Sisyphean book about a Promethean effort."[23]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Parker, "Success and Failure During the First Century of the Reformation," 46.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Strauss, "The Reformation and Its Public in an Age of Orthodoxy," 196–197.

[23] James M. Kittelson, "Review: Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation by Gerald Strauss," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47, no. 3 (1979): 456.

Others criticized in a more measured tone; Lewis Spitz, for example, wrote, "What can be said in response by a critic who believes that what is said is very true but that the account does not tell the whole story or properly evaluate the positive achievements in religious education?"[24] There are far fewer positive reviews, though that does not necessarily discount the book as a whole. It was a provocative and controversial book, and so provoked controversy. Jonathan Zophy, in a review for *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, called *Luther's House of Learning* "one of the finest books ever written on education and…one of the most important books to be written about the German Reformation in the last several decades."[25] Several historians, however, fell in the middle, generally impressed that Strauss was pushing for people to think of the Reformation in a new way and to question old assumptions.

The Social History Debate

Before moving on to Gerald Strauss's legacy within the study of the German Reformation in general and education in particular, let us examine the debate amongst historians over the success and failure of social history as an enterprise. This larger debate was very much a part of the reaction to Strauss's book, and perhaps even more so, apparent in his responses to those criticisms. In a 1991 article in *Past & Present* entitled "The Dilemma of Popular History," Strauss, as he described it, "attempted to draw out some implications of the readmission of partiality into the historian's performance by considering a problem that has been intruding itself into my own field, the German Reformation."[26] Strauss described this dilemma in the following question:

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[24] Spitz, "Review: Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation by Gerald Strauss," 143.

[25] Jonathan W. Zophy, "Review: Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation by Gerald Strauss," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, no. 4 (December 1, 1980): 102.

[26] Gerald Strauss, "The Dilemma of Popular History," *Past & Present*, no. 132 (August 1991): 130.

> "I propose to take it as a fact that most 'history from below' written in recent years succeeds in valorizing popular culture, an enhancement accomplished by conferring upon it a dignity, a weight and a significance that are intended to change our perception of it from something…conventionally labeled 'backward'…to something that can fairly be described as 'vital.' …[I]n effect, if not necessarily in intent, popular history tends greatly to elevate its subject."[27]

Strauss brings up this conundrum repeatedly stating, "As historians we live in two worlds, and our dual citizenship brings conflicting loyalties. These, in turn, induce a compartmentalization of our mental life and set up a double standard for appraising what we see."[28] He even admits he feels an "admiration" for the "apathy and foot-dragging with which my sixteenth-century commoners shielded themselves from an imposed civilizing process," referring to *Luther's House of Learning*.[29] He generally credits Steven Ozment's accusation that he romanticized the superstitions of peasants in *Luther's House of Learning* with spurring his introspection.

To reiterate, Strauss interprets historians' desire to study history "from below" comes at the price of valorizing their subjects. As for the cause of this problem, Strauss points to "[his] choosing (or having been conditioned to choose) to see things from above in the latter, the contemporary, instance, and from below in the former, the historical: in other words, status-induced bias in one case, imaginative escape from it in the other."[30] Finally, Strauss confesses that it was his brush with popular history's magnetic pull that led him to believe that any study of the Reformation is lacking if it does not attempt to understand its impact on mainstream life.[31]

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[27] Ibid., 133–134.

[28] Ibid., 144.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 145.

[31] Ibid., 146.

Two years after Strauss's article, William Beik responded, saying that Strauss's "questioning of the motives of the practitioners of history "from below", risks encouraging those who would like to forget the advances of the past twenty years and push social history and socially motivated history back to a marginal status."[32] Beik critiques especially Strauss's frustration with historians' valorization of their subject. Beik accuses Strauss of confusing "valorization with bias and impl[ying] that those who appreciate the importance of the lower classes somehow promote their cause unduly."[33] Beik understands valorization as something separate from endorsement. He also finds Strauss's dichotomy between "elite" and "popular" culture as a false one, which erroneously enabled Strauss's suggestion that historians are "glorifying one at the expense of the other."[34] Good social historians, which Beik proposes as contrary to Strauss's description, "develop connections between their subjects and larger processes, rarely succumbing to naïve populism."[35] Where Strauss attributes the problem of social history to valorization, Beik posits the more common problem as resulting from the indirect nature of early modern evidence, which "must be tied together by abstractions that may seem far removed from anything imagined by the subjects themselves, and that consequently it may be subject to challenge and debate."[36] Beik's final critique deals with Strauss's worry that he could be considered unable to study fairly early modern popular culture when he remains repelled by the popular culture of today. Strauss is confused, Beik notes, because of an improper distinction between popular culture, "the

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[32] William Beik, "The Dilemma of Popular History," *Past & Present*, no. 141 (November 1, 1993): 207.

[33] Ibid., 211.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 212.

[36] Ibid., 213.

forms of thinking and acting of politically or economically subordinate groups," and mass culture, "culture disseminated by modern forms of mass media which are not generally controlled by popular groups."[37] Beik feels confident that if social historians continue to use sources that "afford the best approach to the questions being asked and whether they tell us something of general significance," social history, whether it is concerned with the contemporary or the early modern world, will remain a viable and important enterprise.[38]

In a reply appearing in the same issue of *Past & Present* as Beik's article, Strauss focused his argument on what he found to be a false dichotomy in Beik's work: that between popular culture and mass culture. Strauss asks, "Why, indeed, should 'mass' culture be taken to have less 'revelatory power' than 'popular' culture?"[39] Strauss argues that the answer is, "simply, that we might not like what it reveals."[40] Strauss concludes, "Like it or not, we are stuck as historians with the fundamental dissociation created for us by our double lives in the past and in the present."[41] Strauss repeats that the dilemma that causes him so much worry is that the past is "chronologically and spatially remote from us" and anything we take from it "must be put into motion by our imagination," but our sentiments toward this past "can never be the same as our feelings towards that which is immediate."[42] Where Beik has faith that proper use of sources and peer review will limit any sentimental interpretations of the past by historians, Strauss has no such faith.

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 214.

[39] Gerald Strauss, "The Dilemma of Popular History: Reply," *Past & Present*, no. 141 (November 1, 1993): 218.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 219.

[42] Ibid.

The Debate Continues, Passively

A quick perusal over the scholarship on education and its relation to the German Reformation since the publication of *Luther's House of Learning* reveals that perhaps Strauss's worries over bias and the possible dilemmas of social history as a discipline were not unfounded. The most subtle, but nonetheless apparent, difference amongst interpretations of both the pedagogy of Lutheran reformers and of its impact seem too often related to the confessional or secular status of the historian. Historian Susan Karant-Nunn shares this conclusion. The difficulty with this understanding is that it can incorrectly imply that any historian who disagrees with Strauss's interpretation is doing so out of confessional sympathies. In order to get at the undercurrents of German Reformation historiography, it works best to advance chronologically from Strauss's book forward to see the legacy of his work, as most if not all of the historians who have covered education in Reformation Germany first mention Strauss before offering their own interpretations.

In 1985 James Kittelson published an article dealing with, perhaps passively so, Strauss's confusion over the Lutheran pedagogues obvious use of humanism in their educational reforms in a book put together by Marilyn Harran entitled *Luther and Learning*.[43] Where Strauss found an inexplicable paradox that frustrated his study, Kittelson simply explains that the "Renaissance ideal of enlightened Christian citizen and the Reformation ideal of teaching true doctrine coexisted in the minds of Luther and others."[44] Kittelson illustrates this paradox with examples from Basel in the 1530s and Strasbourg in the late 1570s. The university in Basel found itself in controversy when

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[43] Marilyn J. Harran, ed., *Luther and Learning: The Wittenberg University Luther Symposium* (Associated University Press, 1985), 95–114.

[44] James Kittelson, "Luther the Educational Reformer," in *Luther and Learning: The Wittenberg University Luther Symposium* (Associated University Press, 1985), 99.

there was a debate over how much education a pastor needed. The university in Strasbourg had explosive debates over who had the authority over the students' lives and studies: the humanist head of the Academy or the theologian President of the Company of Pastors?[45] The following excerpt illustrates Kittelson's favorable interpretation of Luther's opinion of education:

> "There can be no doubt, then, that Luther the educational reformer contributed to the modern world not only by insisting that basic education be available to all—and by making it so—but also by bringing common people the fundamental notion that true religion could be a matter of the mind as well as of the heart and public behavior. From the training of pastors, to the catechisms, to the hymns, Luther's educational reforms in fact did much to create the modern world, with its typical distinction at the popular level between religion of the head and religion of the heart."[46]

Kittelson's sources, Luther's own writings when discussing Luther, and primary sources from both the Basel and Strasbourg conflicts exemplify his argument well. Throughout his career, Kittelson wrote a number of articles concerning the role of humanism in the German Reformation, particularly its influence upon the educational system developed by the reformers. It seems at least probable that some of this concern was fueled by certain shortcomings in Strauss's *Luther's House of Learning* and its influence.

Some historians, such as William J. Wright took a statistical approach, rather than Kittelson's more intellectual historical approach in developing new understandings of education in Reformation Germany that differed from Strauss's interpretation. Wright utilized matriculation lists and stipendiary records "to examine the implementation of educational policies of" the sixteenth century territory of Hesse.[47] Wright begins in passive agreement with Strauss, at least regarding the link between school reforms and

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[45] Ibid., 101–104.

[46] Ibid., 111.

[47] William J. Wright, "Evaluating the Results of Sixteenth Century Educational Policy: Some Hessian Data," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 3 (October 1, 1987): 411.

"the goals of the developing state."[48] He distinguishes his interpretation from Strauss, however, in stating that though "[e]ducational reform was coordinated to the needs of the state….[and that]this conclusion of Strauss's controversial study conformed to other recent findings, the main conclusion of his book cast a shadow on the general issue of whether Lutheran pedagogy achieved its goals."[49] This is a shadow that Wright hoped to shed a more discerning light upon through his statistical analysis.

Wright attempts to further distinguish his study from Strauss's, by recommending that people understand that Strauss was "mainly concerned with assessing the indoctrination of the common people in morals and theology, as opposed to evaluating the development and effectiveness of formal educational institutions."[50] Wright considers himself as successfully investigating the latter of these two concerns. This concern, Wright later adds, is the "more important historical question."[51] Where Strauss saw it as negative that "the educational reforms [of the German Reformation] were designed to produce jurists, pastors, and teachers for the school systems themselves" and thus for the state, Wright takes it as a fact, and judges the success or failure of Lutheran pedagogues off of this fact.

Wright concludes by saying, "the educational goals of the Hessian state were certainly met."[52] His data suggests that the school reforms did create an educational system capable of producing jurists, pastors, teachers, and other elites that served the particular needs of the state. He even suggests that perhaps it was because of the "large

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 412.

[50] Ibid., 413.

[51] Ibid., 413–414.

[52] Ibid., 424.

percentage of alumni of the system who moved through teaching into the pastorate may" suggest "why the Wittenberg reformers were confident in promoting lay state control of education."[53] Wright's data does not allow him to infer, however, as argued by Strauss, "whether any kind of religious energy was conveyed to them."[54] Wright thus utilized a different dataset to answer a different question than Strauss, but Strauss's influence upon the study remains clear.

One historian in particular continues on in the tradition of Strauss, particularly in writing with no confessional leaning whatsoever. This historian is Susan Karant-Nunn, who, fittingly, received her PhD under Strauss while he was at the University of Indiana. In an article that appeared in the 1990 *Lutherjahrbuch*, Karant-Nunn presents a case study of the Electoral District of Saxony in order to get at what she calls, "The Reality of Early Lutheran Education."[55] As with her mentor Strauss, Karant-Nunn writes in a provocative style, beginning her article, "However much I appreciate Martin Luther's and Philipp Melanchthon's energetic advocacy of education, I cannot resist asking, their inspired prose aside, to what degree we may regard the Lutheran Reformation as an impetus to educate society?"[56] She mentions Strauss's book and his conclusion that the Reformation in Germany brought no 'widespread, meaningful, and lasting response to its message,' and writes that her intention in writing this article was to "look closely at one part of one territory and try to ascertain how well the evidence sustained his rather pessimistic conclusions."[57] Karant-Nunn concludes:

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Susan Karant-Nunn, "The Reality of Early Lutheran Education: The Electoral District of Saxony--A Case Study," in *Lutherjahrbuch*, vol. 57, Responsibility for the World: Luther's Intentions and Their Effects (Gottingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990), 128.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 129.

> "[I]t is evident to me from the visitation protocols that the dissemination of schooling and basic literacy was not only slower in coming than many have liked to think, but also that it was taken advantage of by a more restricted segment of the population, no doubt mainly by the better off citizens of town and village."[58]

Furthermore, she writes, "I must agree with Strauss that, in the Electoral District of Saxony at least, the Reformation failed to make all people 'think, feel, and act as Christians, to imbue them with a Christian mind-set, motivational drive, and way of life.'"[59] In her final concluding statement, however, Karant-Nunn seems to back away from some of Strauss's more pessimistic arguments, saying that "Luther was a prominent early advocate of universal education for boys, and his and Melanchthon's advocacy may well have provided a crucial rationale for Elector August in his campaign to establish schools."[60] Her most telling separation from Strauss is her addendum to this previous statement: "Nonetheless, the prince must have had the head of state's varied and complex motives for what he did."[61] Strauss seemed more willing to claim knowledge of the motivations of not only 16th century Lutheran pedagogues and reformers, but also 16th century heads of state.

Later in 1990, Susan Karant-Nunn wrote an article in *Renaissance Quarterly* concerning the historiography of pre-university education in early modern Germany.[62] In this article, perhaps even more than the previously explored article, Karant-Nunn showed Strauss's influence on her work. In another provocative first sentence, she writes, "One of the striking features of the avalanche of attention to Martin Luther that the reformer's

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[58] Ibid., 144.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 146.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Alas, a Lack: Trends in the Historiography of Pre-University Education in Early Modern Germany," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (December 1, 1990): 788–798.

five-hundredth birthday in 1983 occasioned was how little of it dealt with his allegedly crucial position as the founder of schools."[63] Karant-Nunn cites several historians who wrote to this effect, generally pointing to Luther's 1524 open letter to city leaders to establish and sustain schools to support their argument. The older histories claim that "this goal [of Luther's] was attained almost spontaneously, first in the towns of Saxony, and then elsewhere as the reformer's prestige and the force of his teaching moved princes…to action."[64] This sort of history, in Karant-Nunn's opinion, stems from a "glowing [and] confessional outlook."[65] These "Luther scholars," Karant-Nunn argues, "have a hard time brooking the intrusion of the social sciences into their sacred precinct."[66] Social historians, she admits, tend to not be attracted to the study of key figures or "great men" such as Luther.

Karant-Nunn describes the difficulty of combining the two with a direct reference to Strauss's *Luther's House of Learning*. Strauss's book, Karant-Nunn writes, "[T]ended to be ignored by social historians and historians of education and to encounter criticism, sometimes harsh criticism, from Lutheran historians."[67] Karant-Nunn proceeds to spend little time on the criticisms of Strauss, but gives examples of studies that further support his conclusions, including one of her own articles. She misses no opportunity to criticize, and properly so, the work of some Luther scholars, especially their "hackneyed claim that the Lutheran Reformation produced the widespread education of girls."[68] This claim, she

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[63] Ibid., 788.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 789.

[66] Ibid., 790.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 791.

has proved, "to be greatly exaggerated."[69] Karant-Nunn then laments that the "new history" of education, particularly in Germany, has failed to touch the 15th and 16th centuries. Another issue that she discusses as problematic for historians of education is the difficulty of saying anything with much confidence regarding literacy rates in early modern Germany. She ends with a call for a "mature scholar" to focus attention "to Germany as a whole or toward a representative selection of its parts," and for more doctoral students to write dissertations on the history of education.

One historian, John Witte, Jr., seems especially capable of balancing recognition of the theological motivations of the Lutheran pedagogues and social history. In an article featured in the 1995-1996 issue of the *Journal of Law and Religion*, Witte traces "the reformation of the law and theology of education in sixteenth century Germany."[70] Witte avoids direct statements as to the success or failure of Reformation in Germany and instead writes, "The Reformation laid the foundation for a comprehensive system of public education in Germany, under the law and governance of the civil magistrate."[71] Most significant to Witte's argument is his contention that "the new evangelical theology of education" was firmly "rooted in the Lutheran theory of the two kingdoms."[72] Looking at early Lutheran education through the lens of the two kingdoms theory enables Witte to understand the early pedagogues' cooperation with the state in a way removed from Strauss's overly negative perception of it. Briefly, the two kingdoms theory is the doctrine that God created two kingdoms or realms in which humans live: the earthly, political realm and the heavenly, spiritual realm. The two kingdoms theory also helps

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[69] Ibid.

[70] John Witte, "The Civic Seminary: Sources of Modern Public Education in the Lutheran Reformation of Germany," *Journal of Law and Religion* 12, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 176.

[71] Ibid., 178.

[72] Ibid., 179.

explain some of the issues Strauss found with the Lutherans' paradoxical use of humanist methods in implementing their reformation of education.

Witte argues convincingly to suggest that "Luther and his followers grounded their educational reforms in the pivotal doctrine of the two kingdoms."[73] He does this by appealing directly to sources of Luther and Melanchthon. Luther, for example, "regarded education as essential to the maintenance of the heavenly kingdom….and to the constant preservation of the Gospel."[74] Likewise, Lutheran reformers thought of education as absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the earthly kingdom. Witte explains Luther's opinion on this in the following way, "A system of education…serves the three great estates of family, church, and state that form the pillars of the earthly kingdom."[75] Witte's interpretation of early Lutheran motivations in reforming the education system benefit tremendously from this incorporation of theology, leading one to question, though not discount some of Strauss's conclusions in *Luther's House of Learning*.

Where Strauss saw an unnerving use of the state in implementing educational reform, Witte saw "temporalization" ("*Verweltlichung*") which he defines as "the predominant use of civil officials and civic concerns to organize and operate the schools," something the two kingdoms theory required of the state magistrate as "father of the community."[76] Witte analyzes the legal side of these theological developments in examining laws concerning education in Brunswick in 1528 and Württemberg in 1559. The evidence he discovered, he agrees, falls short of the reformers' early hopes for the success of their new educational system, "it does not, however, suggest that the

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[73] Ibid., 185.

[74] Ibid., 186.

[75] Ibid., 188.

[76] Ibid., 218–219.

evangelical reformers' revolutionary new system of education was a failure."[77] Witte's article can thus be read as a refutation of some of Strauss's more controversial theses, and as a successful attempt to use both theology and practical social history in interpreting the reformers' motivations for a new educational system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are two young historians worth mentioning as their recent publications, though not dealing directly with any of Strauss's conclusions, make mention of him and reveal his influence. The first historian under study is Christopher Boyd Brown, who recently published a book on the Lutheran use of hymns in the Reformation. This book can be very much read as in conversation with Strauss. In his introduction, he deals directly with whether or not the Reformation succeeded in creating a Christian public, "If not always in exact proportion to the lofty ideals of the Lutheran clergy, the Reformation did succeed in creating a new kind of devout Christian among the masses, a success of which the Lutheran hymns were both the means and the measure."[78] Brown's book argues quite convincingly for the inclusion of popular devotional items such as hymns to be considered in any argument for or against the success of the Reformation.

Robert Christman, perhaps a more secular historian than Brown, recently published an article on "popular piety" in the Reformation.[79] Christman is far more careful in defining critical terms such as piety than Strauss had been, and he also makes significant use of Visitation Records in crafting his argument. He balances these,

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[77] Ibid., 217.

[78] Christopher Boyd Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Harvard University Press, 2005), 25.

[79] Robert Christman, "The Pulpit and the Pew: Shaping Popular Piety in the Late Reformation," in *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550-1675*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2008), 259–303.

however, with theological tracts, pastoral prescriptions, and church ordinances. Thus, his conclusions are more balanced than Strauss's as well: "Examples of a negotiated piety, a dynamic one that incorporated both clerical and folk ideas and practices, seems closer to the reality of the situation. …Lutheran churchmen, with the support of the state, insisted on more precise beliefs and better behavior."[80] Christman points out, however, that the churchmen did not think of regular people simply as submissive citizens, as Strauss once had.

Studies such as the ones just considered by Brown and Christman are the result of the evolution of the study of education in early modern Germany. Gerald Strauss's *Luther's House of Learning* certainly caused controversy, but both his work and the criticisms of it remain important to anyone wishing to study the reformers' use of education. Increasingly, the field seems to favor a historical perspective that incorporates both the tools of social history as well as a theological awareness in the study of the Reformation in Germany. There are still many questions waiting to be answered, however, such as who reformers thought should have authority in teaching children. Were these views based solely on practicality or did theology play a role? With a refreshing openness to nuance, researchers today are more appreciative of the complexity of this dynamic period of history.

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[80] Ibid., 303.

CHAPTER TWO: MECKLENBURG

Now that we have examined the historiography of education in Reformation Germany, it's time to shift our emphasis to a more focused study of one area and one time period. The territory under study here is that of the northeastern Duchy of Mecklenburg. Why Mecklenburg? The most obvious reason is that the number of scholarly studies done on Mecklenburg pales in comparison to that of central or southern Germany. Its relatively understudied status, however, is not the only thing that makes it worthy of study. Part of the frustration with Strauss's *Luther's House of Learning* was that its incredible number of sources, while impressive, seemed at times to try and force an argument across such a wide swath of Germany that it seems unbelievable. This is part of the reason that historians in general have in recent years overwhelmingly favored micro-studies, or arguments that focus on a limited area of study rather than large and wide-ranging arguments.

Mecklenburg: A Short History

Mecklenburg's geography is partly what makes it such an interesting place to study in the context of the Reformation. To the north was the Baltic Sea, to the east was Pomerania, to the south was Brandenburg, and to the west was an assortment of Holstein duchies and more importantly, the Hanseatic city-state of Lübeck. These borders remained for the most part stable from the late Middle Ages preceding the Reformation to the mid-20th century. Mecklenburg was certainly never described as large, measuring approximately 120 miles from east to west and only 50 miles from the north to the south. While the name Mecklenburg technically only refers to the most northwestern region of the territory, by the 16th century the entire territory was frequently called Mecklenburg to the disuse of other regional names. This shared name was encouraged by the topographic

and economic homogeneity of the territory. Much of Mecklenburg consists of a mostly flat plain with some small hills. Beside flat plains, Mecklenburg was also characterized by glacial lakes and forests of fir and beech. This topography contributed to an overwhelmingly agrarian economy. The main crops grown in the territory were barley, oats, and rye.[81]

While Mecklenburg's total area of about 6,000 miles squared may seem large, the estimated population of little more than 150,000 in 1500 reinforces the overwhelmingly rural nature of the territory. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to describe the Reformation in Mecklenburg as an urban event. There were few sizable towns and none of them possessed free imperial status. As Gary Michael Miller eloquently characterizes the Reformation of western and southern Germany as "the story of powerful cities, urban guilds, patrician elites, and town councils, then the Reformation in Mecklenburg must be seen as a tale of peasant villages, manor houses, tiny market towns, and paternalistic princes."[82] The rural nature of Mecklenburg is another factor which sets it off as worthy of study and a possible alternative understanding of the Reformation in Germany than that provided by Strauss.

At the basic, local administrative level, Mecklenburg used a system of *Ämter* (*Amt* in the singular) or districts to divide up the territory. The number of church parishes within each *Amt* could vary widely from 6 to 20. Miller explains the role of the chief *Amt* official, or *Amtmann*, who was "typically a local noble who exercised broad administrative, financial, judicial, and military powers, in addition to his responsibility for overseeing the ducal estates in the district."[83] Before the Reformation there were 28

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[81] Gary Michael Miller, "The Lutheran State Church of Mecklenburg, 1549-1621" (Dissertation, Yale University, 1999), 20–22.

[82] Ibid., 23.

[83] Ibid., 25.

Ämter in Mecklenburg. Following the Reformation and the forced secularization of religious houses in the 1550s the total number of *Ämter* increased to nearly 40.[84]

Due to its relative remoteness and relative lack of resources, in matters of foreign-policy Mecklenburg was quite peaceful preceding the Reformation. Internal affairs, however, were another affair entirely. From the late 12th century the ruling family of Mecklenburg, the Obotrites, had ruled all or parts of the territory. The Obotrites never failed to produce a male heir from the Middle Ages to their forced abdication in 1918. Indeed, their ability to produce male heirs began to create problems in the 1400s, as Mecklenburg was continually divided up—a region going to each son. In 1477 with the death of Duke Heinrich IV, rather than partitioning the duchy, his two sons, Magnus II and Balthasar, were declared co-rulers of Mecklenburg. This meant that theoretically they were to divide the income of the ducal lands between them, but work cooperatively as one sovereign power.[85]

The scheme of one state, two princes, worked for Magnus II and Balthasar because Balthasar for all practical purposes deferred to his brother. Before his death in 1503, Magnus instructed his sons, Heinrich V and Albrecht VII, to continue the practice of joint ruler ship. Heinrich, as the older brother, naturally assumed that he would play a role similar to that of his father while Albrecht would passively defer. Albrecht, however, not only refused to be subordinate to his brother, but he also pushed to permanently divide the duchy into two separate states. Heinrich, in cooperation with the territorial estates opposed any such partition plans of Albrecht. The brothers' uncle, Duke Bogislaw of Pomerania was called in to mediate an agreement between them.[86] The terms of this

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[84] Ibid., 26.

[85] Ibid., 27–28.

[86] Ibid.

mediated agreement would come to have a definitive effect upon the course of the Reformation in Mecklenburg. While the dukes still divided the income and ducal lands evenly, now each duke gained control of specific *Ämter*. Each duke also founded their own residences apart from one another, with Heinrich choosing Schwerin and Albrecht Güstrow. Not everything was divided, as the church, courts of law, estates, the territory's lone university at Rostock, and the governance of all large towns remained collective.[87]

These terms managed to keep the peace well enough until Heinrich (d. 1552) and Albrecht (d. 1547) were both dead and Albrecht's five sons (Heinrich had no male heirs) initiated another partition crisis. Albrecht's two oldest sons, Johann Albrecht I and Ulrich, in particular fought for power until they finally agreed in 1555 to renew the 1520 agreement their father and their uncle had made. Johann Albrecht as the eldest brother chose to live in court at Schwerin, while Ulrich followed their father's footsteps and established his court at Güstrow. Because of the brothers' divisiveness, historians sometimes mistakenly refer to this period of Mecklenburg history as "Mecklenburg-Schwerin" and "Mecklenburg-Güstrow" as if they were separate entities entirely. In addition to feuding dukes, Mecklenburg's political environment was dominated by the landed nobility, known as the junkers. The junkers of Mecklenburg had some powers, including the limited power to collect taxes and thus further complicated the political landscape of the duchy.[88]

The combination of the junkers and the dukes jockeying for power created in Mecklenburg, according to Miller, a "political and social system" that was "too complex and multi-faceted for the church to have served as the tool of the expanding state in the manner envisioned by the proponents of the confessionalization and social discipline

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[87] Ibid., 29.

[88] Ibid., 29-34.

models."[89] This political aspect of Mecklenburg's history already brings into question some of Strauss's blanket statements about the Reformation in Germany.

A Brief Review of the Reformation in Mecklenburg

Due to its relative remoteness and complicated political system, Mecklenburg for the most part was spared the drama of the 1520s experienced in the southern areas of Germany. Local church historians of Mecklenburg are in disagreement as to when the Reformation first began in Mecklenburg. Some hold that it was in 1521 when the first evangelical pastor began to preach in the territory. Others point to 1533 when one of the dukes first confessed Lutheran beliefs. By 1547, both dukes accepted Luther's teachings. Just two years later in 1549, the junkers agreed with them and by 1552 Mecklenburg issued its first church ordinance. Tracing the origins of the Reformation in Mecklenburg is not the goal of this thesis, suffice it to say that while several German territories experienced the sudden introduction of reform, the course of the Reformation in Mecklenburg was slow. Miller adequately states the main obstacles in the way of a "classic top-down 'prince's Reformation'" as a result of the complexity of having in practice two princes, an assertive junker class, and two relatively independent Hanseatic cities. If either of the princes would have at any time taken quick action either toward reform or against it, the result in Mecklenburg surely would have been political chaos.[90]

During the 1520s, Mecklenburg was open to evangelical preachers, as long as they did not do too much to upset the status quo or offend the city council of the town they were in. At almost the same time as a few Mecklenburg natives were returning home from their studies in Wittenberg and as evangelical preachers were enthusiastically preaching their message, humanism was beginning to take hold at the University of

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[89] Ibid., 35.

[90] Ibid., 38–39.

Rostock. Duke Albrecht initially supported reform, and even hired a man that Luther had recommended as his court chaplain. By 1530, however, Albrecht's main focus was international affairs, particularly his desire to gain favor with Emperor Charles V by helping Charles' now deposed brother-in-law Christian II of Denmark regain the throne. Heinrich, for his part, remained cautious. Later Lutheran historians of Mecklenburg find Heinrich's slow and passive route toward reform most frustrating. Heinrich, while still attending Catholic mass, continually opened up pulpits for evangelical preachers across the duchy (sometimes only to see them quickly removed by his brother). In 1533, however, Heinrich publically took communion in both kinds at Easter, thus announcing his formal acceptance of Luther's message.[91]

Shortly thereafter, the brothers were forced to work together again, as junkers and town councils across Mecklenburg were confiscating church properties in the name of reform. The dukes met in 1534 and agreed to quit their struggle for town pulpits. They reasoned that if a town had two parishes, then one church should be Protestant and one should remain Catholic. Lutherans and Catholics in towns with only one church would just have to share the same building. The most important result of this 1534 meeting was that Heinrich and Albrecht ordered a general visitation of the parishes in the duchy where they had patronage rights (about 40% of all the parishes in Mecklenburg). This visitation is unique in comparison to later visitations or from those in wholly Lutheran states, as the visitors were to be evenly divided with one Catholic clergy member, one Lutheran pastor or theologian, and a neutral secretary.[92]

In a rather fascinating display of hoping to keep a bi-confessional harmony in their duchy, the dukes instructed their visitors not to ask questions concerning doctrine,

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[91] Ibid., 46–50.

[92] Ibid., 52; Emil Sehling, "Mecklenburg," in *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen*, vol. 5, 5 vols., Des XVI Jahrhunderts (Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1913), 127–250.

ceremony, or religious practice. They should instead focus upon the financial situation of the parishes they visited. The dukes, as good patrons should, wanted a basic knowledge of parish income, property values, tithes, fiefs, and dues in the churches to which they claimed patronage rights. Of course, in focusing on only the churches of which they were patrons, they avoided stirring up trouble with any landed nobility or town councils that might claim the dukes were violating their jurisdictional privileges. The visitors still managed to visit over 130 parishes, and while sticking to financial issues they still asked some questions in order to determine the general position on reform taken in each parish. Only 21 of the pastors interviewed were determined to be of the evangelical slant. It should be of no surprise that 14 of these evangelical pastors were found in Heinrich's *Ämter*, six were preaching in jointly-held districts, and only one was living in Albrecht's *Ämter*.[93]

Eventually, Duke Heinrich began to fear the course the Reformation could take in Mecklenburg if it happened without the help of his guidance and supervision. He had no doubt heard of the horrific bloodshed in Münster in the summer of 1535. Heinrich looked with increasing suspicion upon not only the Anabaptists in his territory, but the Zwinglians too. The city of Wismar was particularly noted as being under the influence of Zwingli's teachings. The six Hanseatic cities of Mecklenburg decided to take action for themselves (except Wismar, of course), and in 1535 issued a document declaring that only preachers who adhered to the Augsburg Confession would be able to preach in their cities.[94]

It was perhaps the action of these Hanseatic cities that finally spurred Heinrich into taking action. Without the permission of Albrecht, who was at that moment besieged

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[93] Miller, "The Lutheran State Church of Mecklenburg, 1549-1621," 53. The 1534 "Kirchen Visitationsprotocollen" is unfortunately not available in Sehling's volume.

[94] Ibid., 54.

in Copenhagen, Heinrich ordered a second visitation. This visitation is remarkably different from the one a year previous. Both of the visitors this time were Lutheran, and Heinrich specifically ordered them to visit only those places in which the Reformation had already found fertile ground. As Miller describes, "this new visitation was not intended to spread the Reformation to new places, but to regulate and control it where it already existed."[95] Indeed, the very first article of the visitation protocol explained that it was made necessary because many people were being seduced by Zwinglian and Anabaptist heresies. This was causing the proliferation of many "un-Christian" and unfounded ceremonies.[96]

The two visitors, Egidius Faber of Schwerin and Nikolaus Kutze of Neubrandenburg, visited only 38 parishes and only those that were in Heinrich's lands. They did not find much evidence of Anabaptism or Zwinglianism, but urged the duke to introduce a sweeping reform throughout the land. They recommended a public disputation between the territory's best evangelical preachers and some Catholics to reveal finally the truth of the evangelical message for everyone. Due to their limited authority and frustrations with their slow to reform duke, Faber and Kutze described their recently completed activity as "barely the shadow of a true visitation."[97]

Faber and Kutze would have to wait until 1540 to see any real action by Duke Heinrich. For it was in 1540 that the man Heinrich had hired as the first church superintendent of Mecklenburg in 1537, Johannes Riebling, finally moved from Brunswick to devote himself to the duchy. Later in 1540 Heinrich took another bold step toward reform, and issued the first official church ordinance for the duchy. It is likely that

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[95] Ibid., 55.

[96] Sehling, "Mecklenburg," 137.

[97] Miller, "The Lutheran State Church of Mecklenburg, 1549-1621," 56.

the success of the Reformation in Brandenburg just the year before was a major catalyst for this action. Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg issued an ordinance for his territory in 1540, too, and Heinrich no doubt felt safer issuing his own after the last powerful Catholic holdout in northern Germany gave in to the Reformation. The 1540 church order for Mecklenburg, however, was really just a Low German translation of the Nürnberg ordinance of 1533. This order had been in circulation in the duchy since 1535. The difference was that now it had the official legal sanction of the duke. Superintendent Riebling also published the duchy's first catechism for children (this too was simply a Low German translation rather than an original work). Riebling's third important contribution was a Low German guide for the liturgy, the *Ordeninge der Misse*.[98]

Duke Heinrich then ordered a general visitation of the duchy to put the church order of 1540 into practice. The visitors for the first time now consisted of both church and secular officials, including Superintendent Riebling, an official from Heinrich's court, a respected pastor from Schwerin, and a ducal secretary. Neither the visitation nor the ordinance of 1540, however, had been officially approved by Albrecht. To make matters even more tenuous, Heinrich had not only acted without his brother's permission, but without the assent of the territorial estates as well. Due to these restrictions, the visitors had no power to remove Catholic priests from their positions, though they did have the permission to remove Zwinglian and Anabaptist preachers. While the earlier visitations had firmly focused on the financials of parishes, for the first time an emphasis was placed on the pastors. Their training, morals, and theological views were all up for questioning. It was also noted that the school master should lead a virtuous life so that he could set a good example for the boys he taught.[99] These sorts of questions were not yet

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[98] Ibid., 57–58.

[99] Sehling, "Mecklenburg," 149. The Low German reads: "…und der schulmeister soll ein zuchtiges leben furen, darmit er den knaben ein gut exempel gebe."

asked of the general populace, which would have been difficult considering the visitors relied on pastors traveling to the main town within the *Amt* they were located in and interviewing them there. The very first instruction the visitors gave to the pastors was that they should teach the common folk from the catechism each Sunday.[100] The questions for the doctrinal examination interestingly remain in Latin despite the evangelical emphasis on understanding the gospel message in the vernacular.

It would take until 1547 for any further changes to take place in Mecklenburg related to the Reformation. It was in that year that Duke Albrecht VII died and was succeeded by his eldest (and Lutheran) son, Johann Albrecht I. Duke Johann Albrecht would later emerge as the true architect of Mecklenburg's Lutheran church, as he acted with more freedom in support of reform than his uncle Heinrich ever did. Johann Albrecht quickly appointed a Lutheran as his chancellor and in 1548 added another superintendent to help the overworked Riebling. That same year, Charles V defeated the Elector of Saxony at the battle of Mühlberg and determined the outcome of the Schmalkaldic War. In 1548, Charles V called upon all Protestants in the Empire to accept the Augsburg Interim, which contained only minor guarantees for Protestants, including the right of clerical marriage and communion in both kinds. Heinrich had never joined the Schmalkaldic League and was loathe to ever create tension with the Emperor. Johann Albrecht had even been on the field at Mühlberg fighting alongside the Emperor's forces. When Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg chose to implement the Interim, it seemed highly unlikely that Johann Albrecht would not do the same. The territorial estates of Mecklenburg, however, stood ready to protect their newly Lutheran duchy.

The dukes and the estates chose to only passively resist the Emperor's command at first. They first simply stalled; telling Charles V there was no way they could meet to

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[100] Ibid., 149–150. The Low German reads: "Erstlich soll der predicant den catechismum mit allem vleisse dem volke predigen und lehren alle sonntage…"

discuss implementing the Interim because the plague was wreaking havoc in the duchy. This delay allowed them enough time to receive the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg's rejection of the Interim and their confessional statement which accompanied it in late 1548. In June of 1549 the dukes met with the estates in Sternberg and officially rejected the Interim. Their doctrinal statement was based on that of Brunswick-Lüneburg's. According to Miller, this Sternberg *Landtag* of 1549 firmly "marks the birth of the state church in Mecklenburg, the moment when the princes and the people…officially embraced Lutheranism and made it part of their collective identity…."[101] Johann Albrecht abandoned the Emperor and joined the north German alliance of Protestant princes after a meeting at Torgau in late 1551. In 1552, he joined forces with these Protestant princes in the "Revolt of the Princes" and successfully forced Charles V south over the Alps. Just as Johann Albrecht was preparing for war, Duke Heinrich died. Johann Albrecht was then able to rule the duchy alone until his brother Ulrich forced him into a cooperative rule again in 1555.[102]

In this three year period of uninterrupted rule, however, Johann Albrecht would work hard to further the Reformation in Mecklenburg. Johann Albrecht waited only a few weeks after the death of his uncle before he ordered the first religious house in the duchy to be dissolved. By the end of the year, almost all of the religious houses in the duchy had been in some way dissolved. This successfully transferred the income of 55 parishes to the duke, giving him control of roughly 55% of all church property in the duchy. Johann Albrecht's next step was to create a church order for Mecklenburg in 1552.[103]

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[101] Miller, "The Lutheran State Church of Mecklenburg, 1549-1621," 69.

[102] Ibid., 63–70.

[103] Ibid., 63–72.

Church Orders and the Confessionalization Thesis

The first chapter of this thesis argued that the history of education in Reformation Germany is divided between confessional and secular historians. The history of church orders is just as divided. Here the theory of confessionalization offers us a window into the motivations for the creation and execution of these church orders. The later Reformation period in Germany is defined as after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. As Jeffery Jaynes and others have often noted in studies concerning this late Reformation period, the princes and rulers of Germany yearned first and foremost for political stability in their kingdoms. This need for political stability could not, in the eyes of the princes, be met without the parallel "consensus in confessional matters."[104] Furthermore, "[f]rom the perspective of civil authority, the church orders were a means to this desirable end."[105] In other words, if providing their churches with strong and enforceable constitutions could lead to political stability in their lands, the princes and magistrates of Germany were more than willing to take part by commissioning the production and dissemination of standardized church orders.

Most historians agree on this point, that the church orders were often welcomed by civil and territorial leaders as an avenue to stability. Where opinions differ, however, is concerning the intent of these orders. From the perspective of confessional historians such as Jaynes, what is just as important as these documents' aim at political centralization is "their true intent…to assist the church in its ongoing effort to ensure sound teaching and inform Christian practice, both individually and corporately."[106]

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[104] Jeffrey Philip Jaynes, "Ordo et libertas: Church discipline and the makers of church order in sixteenth century North Germany" (Ph.D., The Ohio State University, 1993), 157, http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu/pqdtft/docview/304065133/abstract/13ACDBA689A6957E920/1?accountid=14663. It should not come as a surprise, but Jaynes' *Doktorvater* was James Kittelson while he was still at Ohio State.

[105] Ibid., 158.

[106] Ibid.

These historians further elaborate that it is important to realize that these church orders were not simply the product of the princes' press for political stability, rather, they "resulted from the pastors and theologians who composed them."[107] The expanded argument is then that the pastors and theologians had their parishioners in mind, though this is quite difficult to measure. Alternatively, Strauss and other social historians argue that these documents served solely to advance the power of the ruling oligarchy.

The essential facts concerning the church orders remain the same whether considered under confessional history or not: they represented an established religion that placed an innate value on social, religious, and political order. Some historians, however, such as Strauss, seem to be repulsed by the reformers' talk of order, and interpret "the whole enterprise" as if it were "trapped in antiquated notions of hierarchy."[108] Often, this difference in interpretation of historical events is most easily recognized in a different tone taken to these same notions of order. Strauss's tone in the following excerpt clearly disagrees with Jaynes's: "Reformers detested this chaotic condition [following the wars] because they saw it as a gross violation of fundamental postulates in which they were true believers: that truth is single, that order is paramount, and that both truth and order issue from authentic and binding declarations."[109] Strauss elaborates on the authorship of these orders as "a small number of close-knit coteries who jointly took over the direction of church and state in Protestant regions…."[110] Furthermore, Strauss argues:

> It is *their* views, the views of these men—theologians, lawyers, academics, professional administrators…closely tied, both organizationally and personally, to

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 12.

[109] Gerald Strauss, *Enacting the Reformation in Germany: Essays on Institution and Reception*, First ed. (Variorum, 1993), 5.

[110] Ibid., 5–6.

> ruling princes and magistrates—that are reflected in the foundation documents of the new state churches in Germany: in the church ordinances…through which institutional articulation and doctrinal formality were given to the Lutheran polity.[111]

It is difficult to objectively reconcile the assertions made by confessional historians that the true motivations for printing these later reformation church orders was for pastoral care with the allegations put forth by Strauss that the authors were motivated by tyranny.

The Mecklenburg Church Order of 1552

Studies on 16th century German church orders generally describe them as containing three main categories: first, the *Agenda*, or items of church order that concern the order of worship, liturgy, and ceremonies; secondly, the *Credenda*, which generally lay out "true" doctrine and provide a confession of faith; and finally, the *Administranda*, which literally outlines the organization of the church, educational reforms, and the regulation of the community chest. The composition of Lutheran church orders issued in different German territories varied significantly, and could include all of these parts or only one, which led to a great variety of orders between territories. Perhaps this should not come as a surprise, however, to scholars familiar with the history of Germany and its similarly diverse regional divisions. After all, German territories were traditionally organized by civic constitutions (*Stadtverfassung*), synodal statutes (*Statuta synodalia*) initiated by bishops, and territorial legislation (*Landesordnungen*, *Polizeiordnungen*) regulated by feudal princes.[112]

Though there have been a few studies that make use of German church orders, most focus mainly on the southern half of Germany. Perhaps this stems from an interest in the more direct conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the reforming imperial states in southern Germany; however, the orders from northern Germany remain largely

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[111] Ibid., italics original.

[112] Jaynes, "Ordo et libertas," 31–32.

neglected. After the War of the Schmalkaldic League from 1546 to 1547, which was mainly localized in the southern German territories, the first church order produced for northern Germany was in 1552 for the duchy of Mecklenburg.

Duke Johann Albrecht called upon his rising professor of theology at Rostock University, Johann Aurifaber of Breslau to compose an order for the churches of Mecklenburg. Aurifaber had not only recently been ordained by the well-respected Lutheran theologian and prominent church order writer Johannes Bugenhagen, but he had also studied under Philip Melanchthon in Wittenberg. After completing the church order in 1552, Aurifaber, it is important to note, sent his work to Melanchthon for comments and criticism. Many early reformation leaders including Aurifaber and Duke Johann Albrecht no doubt saw the greatest living Lutheran authority as Melanchthon. It perhaps even needed Melanchthon's stamp of approval in order for the document to gain any respect throughout the countryside.[113]

Indeed, some have even argued that in principal "the church order for Mecklenburg was really the work of Melanchthon; Aurifaber essentially applied Melanchthon's insights to Mecklenburg."[114] Upon closer inspection, one can see that the Mecklenburg church order follows almost exactly the outline of Melanchthon's *Wittenbergishe Reformatio* (1545), his church order for Wittenberg. Where they differ, however, is where Melanchthon highlighted theological tenets most clearly, Aurifaber focused on the basic details of church order. Further evidence of Melanchthon's influence over this document comes from the fact that "the extensive first section of the Mecklenburg order circulated subsequently as Melanchthon's tract *Examen ordinanden*:

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[113] Ibid., 159.

[114] Ibid., 160.

a doctrinal piece designed to screen candidates for pastoral and other teaching offices in the territory."[115]

Aurifaber is interestingly only one of two Lutheran reformers born during the 1510s to contribute to the church order writing process.[116] This lends more understanding to the earlier notation that Aurifaber leaned so heavily upon Melanchthon in composing his church order. Most of the northern German reformers who wrote church orders before the Schmalkaldic War did not return to writing any after the war. The three (out of 25) who did all lived in Hesse. The Mecklenburg church order of 1552 and its third edition in 1554 are therefore unique in respect to the multitude of German Lutheran church orders stemming from this period.

The Mecklenburg School Order of 1552

The first school order for Mecklenburg was actually just a section, and a rather short section at that, of the Mecklenburg church order. According to the document, it was made out of a concern for consistency across Mecklenburg that the children who go to schools all receive education in the same form.[117] From this initial premise, and it is important to note the emphasis on form of education as what should remain consistent, the authors of the order consider the best form of education for the youngest to benefit from their new pedagogical system, elementary age boys. These boys will focus on beginning to learn and know the letters of the alphabet. After they have mastered the alphabet, they can begin to read and write. The only books or readings these children

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid., 311.

[117] Sehling, "Mecklenburg," 214.

need to look at are the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the catechism. The order's concluding statement for these children is that they should practice singing together, though it does not have any recommended works for singing. [118]

For the middle age group, those defined as being able to read, but just beginning to formally study grammar, the first instruction for them is that they should also sing together, though they should do this daily in the first hour after noon. This group shall be called the secondary class and the instructions for what they are to study are naturally more detailed than those for the elementary students. Indeed, here the order covers daily topics of study, for example Monday and Tuesday they should read Aesop's Fables as translated by the German humanist Jaochim Camerarius. The main thrust of the curriculum for this age group, however, seems aimed at mastering Latin grammar. Not to be forgotten, of course, was the catechism. Now, however, students could consider the questions and answers of the catechism in Latin. Last to be mentioned are girls and their educational needs. Here, the directive was to "habituate girls to the catechism, to the psalms, to honorable behavior…and especially to prayer." The main goal to be achieved from memorizing verses from scripture was "that they may grow up to be Christian and praiseworthy matrons and housekeepers."[119]The writers of German *Schulordnungen* clearly had lower expectations for girls than boys in terms of education, though it is important to note that they were not excluded completely from the educational system.

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[118] Ibid., 215.

[119] Quoted from Gerald Strauss, "The Social Function of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany," *History of Education Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (July 1, 1988): 197.

The rest of the *Schulordnung* continues in much the same manner as already described, mainly considering what kinds of books (only approved classical works and certain books of the Bible) should be used in the classroom. While Strauss contended that Lutherans loved, out of "their anxious concern for regulating everything and leaving nothing to whim and chance" strove for over-regulation in the *Schulordnungen*, "giving confirmation of the sixteenth-century governing mind's predisposition to arrange things in a definitive order, to stipulate, regulate, and control," the Mecklenburg school order does not seem to fit this model.[120] It seems safe to assume that the writers of the church order wanted to leave it to the local level to 'stipulate, regulate, and control' education in their area. This is in stark contrast to Strauss's overarching assertion that the rulers of Early Modern Germany designed school orders motivated only by tyranny.

Another surprising aspect absent in the school order is any description of the school master or teacher of all these children. Not only who he was in particular, but where he came from and what made him qualified to teach. Often times, school teachers were also the sexton for the local church. This person was expected to help in the performance of certain tasks during the church service, for example in helping the pastor during the Lord's Supper. The sexton was also expected to clean and polish the regalia on the altar and ring the church bell to call people to worship. They were expected, too, to provide maintenance for the church bell and clock and ensure that it kept time correctly.

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[120] Ibid., 195.

They were, in a sense, both servants of the school and the church in which they served.[121]

[121] Marie M. Baxter, "Schooling in context: Teachers, education and the state in Wertheim Am Main, 1550--1750" (Ph.D., The University of Chicago, 2008), 20–21, http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu/pqdtft/docview/230694483/abstract/13CBC2A9E1E197ECC16/1?accountid=14663.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION

At the 2004 annual meeting of the Sixteenth Century Society Conference, Edward Muir organized a roundtable discussion of post-confessional Reformation history which Susan C. Karant Nunn chaired. The panel's focus was on the theme of "Post-Confessional Reformation History," and the resulting audience was an overflow crowd with standing room only. Leaders in the field of Reformation history, such as Philip Benedict and Lyndal Roper offered their opinions on many of the same historiographical topics as covered in Chapter 1 of this thesis. In 2006, the *Archive for Reformation History* published revised versions of the essays presented in 2004. These scholars all noted both the success and continued need for an open dialogue between confessional and non-confessional historians. Lyndal Roper quite eloquently noted that "The search for a 'post-confessional' history is misguided if it means we relinquish committed history in the deluded search for an 'objective' history."[122] Though as Roper noted, an objective history is impossible, the kind of history that best fits the post-confessional lens these historians were calling for is one that demands a variety of sources.

A post-confessional approach to the history of education in Reformation Mecklenburg, for example, would utilize documents from the magisterial part of the Reformation there. This would include an examination of the unique situation created by dueling dukes and the landed nobility in a constant battle for power. The economic and

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[122] Lyndal Roper, "Allegiance and Reformation History," ed. Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Archive for Reformation History* 97 (2006): 296.

political environment created by these factors no doubt effected the Reformation in Mecklenburg, and these factors likely contributed to the design of Reformation schools. A post-confessional history would consider in more detail the dukes' main concern of finance in regard to the Visitations, and whether or not this was a constant concern throughout the Reformation in Mecklenburg. How did financial concerns, for example, influence the early educational system adopted by Reformation leaders?

This post-confessional history of education in Reformation Mecklenburg would also consider the thoughts and writings of some of the main leaders of the Reformation there. When the most prominent professor of theology at the University of Rostock, David Chytraeus, wrote the following recommendation in 1578, "Pastors in their churches, schoolmasters in their schools, and heads of households at home among their children and servants must practice the catechism with the utmost industry," it seems one should investigate exactly what catechism Chytraeus was advocating.[123] Strauss described the preceding excerpt as a "glimpse of how the process of total catechization was intended to work in ideal circumstances."[124] He makes no mention, however, of whether these were the catechisms translated into Low German by Superintendent Riebling, or whether another catechism had spread throughout Mecklenburg by 1578. Neither does he consider other possible motives behind the "total catechization" of the countryside other than the desire to limit freedom of thought and bring up obedient citizens.

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[123] Quoted in Strauss, "The Social Function of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany," 204.

[124] Ibid.

Strauss makes great use, however, of the Visitations. While the Visitations are still very much a part of the magisterial Reformation, they offer an otherwise unavailable view into the actual situation of Mecklenburg's Lutheran churches, rather than only top-down prescriptive documents such as the church orders. Many confessional historians shied away from the Visitations as they so often seemed negative and perhaps a bit lacking in theology. In order to study the Visitation Reports, and not just the Visitation Instructions, one must travel to local archives. Historians of the German Reformation will forever be indebted to Strauss for showing how rich much of Germany is in terms of primary source documents.

It is only through the use of official church and magisterial documents, theological writings, and social historical documents such as the Visitation Reports that one can avoid the dangers both confessional and social historians sometimes make. Benedict rightly described the common failing of confessional historians to "overlook the many very clear ways in which extra-theological influences shaped the formation and reception of religious messages."[125] He described, on the other side of the spectrum, the tendency of social and cultural historians to become so intrigued with the "implications of religious movements for…long-term social and political transformations that they…caricature or fail to understand the conscious motives and beliefs of those who made and responded to these movements."[126] Both of these failings can be seen in earlier interpretations of the history of the Reformation in Mecklenburg. Lutheran

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[125] Philip Benedict, "What Is Post-Confessional Reformation History?," ed. Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Archive for Reformation History* 97 (2006): 282.

[126] Ibid.

historians have tended to interpret the Reformation in Mecklenburg as going quite smoothly due to God's providence. Social historians, however, such as Strauss, can at times demonstrate a different bias in selection of sources which show the Lutheran pedagogues as striving primarily for social control of the populace.

An illustration of this point can be made in further examining David Chytraeus's admonition for pastors, teachers, and fathers to rely on the catechism mentioned earlier. Chytraeus recommended not only for pastors to preach from the catechism each Sunday, but also that the "catechism be taught in the schools, day after day, with the same words, in Latin or German, the school master saying it to the pupils, the pupils reciting it back to him…."[127] Strauss interprets this reliance on repetition of the catechism as "the best hope for prevention of future trouble" such as that caused by the Anabaptists.[128] Furthermore, Lutheran pedagogues hoped their students would internalize the "structuring ideas of authority, hierarchy, and order, the prerequisites of a stable society."[129] Strauss ignores the possibility that Chytraeus believed that the salvation of the people of Mecklenburg was at stake, and that the catechism offered an authoritative entry to the Lutheran gospel message.[130]

There is no doubt that the Reformation caused significant changes in the religious, political, and economic landscape of Mecklenburg. These changes, according to Gary

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[127]Quoted in Strauss, "The Social Function of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany," 204.

[128] Ibid., 202.

[129] Ibid., 206.

[130] Thomas Korcok, *Lutheran Education: From Wittenberg to the Future* (Concordia Publishing House, 2011). See in particular Chapter 2, "The Evangelicals' Pedagogical Reforms."

Michael Miller, "came not through ducal fiat, but through a subtle, almost invisible, process of dialogue and hidden negotiation among the various groups that made up early modern Mecklenburg society."[131] Miller suggests his own version of post-confessional history, albeit without explicitly stating it as so, in discarding the simplistic model of the magisterial Reformation and instead urging the investigation of the "'territorial church,' a more complex and confusing paradigm where princes, clergymen, nobles, burghers, and peasants alike took a hand in defining the nature of the church and its institutions."[132] The history of education within Reformation Germany, and within Mecklenburg in particular, no doubt requires this same sort of investigation that recognizes the complexity of not only the historical situation, but of the historiographical viewpoint of the historian as well.

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[131] Miller, "The Lutheran State Church of Mecklenburg, 1549-1621," 401.

[132] Ibid., 402.

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