

Public Communication in European Reformation

Artistic and other Media in Central Europe
1380–1620

Editors:
Milena Bartlová and Michal Šroněk

ARTEFACTUM
INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY

Prague 2007

The book was published with financial support from the Czech Science Foundation.

Published by Artefactum,
Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v.v.i.

© Authors, 2007

© Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v.v.i., 2007

Individual authors are responsible for obtaining permissions to publish their illustrations.

ISBN 80-86890-15-5

Dedicated to the memory of Anne Walsh

Viewing and Singing the Word of God in Lutheran Germany

HELGA ROBINSON-HAMMERSTEIN

In April 1521 at the Diet of Worms Dr. Martin Luther stood for *sola gratia – sola fide – sola scriptura* as the exclusive means of salvation. The papal bull excommunicating and the Edict of Worms subsequently proscribing the ‘obstinate schismatic and manifest heretic’ might have put an end to Luther’s public activities, perhaps even to his life. He insisted that he had preached the ‘saving Word of God’ (*logos*) and – as an ‘extension of the voice’ – he had written pamphlets that were speedily printed by entrepreneurs with an eye for lucrative sales. These pamphlets were in their majority expositions of biblical texts related to the burning issues that worried ‘good Christians’ in the early sixteenth century. Luther was convinced that ‘the Word’ as the ‘echo of God’s speaking’ was sufficient to reveal to those who had ears to hear the relationship between God and Man as determined by *sola gratia – sola fide – sola scriptura*.¹

Luther never abandoned this conception of the essentially verbal communication of the ‘logos’ even when he encouraged like-minded friends to promote the Word by cognate media. Not only were these friends – like Luther – ‘captive to the Word’, they also possessed the necessary skills to produce ‘speaking pictures’ and write texts and tunes in the service of the pure Word.

What had persuaded Luther that other media of communication of the Word had a vital contribution to make?

The papal excommunication and the imperial prosecution followed by the enforced stay at the Wartburg (May 1521–March 1522) may have led to a deeper appreciation of a campaign to spread the pure Word, in which a great number of preachers participated. More importantly, however, the various responses to Luther’s absence from Wittenberg are likely to have speeded up the development of something like a ‘media strategy’.²

Wittenberg parishioners and students had been excited by professor Andreas Karlstadt’s interventions to implement what was generally appreciated as Luther’s preaching and writing. Karlstadt had denounced the use of images in churches and had fashioned a German mass with common chalice. Almost simultaneously Lucas Cranach, Wittenberg court painter, and Philip Melancthon, professor of Greek at the university, both very close humanist friends of Luther, had worked out their own contributions to the spreading of the Word: (a) antipapal polemic in word and image – the Antichrist in the person of the pope as the antithesis of Christ – and (b) the calculated design of a ‘Luther image’.³ This chimed well with several anticlerical songs that enjoyed great favour with the populace.

When Luther returned to Wittenberg he condemned Karlstadt’s efforts outright as a ‘trivialisation of the Word’. In Cranach’s and Melancthon’s endeavours he recognised the

beginnings of a potentially effective communication strategy. He even participated in polemical propaganda.⁴ As to the cultivation of his own image – a personality cult – it is impossible to know whether he ever acknowledged it. During his stay at the Wartburg he had concentrated on preparing the most important tool for the dissemination of the pure Word by translating the New Testament into the vernacular. He had developed a new language which turned easily comprehensible words into powerful carriers of ‘the message’. Luther welcomed Lucas Cranach’s contribution of illustrations to the production of the New Testament for church and household. The focus was not as yet on the provision of images to assist congregational worship.

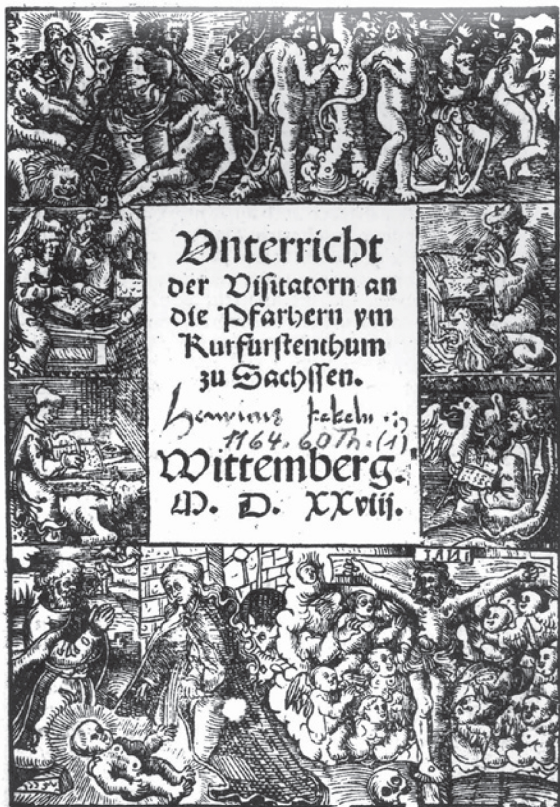
Cranach’s transition from medieval to reformation image-maker seems to have been part of a natural evolution as an artist responding to his cultural environment as well as helping to shape it. After 1523 his representations of the Marian legend, for which he was renowned throughout Germany, simply disappeared from his oeuvre. As far as conventional images were concerned Cranach proved in many instances that his medieval art was indeed capable of transformation to serve the dissemination of the Word. He – like Albrecht Dürer – favoured the peaceful removal of medieval ‘clutter’ that hindered the ‘proper’ viewing of images. In the course of a few years, however, Cranach realised that it was not enough to insist on the removal of misleading images, rather he recognised the urgent need to direct people’s attention away from a false religion that relied on the intercession by the ‘fabricated saints of the later Middle Ages and the co-operative grace of good works’.⁵ By contrast with Cranach’s naturally evolving artistic insights, Luther seems to have been quite unexpectedly forced to confront an ‘evangelical image question’ for the first time

by Andreas Karlstadt’s radical ‘condemnation of images as deceivers’ that had power over the viewer and persuaded him to idolatry.⁶ Luther’s common sense told him that images had no power over man. He argued that there was no need to reject traditional representations, they could not interfere with the faith, provided the heart was not attached to them. He diagnosed the problem as one originating in man’s ‘attitude’ or ‘disposition’.⁷ In fact, he recognised images as a human reality and declared that he could not think of Christ, the Word of God incarnate, without visualising him on the cross. In Luther’s view certain representations of the Virgin could enhance the efficacy of ‘the Word become flesh’. Mary was after all authenticated in the Bible as the woman who enabled the Logos to assume human form. Cranach duly assisted in transmuting ‘the intercessor’ into the Virgin of the *Magnificat* and other apostolic texts, in effect an *exempla* of the faithful Christian woman. All this helped to ensure that there was hardly any Lutheran iconoclasm.⁸

The collaborative friendship between Martin Luther and Cranach changed the artist’s style and eventually led to the elaboration of new themes that ‘reformed’ the existing visual world of Christians and found an appropriate way of communicating – among others – the essential Lutheran message of ‘law and gospel’. In his *Postilla* of 1521 Luther had described the distinction between ‘law and gospel’ as ‘*summa totius Christianae doctrinae*’.⁹ For the purposes of the present paper I wish to concentrate on this issue without denying Cranach’s prolific mastery in other religious and especially secular paintings.

By the late 1520s Luther and Cranach agreed that while images had no part to play in the experience of receiving the free gift of grace, ‘suitable images’ could assist the communication of the message of salvation. In 1529, Luther

expressly acknowledged the need to assist Christians in the 'right viewing' of images by creating new ones expressive of the message of salvation. He likened the value of images to the purpose of parables and even referred to properly illustrated Scriptures as a form of 'leyen Bibel'. He spoke of the need to represent [*furhalten*] the words and works of God constantly and consistently to encourage faith and understanding.¹⁰ His Large and Small Catechisms were also published in that year to help readers to review and internalise the teaching. In 1529 Master Lucas first designed images for single woodcuts, panels and book illustrations which served precisely this purpose. His workshop, in which his son Lucas Cranach the Younger gained prominence in the 1530s, actively participated.¹¹



1. Title Page of 'Unterricht der Visitatorn'

It is important to stress here that Cranach's creation of new images and Luther's better understanding of their value was conditioned by developments within Lutheranism, notably the deplorable findings of the official visitations in the Saxon Lands. There can be little doubt that the fashioning of new images – especially those envisioning 'law and gospel' – marked the transition from concerns with the individuality of Christian decisions to supporting the proclamation of the Word to congregations as the fundamental constituents of a Lutheran 'state church'. In the late 1520s the first visitations of Saxon congregations had found nothing but crass ignorance of the Word of God and its application to the daily life of the communities. It was this state of affairs that suggested to Luther, Melancthon and Cranach the urgent necessity of the 'pictorial re-enforcement' of the preached Word for the benefit of Christians assembled as congregations. The appropriate instructions to visitors having been drafted by Philip Melancthon on the basis of his *loci communes* (1521) that summarised the main points of the Christian faith, were revised by Luther.¹² 1529 has therefore been called the year of the image of the Reformation. How closely the design of the visual message of 'law and gospel' was connected with the visitations is evident in the title page of the *Instructions for Visitors*. A copy printed in 1528 makes an attempt to assemble some the necessary component parts for an image of the contrast between 'law and grace' – rather than 'law and gospel' – in an as yet uncoordinated manner.¹³ [1] A considerable 'sorting process' is evident in Lucas Cranach's panels of 1529/30.

Possibly the earliest of these representations of 'law and gospel' is the so-called Prague type.¹⁴ [2] On the evidence of restoration work, any dating before 1529 has recently been firmly ruled out.¹⁵ This panel juxtaposes 'law and gospel', divided by the tree of life, withered on the left side, flourishing on the right. The naked

Christian, however, is positioned in the centre at the foot of this dividing tree. His hands folded in prayer point to the left, but his face is already turned to the right. The surrounding figures of a prophet on the left, leaning towards the right, and John the Baptist, standing under the cross on the right, direct the Christian to Christ on the cross. Their gestured advice coordinates this central scene and suggests an analogy with Hercules at the crossroads. To the left of the 'speaking' centre the visual references work their way from the top down. In the highest place on a steep hill (signifying Mount Sinai) Moses receives the tablets of the Law from the hand of God. Half way down Adam accepts the forbidden fruit from the hand of Eve. This middle ground on the left also accommodates the tents of the Children of Israel and some figures looking up at the brazen serpent.¹⁶ At the lowest level a large open coffin reveals the dead body 'of man'. On the right hand side the Virgin Mary is positioned on an elevation – cor-

responding to Moses and the tablets of the Law – to receive the divine message that her womb will carry the Saviour of mankind. Her future as the suffering mother is graphically interpreted by placing her behind the crucified Christ. Below this representation of the new Eve and the Redeemer of mankind the risen Christ emerges from his tomb in the cave. His feet crush the dragon of spiritual death. The message assembles pictorial references to passages from the Old and the New Testament that are in some versions recorded on a board on which the artist's visualisation rests. These passages clearly guide the viewer through the image. They are not present in the Prague panel, but may have been there, since the panel was originally wider and has evidently been cut at the lower end.¹⁷

The Gotha type – a sketch, a panel (1529) and a woodcut by Lucas Cranach (1529/30) – is known to have exercised the seminal influence on Cranach's workshop and also other artists of Lutheran Germany.¹⁸ [3-5] I shall concentrate



3. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Law and the Gospel*. Sketch of Gotha Type. Dresdner Kupferstichkabinett



5. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Law and the Gospel*, Gotha Type, London, British Library, Department of Prints and Drawings

my descriptive analysis on the woodcut of this Gotha-type with occasional references to the panel and the sketch. The antithetical device of juxtaposing 'law and gospel' and representing 'the Christian' in two matching naked figures on either side of the damaged (left side) and blooming (right side) of the tree of life seeks to instruct by means of carefully arranged illustrations of the narrative of the Fall and Redemption of man. The figures at the upper end are smaller than those at the lower level, thus creating a backdrop and a more pronounced foreground. The complete message works from the top down. Christ appearing on the Day of Judgment with the Virgin Mary and St. John interceding for the poor sinner presides over the left hand side. The story of sin coming into

the world is told in the figure of Eve handing Adam the apple, the fruit of the forbidden tree. This message is reinforced in the foreground by Moses and prophets pointing insistently to the tablets of the law.¹⁹ They all have their backs against the tree and ignore everything that happens on the right hand side. Such a concentration on Moses and *the* prophets – not the single prophet pointing to the right – constitutes an adjustment in the interpretation of Old Testament texts. The main, very vivid scene on the left shows the scared Christian being shafted by two devils into the flames of hell.

God's plan to save mankind is represented on the right hand side by the annunciation to the Virgin – a ray of light from the clouds with an angel carrying the cross – of the birth of Christ.



4. Gotha Panel

She stands behind the cross in the foreknowledge of suffering. (This scene is not present in the Gotha panel.) Nearby shepherds in a field receive the good news. The most eye-catching scene occupies the lower part of the right hand side. John the Baptist pointing to the crucified Christ, whose blood (as announced in the Last Supper) is shed for the Christian whose chest is exposed to a gushing stream that issues from the wounded body on the cross. The crucial role of the Holy Spirit is indicated by the dove guiding the blood from the dying Christ to the sinner. The flow of Christ's blood is the alternative parallel to the pole with which the devils spike the sinner into hell on the left hand side. This type of pictorial representation of the act of redemption is generally recognised as the invention of Lucas Cranach.²⁰ The salvific message is rounded off by a prominent display of Christ risen from his cave tomb. (This cave is significantly overarched off by the hill of the cross). The shaft of his banner of victory has stabbed death and hell into submission, another parallel to the condemnation scene on the left. On the Gotha panel, by contrast with the woodcut, the lamb of God at the foot of the cross (which is only slightly elevated) overwhelms the devils of hell with the gonfalon. The most active figure on the panel is the risen Christ who ascends into Heaven from the hill that is level with the top of the cross.

It is evident that there are changing configurations of signifiers within the right and the left hand sides. There is only one standard element that does not change its form but can be found on either side of the tree of life: the brazen serpent scene. Since several representations of 'law and gospel' are supported by excerpts from biblical passages, it seems sensible to seek elucidation of the placing of the scene from these excerpts. To this end I am taking a closer look at the contemporary copy of the Prague-type [6] and the Gotha panel [4]. The scene is

accommodated on the left hand side in both, while the sketch [3] and the woodcut [5] show it on the right. Exploring the texts, it soon becomes evident that they throw light only on the prominent scenes in the foreground. The contemporary copy of the Prague panel, however, has short explanatory notes against the various scenes on the panel itself. The legend under the tents of the Children of Israel with the brazen serpent reads surprisingly: *Figur der Rechtfertigung* / symbol or parable of justification. The inspiration of the illustration is from the Old Testament and is likely to have formed part of standard Christian instruction, even in medieval times. The account relates that the Children of Israel cursed God and Moses for having freed them out of their slavery in Egypt only to leave them to die in the wilderness.²¹ As a punishment for their lack of faith God sends fiery serpents to bite the sinners to death. The people recognise their sin against God, whereupon God commands Moses to fashion a serpent of brass and put it up on a pole. With this God promises that every sinner bitten by a serpent who looks up at the brass image shall live. God keeps his promise to save sinners. Accordingly, the representation by Cranach shows inert bodies on the ground and people looking up at the image of the serpent. In light of the New Testament this can be interpreted as a parable or forecast of man's justification through Christ's vicarious death lending additional force to the realisation of the need for redemption and its acceptance in faith. Irrespective of the placing of this scene on the left or the right hand side of the tree of life, the artist, by including it, reveals the change from temporary to lasting salvation. There is a further interpretation option. Since the Old Testament story ends with the destruction of the brass serpent by king Hezekiah because of the propensity of the Children of Israel to burn incense to it,²² Cranach may well have set out to counter the medieval image cult's pre-



6. Contemporary copy of Prague Panel (Prague-Type)

disposition to idol worship. The inclusion of the brazen serpent in the image of 'law and gospel' seems to be more important than its placing on the left or the right side.²³

There can be no doubt that Cranach's pronounced Reformation image of 'law and gospel' intended to persuade Christians to review the vital tenets of their faith in their daily lives. Furthermore, it is evident that Cranach, in the process of 'sorting' the elements of composition designed an image that invited the listening members of congregations to 'work at their understanding' of God's offer of 'free grace' as a message that needed to be measured against the fact that the Christian was and remained *simul justus et peccator*. The historian, however, must differentiate between the artist's intention and the viewer's perception. The exploration of the dichotomy contains its own *problematique*. It remains questionable whether the average Lutheran absorbed and internalised more than the simple, 'consoling' message that sinful man is driven by death and devil into hell while the vicarious death of Christ redeems that same sinful man from death and devil.²⁴ The ordinary viewer, concentrating on the foreground, may well have reduced the image to one of God's grace as a liberating, unconditional gift. Cranach's creation may also have served as a means of cancelling out visions of the desperation of pre-reformation religiosity that vainly attempted to cooperate in the process of salvation as one of progressing slowly and with many setbacks up a ladder of perfection. This is captured in pre-Reformation woodcuts and paintings by Cranach and many other artists.

In 1529/30 when the Prague-type and Gotha-type were gaining shape the traditional medieval altars remained in the churches. Wherever possible, merely the side panels, on which saints could be seen as intercessors for sinners, had been removed. As long as the crucifixion was the centrepiece, medieval images could

do no harm to the consolidation of Lutheranism as a separate confession. All the same, by the early 1530s it seemed high time not only to expunge the medieval conception of 'cooperative grace' but to install proper reformation images in churches. The production of new altarpieces, however, depended less on the creative energies of artists like the Cranachs than on the faith and purse of the ruling princes of Saxony. Substantial sponsorship was required. The extent to which the artists had to await expressions of good will of their overlords becomes apparent in the painting of large altarpieces. It is now generally recognised that the thriving Cranach workshop owed its survival and expansion in major art works not to the church but to the need of courts and rich burghers in Saxony, Southern Germany and in Bohemia for many secular as well as some personal devotional works.

In 1531 John the Steadtfast placed his order for the first Lutheran altar. The work was completed only under his son, John Frederick the Magnanimous, and installed in Schneeberg in 1539. It incorporates the essence of Luther's teaching on the weekday panels in an exemplary way. [7] Like the woodcuts and panels of 1529/30 they elaborate primarily the message of salvation by faith alone in the antithetical dialectic of 'law and gospel' authenticated by biblical texts.²⁵ In composition they are closest to the Gotha-type woodcut. There are only two significant alterations that may have been adopted to change the emphasis of the overall message. On the left Moses presses the tablets of the Law under his arm. He and the prophet standing closest to him point with their right hands to death and devil shafting the sinner into the flames of hell. On the right hand side Christ is shown ascending into Heaven, only his legs are visible below the clouds.

The Schneeberg altarpiece provides also the most impressive evidence of the Cranachs' in-



7. Lucas Cranach the Elder, Schneeberger Altarpiece (weekday display)

terpretation of the reformers' appreciation of images as mnemonics. The positioning of the Holy Supper on the predella was a response to Luther's express wish. The message is the dispensing of this sacrament to the people by Christ Himself, eliminating the role of the priest. The congregation could see it throughout the service but was more directly confronted with it during the sharing of bread and wine at the altar. The lay chalice is emphasised. The Cranachs, however, also focused attention on the

betrayal of Christ by Judas. Without overriding Luther's initial instruction they highlighted the simultaneity of redemption and temptation (*simul justus et peccator*). On feast days the side panels on view displayed crucial scenes of the life of Christ witnessed by the princes who kneel in prayer unassisted by saints. The clear identification on the central altarpiece of the scornful and the penitent thieves crucified with Christ draws attention to the misguided and the faithful Christian sinner of the Luther's

day. The imperial captain on a white charger, the Muslim on a black horse riding towards the cross embody expectations as well as anxieties for the safety of contemporary Christendom.²⁶

All Cranach altarpieces, of which I have only selected the Schneeberg, the Wittenberg and the Weimar ones for commentary here, represent milestones in the development of the Lutheran confessional church. The artists designed them to reassure the congregations that God's Word remains in all eternity and that misfortunes are sent to test their faith in this Word. The devastating effects of Luther's death and the defeat of the Lutherans at the Battle of Mühlberg were meant to be channelled into positive reassurance by the production of the 'speaking summary of Luther's teaching': the Wittenberg Altar.²⁷ In this case, on the reverse of the retable, Cranach assembles several well-known

elements of his repertoire illustrating 'Christ in victory' ruling the world in which hideous devils have been mercifully vanquished. [8] One of the panels is occupied exclusively by a brazen serpent scene, interpreted as a foreshadowing of lasting justification. This seems to be an attempt to convey the containment of dangers that threatened to beset the Lutheran church. There is no doubt, however, that the execution of this work was left to men less accomplished than the two Cranachs. Lucas the Elder may have had very little to do with any details of the altarpiece. He had accompanied his overlord into exile from which he only returned to settle in Weimar for the last year of his life, 1552–16 October 1553.²⁸

The most personalised visualisation of 'law and gospel' – the altarpiece of the Weimar Stadtkirch St. Peter and Paul (Herderkirche)



8. Lucas Cranach the Elder, Wittenberg Altarpiece, revers, central and right panels

– was created by Lucas Cranach the Younger as an epitaph to his father whom he represents as the steadfast Christian man under the Word, in 1555.²⁹ [9] The centrepiece is the crucifixion. Whereas most traditional elements of the ‘law and gospel’ message of the Gotha Type are present in the background left and right, the cross with the body of Christ is the tree of life at the centre. There is no left/right juxtaposition. To the left of the cross the risen Christ stabs the devils of death and sin with his gonfalon. To the right John the Baptist, standing close by the

cross, points to its significance. In Reformation teaching John the Baptist figures as the mediator between the Old and the New Testament.³⁰ Martin Luther on the extreme right points to the open Bible, the life-giving Word of God. With these crucial messages John the Baptist and Martin Luther flank Lucas Cranach the Elder who receives the benefits of Christ’s vicarious death and resurrection in a stream of blood from the wound of Christ’s body to his head. Cranach’s face is identical with his famous self-portrait in old age, faithfully copied by his son.³¹



9. Lucas Cranach the Elder, Weimar Altarpiece, centrepiece

While Andreas Karlstadt's pronouncements had forced Luther to confront the problem of images, there was never any question about the vital role of music in the service of the Word. Analysing the medium of music by concentrating on Luther himself, I can only repeat what I said in an earlier article on Reformation music. I do not consider him the 'only begetter' but the seminal influence of his appreciation, perception, intuition, writing and deployment of vocal music is incontestable.³² His musical creations had a lasting impact. They can still be found in hymnbooks today.³³ The liberating Word seemed to suggest music as its sympathetic medium to enhance the effect of speech. Luther himself realised the natural potential of music to express the message of 'law and gospel' well before he considered the role of the visual medium. This is evident first and foremost in his autobiographical hymn *Nun freut euch lieben Christen g'mein*.³⁴ He developed a 'theology of music' observing that 'sounds brings the text to life'.³⁵ The reformer's rhetorical understanding of music was made possible by a paradigm shift in the arrangement of studies at universities under the influence of humanism some time before the Reformation of the Word. The harmonic rules of scholasticism (*numerus sonorus*) had been replaced by the free harmony (*musica poetica*) when the teaching of music had been transferred from the mathematical *quadrivium* to the spoken arts of the *trivium*. Luther had already benefited from this change during his time at the university of Erfurt.³⁶ From the start music in the proclamation of the Word differed in two respects from the creation of images that fulfilled the same purpose. It did not depend on the largesse of princes and their dedication to the new teaching. It could give Christians a voice to sing the preached Word well before the drawing of confessional boundaries in 1529/30. Reformation hymns consciously ignored such potential divisions from the begin-

ning in 1523/4, and tunes also remained interdenominational in later years.

There was, however, a popular tradition of music-making that might have presented fundamental difficulties. Communal singing of secular and spiritual songs was greatly favoured by all levels of the population throughout the Middle Ages. Much of this kind of singing did not belong to the realm of mere entertainment. Primarily on pilgrimages songs and *leis* were addressed to saints as a means of obtaining indulgences. Luther does not seem to have been particularly bothered about the connection of singing with the kind of devotion he wished to replace by encouraging congregations to endeavour to understand and internalise the Word of God. He appreciated old songs. Even more than in the case of his attitude to images he essentially performed an act of trimming and cleansing, not an act of removal or destruction. Adopting the method of *contrafactum* he matched old tunes with powerful new texts so that they would no longer hinder but assist the spread of the Gospel. He was also convinced that old tunes, stripped of their self-indulgent embellishments, must be retained and re-interpreted 'for the sake of simple folk'. In fact he carefully selected old and new melodies, not infrequently new tunes by Catholic composers, to use them in the service of the proclamation of the Word. Furthermore, he had no compunction about adapting *Bänkelsänger* tunes for topical 'news stories' that recounted recent events of the persecution of the Gospel. The earliest and best known of these, *Ein neues Lied wir heben an* ('We raise a new song') (1523), gives an account of the death of the Brussels martyrs. It gained extraordinary popularity because it was available as a broadsheet.³⁷

More importantly, however, Luther postulated that music must be used programmatically as exemplified in one of the earliest rhymed psalm texts, a category he 'invented'

and valued above all others. In this case it was *Aus tiefer Not* (In deep distress I cry unto Thee). A striking fifth thrusts the words into the deep. The ancient Phrygian key capably assists the art of translating words into music.³⁸ Such hymns soon became recognised and could do service even in areas where the new teaching was persecuted, when they were merely hummed. The intoning of such hymns must be considered an unimpeachable and at the same time audacious act of defiance perpetrated in several places outside Saxony.³⁹ All this indicates that Luther himself was the capable initiator, writing texts and tunes and drawing attention to the potential of music as a 'divinely willed' medium of communication of the message of salvation.

It is noteworthy that the search for the right form of music to carry the Word started five years before the creation of appropriate images. While Luther may have had no difficulty devising musical expressions of the Word, especially the conflict between 'law and gospel', the task of persuading congregations to 'sing well' required carefully considered educational strategies. It was not necessary to wait for reports of any Visitors to know that good congregational singing was difficult to attain. What caused special concern among Luther's friends and helpers was the evidence that people adhered to the 'trivial' and were 'ignorant of the Word'. Furthering congregational singing called for systematic measures. Several determinants governing the definition of the role of music in the service of the Word emerge in a letter of 1523 when Luther summoned the help of others.⁴⁰ Characteristically in the first instance he called upon writers of appropriate texts. The tentative strategy was to 'follow the example of the prophets and the Early Church Fathers' by creating 'psalms for the people in the native tongue, so that the Word of God may remain among the people through song'. A further aim of psalm versification was to make people

generally aware of the connection between the Word and the two remaining Sacraments, to persuade congregations to affirm their faith by singing together.⁴¹

In 1524 several compilations of hymns and *leis* were indeed printed. The first is the *Achtliederbuch*, a fairly random collection for 'ordinary Christians'.⁴² It opens with one of Luther's seminal hymns, the joyful *Nun freut euch lieben Christen g'mein*, a signal statement of the conflict between 'law and gospel' written in 1523. This autobiographical account is offered as the basic experience of every Christian 'captive to the Word'. The two printings in Erfurt of the so-called *Erfurt Enchiridion* of the same year explicitly say on their title-pages that they should be considered the iron ration every Christian would do well to keep by him.⁴³ It presents 25 hymns, 18 of these by Luther although not identified as such. The publication can only be properly appreciated in the context of Luther's 'Address to the Councilmen of every city to keep schools' (1524).⁴⁴ The *Erfurt Enchiridion* opens up an individual as well as a congregational perspective, but it was specifically intended for the young, as the preface announces. The underlying assumption is that the young must be taught to 'sing well' to persuade adults to abandon the 'devil's chorales' sung in Latin by those 'who do not understand them'. According to the anonymous preface, singing in church 'blasphemes holy scripture and the psalms'. It is more like shouting, 'as if God were deaf'.⁴⁵

In the late summer of 1524, Johann Walter (1496–1570), the Torgau court composer, Luther's close friend, a humanist whom he trusted implicitly, produced, with Luther's knowledge and approval, a much more comprehensive compilation, printed by Joseph Klug in Wittenberg. Significantly, this was also not intended for congregational singing, rather it was another means of inculcating 'Lutheran music'. The collection was designed for choir

with three- to five-part settings of 38 German and 5 Latin hymns, 24 of these by Luther. Johann Walter's *Geistliches Gesangbüchlein* may lack liturgical orientation, but the work became immensely popular and the individual choral voices were only slightly adjusted in later editions. There were altogether seven between 1524 and 1551, re-ordering and extending the repertoire.⁴⁷

A fruitful collaboration had begun without Luther exercising any direct influence on Johann Walter's selection. That Luther did not consider himself competent enough is evident from the preface he supplied. It contains some revealing observations. He defends singing as a 'good and God-pleasing practice' encouraged by many scriptural examples. In this preface he aims for more than 'keeping the Word among the people', as he had put it in his letter of 1523. He calls for didactic measures to wean 'the young' – the next adult congregation – from 'fleshly' songs. He shows himself confident that by teaching them good songs the bad would be defeated. He also includes a veiled attack on what he considered the 'premature', 'misconceived' liturgical efforts of Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer. The Arts in general must be cleansed to make them useful in the 'service of Him who created them'. Teaching music to the young is to be the necessary first stage, proper congregational singing will then follow naturally.⁴⁸

Only in 1525 did Luther consider that the time had come to create a new liturgy. Johann Walter's musical understanding and his skills were indispensable to find the 'right form'. He

was invited to Wittenberg together with his cousin Conrad Rupf. They stayed with Luther to discuss the complete liturgy.⁴⁹ After much consideration and careful preparation the first choral German Mass was sung in Wittenberg at the end of the year 1525. The congregation, however, was not to be relinquished to a passive receptive role. In 1526 Hans Lufft of Wittenberg transformed Johann Walter's *Chorbüchlein* – retaining only the *cantus firmus* – 'for the laity'. The year 1529 saw the production of a proper congregational hymnbook. As in the case of visual communication the purpose of congregational singing was to overcome people's general ignorance that had become so evident during the territorial visitations.

Johann Walter's prolific contribution to the shaping of Lutheranism can only be briefly indicated here. Already in the early 1520s he had gratefully acknowledged Luther's teaching as the *dogma salutionis*. In his later years he expressed Luther's central paradigm of the 'happy exchange of divine grace and the sin of man' in poetry as well as compositions, with sophisticated psalm paraphrases. His texts in praise of music reflect his dedication to the sounds of the Word, Johann Walter's greatest gift to the Lutheran musical tradition was the creation of the choral culture in the *Kantorei* in Torgau.⁵⁰

Even if congregational singing and viewing in the manner intended by Luther and his friends remained an unattainable ideal, there will be general agreement that the carefully designed 'media strategy' of the Lutheran reformation certainly merits further interdisciplinary scholarly investigation.

- 1 For the general context see Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther. His Road to Reformation*, Minneapolis 1985, chapters IX – X.
- 2 Helga Robinson-Hammerstein, Luther and the Laity, in: eadem (ed.), *The Transmission of ideas in the Lutheran Reformation*, Dublin 1989, pp. 11–46.
- 3 Martin Warnke, *Cranachs Luther. Entwürfe zu einem Image*, Frankfurt am Main 1984. The attempt at the design of a representative, speaking image had already started in 1520. – Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda and the German Reformation*, 2nd ed. Oxford 1994, Chapter 2.
- 4 See the 'Monk Calf' and the 'Pope Ass', 1523 in *Luthers Werke. Weimar Ausgabe* [WA] XI, pp. 357–368: *Deutung der zwo greulichen Figuren...* with Cranach's illustrations.
- 5 This is especially evident in his religious woodcuts for title pages in the period between 1522 and 1528, see Dieter Köpplin – Tilman Falk, *Lukas Cranach. Gemälde, Zeichnung, Druckgraphik I*, Basel – Stuttgart, 2nd ed., 1974, pp. 307ff.
- 6 Andreas Karlstadt, *Von abtuhung der Bylder, Vnd das keyn Betdler vnther den Christen seyn sollen*, Wittenberg, Nickel Schirlentz, 1522. – English translation Andreas Karlstadt, *On the Removal of Images and that there should be no beggars among Christians*, in: Edward J. Furcha (ed.), *The essential Carlstadt: fifteen tracts by Andreas Bodenstein (Carlstadt) from Carlstadt*, Waterloo, Ont., c.1995, pp. 100–128, 405–406.
- 7 See his *Invocavit Sermon of Tuesday, 11 March 1522* in: Hans-Ulrich Delius (ed.), *Martin Luther. Studienausgabe II*, Berlin 1982, pp. 538–543. – See also Luther's sermon entitled: *Wider die himmlischen Propheten, von den Bildern und Sakramenten*, 1525, in: WA XIII, pp. 80 ff.
- 8 Klaus-Peter Schuster, *Bilderkult und Bildersturm*, in: Werner Hofmann, *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst*, München 1983, pp. 126–151.
- 9 WA VII, p. 502. – See also the summary of research by Gunther Wenz in his article *Gesetz und Evangelium. Lukas Cranach d.Ä. als Maler der Wittenberger Reformation*, *Una Sancta* LXI, 2006, pp. 54–68. – More comprehensively Christoph Weimar, *Luther, Cranach und die Bilder. Gesetz und Evangelium. Schlüssel zum evangelischen Bildgebrauch*, Stuttgart 1999. – For an assessment of the influence of Luther's teaching on Cranach's style see Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image*, London, 2004, pp. 212 ff.
- 10 See preface to his *Passional* in the consolidated form of 1529, in *Ein betbuechlein mit eym Calender vnd Passional huebsch zu gericht*, Wittenberg, 1529, Viii–Vv. Facsimile edition with postscript by Frieder Schulz, Kassel, 1982. The illustrations were possibly provided by the Cranach workshop.
- 11 Ingrid Schulze, *Lucas Cranach d.J. und die protestantische Bildkunst in Sachsen und Thüringen. Frömmigkeit, Theologie, Fürstenreformation*, Bucha bei Jena, 2004, pp. 46–48.
- 12 For Melanchthon's *Loci communes* (1521) see Wilhelm Pauck (ed.), *Melanchthon und Bucer*, London 1969, pp. 3–17. – For the wider implications see Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy. The Case of Philip Melanchthon*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 27–74.
- 13 *Unterricht der Visitatorn an die Pfarhern ym Kurfurstenthum zu Sachssen*, [Erfurt], 1528. The title page design cannot be traced to the Cranach workshop. This copy of the instructions to Visitors is among the holdings of the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel. Access: <http://diglib.hab.de/varia/luther/normal/te647.jpg>. – For earlier reflections on the proper constitution of congregations by Luther see *Eyn ratschlag wie in der Christlichen gemeyne ain rechter anfang vnd beharrliche endtschafft eyner bestendigen ordnung sole furgenommen vnnd auffgericht werden*, [Nuremberg, F. Peypus, 1526] Pamphlet in Trinity College, Dublin Library. Shelfmark: 124.s.411.
- 14 On this and the differentiated messages of the subsequent versions see Frank Büttner, 'Argumentatio' in Bildern der Reformationszeit. Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung argumentativer Strukturen in der Bildkunst, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* LVII, 1994, pp. 23–44, here especially pp. 35–38. There is some controversy about the dating which will become evident in the course of this presentation.
- 15 See Kaliopi Chamonikola (ed.), *Pod znamením okřídleného draka / Under the sign of the winged serpent. Lucas Cranach a české země / and the Czech Lands*, (exh. cat.) Správa Pražského hradu a Národní galerie v Praze, Praha 2006, pp. 74–79.
- 16 The placing of this scene, which can appear on the left or the right hand side in the various versions, has given rise to much speculation; see article by Büttner (see note 14). I shall return to this conundrum when discussing the elaboration of the Gotha type.
- 17 See Chamonikola (see note 15) the English insert of the Prague catalogue, p. 31.
- 18 It is possible to trace reworkings of this Reformation image through a sketch in the Dresden Kupferstichkabinett the Gotha panel and the woodcut version. See Oskar Thulin, *Cranach-Altäre der Reformation*, Berlin 1955, pp. 136–140. – Max J. Friedländer

- Jakob Rosenberg, *Die Gemälde von Lucas Cranach*, Basel – Boston – Stuttgart 1979, list the known variants in their description of the Gotha panel, No. 221, p. 114.
- 19 This is clearly an illustration of Isaiah. 7,14; 40,3; 42,1–4; 53,4; 61,1–2.
- 20 Koerner (see note 9), pp. 231–234 et passim.
- 21 Numbers 21,5–9.
- 22 See 2 Kings 18,4.
- 23 Büttner (see note 14) sees a deeper meaning in the location of the scene. He takes issue with the habit of pressing Cranach's arrangements into typologies in Friedrich Ohly, *Gesetz und Evangelium. Zur Typologie bei Luther und Cranach*, Münster 1985. – Friedländer – Rosenberg (see note 18) record Cranach's and his workshop's custom to vary themes by relocating certain component parts of an image, see description of illustration no. 221, p. 114. – Cf. Koerner (see note 9), pp. 231, 335, 370.
- 24 There is certainly evidence that even well-educated and sophisticated men of letters found Luther's teaching attractive because they accepted it as a deeply consoling message; see Bernd Hamm, *Lazarus Spengler (1479–1534). Der Nürnberger Ratsschreiber im Spannungsfeld von Humanismus und Reformation, Politik und Glaube*, Tübingen 2004, pp. 204–223.
- 25 This is the work of both Cranachs and their workshop; see Michael Böhlitz, *Altargemälde von Lukas Cranach dem Älteren, Lukas Cranach dem Jüngeren und ihren Schülern im Chemnitzer Raum*, in: Harald Marx – Ingrid Mössinger (eds), *Cranach*, Köln 2005, p. 18–43, here p. 29. – Thulin (see note 18) offers a full description, pp. 33–53.
- 26 Böhlitz (see note 25), p.28.
- 27 Thulin (see note 18), pp. 9–32. Thulin also analyses all the other altarpieces that are not mentioned in this paper.
- 28 For a short survey of Lucas Cranach the Elder's life see Hans Düfel, *Cranach, Lucas der Ältere*, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* [TRE], VIII, 1981, pp. 218–225.
- 29 Schulze (see note 11), pp.11 ff. et passim. I have also consulted the article by Bonnie Noble, *From Vision to Testimony: Cranach's Weimar Altarpiece*, in: *Reformation & Renaissance Review: Journal of the Society for Reformation Studies* V/2, December 2003, pp. 135–165.
- 30 Thulin (see note 18), pp. 127–129 cites extensive evidence from Luther's sermon of St. John's Day, 24 June 1522.
- 31 I agree with Ingrid Schulz (see note 11) who makes a persuasive case for seeing the portrait of Cranach the Elder and the Weimar Altarpiece in general, as a work of Lucas Cranach the Younger, who adapted pictorial signifiers developed by his father. – Thulin (see note 18) suggests that this must be seen as the elder Cranach's last work, at least in its conception, see pp. 54–74. – Noble (see note 29), pp. 135–165 treats it as the work of father and son.
- 32 Helga Robinson-Hammerstein, *The Lutheran Reformation and its Music*, in: eadem (see note 2), pp. 141–171, here p. 141.
- 33 Markus Jenny (ed.), *Luthers geistliche Lieder und Kirchengesänge*, Weimar, 1985. – Gerhard Hahn, *Das Evangelium als literarische Anweisung. Zu Luthers Stellung in der Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenliedes*, München 1981.
- 34 See below, p. 18.
- 35 Walter Blankenburg, *Luther und die Musik*, in: idem, *Kirche und Musik*, Göttingen 1979, pp. 17–30, here p. 25. – For Luther's occasional observations on music see Walther Buszin, *Luther's quotes on music*, *Journal of Church Music* XIII, no. 9, 1971, pp. 2–7.
- 36 Siegfried Orth, *Zur Geschichte der Musikpflege an der ehemaligen Universität Erfurt*, Erfurt 1967, pp. 91–147. – See also *Universität und Musik*, in: *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* XIII, 1966, pp. 1093–1138.
- 37 See all twelve verses with English translation in Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*, Aldershot 2001, pp. 260–263.
- 38 The tune originally published in the so-called *Erfurt Enchiridion* of 1524 (of which more below) is different.
- 39 There is a review of this type of oral communication of Reformation ideas in Rober W. Scribner, *Oral culture and the transmission of Reformation ideas*, in: Robinson-Hammerstein (see note 2), pp. 83–104, here especially pp. 92–3.
- 40 *Luthers Werke*, WA, *Briefe*, no. 698, pp. 220–1.
- 41 Wichmann von Meding, *Luthers Gesangbuch. Die gesungene Theologie eines christlichen Psalters*, Hamburg 1998, p. 54. – See also Markus Jenny, *Kirchenlied, Gesangbuch und Kirchenmusik*, in: *Martin Luther und die Reformation in Deutschland* (exh. cat.), Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nürnberg, Frankfurt 1983, pp. 293–322.
- 42 According to von Meding (see note 41) p. 54, it was printed in Nuremberg, although the title page says Wittenberg.
- 43 Trinity College, Dublin Library possesses a copy of one of the original printings, *Enchiridion. Oder*

- eyn Handbuchlein eynem yetzlichen Christen fast nutzlich bey sich zuhaben zur stetter ubung unnd trachtung geystlicher gesenge und Psalmen Rechtschaffen unnd kunstlich vertheutsch.* (Erfurt: M. Maler, 1524); Shelfmark: C. pp.37/6. The other Erfurt imprint of the same year was made by Johannes Loeffler.
- 44 Martin Luther, To the Councilmen of all cities in Germany that they establish and maintain Christian schools, 1524, in: *Luther's Works, American Edition* XLV, Philadelphia 1962, pp. 339–378.
- 45 The preface is anonymous, but expresses Luther's views very graphically and might well be by him or one of his close friends.
- 47 von Meding (as note 41) pp. 73–146 discusses the various issues and analyses all the texts. – Generally Patrice Veit, *Das Kirchenlied in der Reformation Martin Luthers*, Stuttgart 1986. – Martin Staehelin, Johann Walter. Zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung, in: Friedhelm Brusniak (ed.), *Johann-Walter-Studien. Tagungsberichte Torgau 1996*, Tutzing 1998, pp. 15–35.
- 48 Luther's preface is reproduced in English translation in *Luther's Works, American Edition* LIII, Philadelphia 1965, pp. 315–6. – See also Ulrich Asper, Johann Walters Geistliches Gesangbüchlein, in: Brusniak (see note 47), pp. 141–143.
- 49 Staehelin (see note 47), p. 18, based on Johann Walter's own account.
- 50 Generally see my article, The Lutheran Reformation and its Music, in Robinson-Hammerstein (see note 2), pp. 158–161.