The Unresponsiveness of
The Late Medieval Church:
A Reconsideration

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THE SWIFTNESS with which the Roman Church crumpled before the spread of reformed teachings in the second quarter of the sixteenth century has naturally prompted many historians to try to explain why such a revolution in ideas and institutions took place. David Hackett Fischer believes that the question "why" is a metaphysical and therefore mistaken one and that historians would do better to direct their efforts to exploring "how" an historical event or development occurred.[1] Fischer correctly underlines both the historian's ultimate inability to explain satisfactorily why events, at least "great" events, happen and the necessity of examining in detail how specific changes came about. Studies of the latter sort are rooted in concrete historical detail and can often yield surprising results. Miriam Chrisman's investigation of the Reformation in Strasbourg furnishes a case in point. She found that the church in Strasbourg seemed solidly established in 1520, that the Reformation there was the work of a determined minority facing a fragmented and unsure opposition, and that it required some five years to ensure the triumph of the new views.[2] Such conclusions do not jibe easily with the picture presented in many more general treatments of a Europe ready to explode in anti-Roman revolution in 1517.

Still, there are two difficulties with Fischer's view. First, historians can be remarkably stubborn and presumably will not quietly abandon ancient and proved ways of going about their business. Second, they have some justification for not doing so. Exclusive preoccupation with "how" can issue in purely narrative history (which, too, Fischer enjoins us to avoid[3]) and in neglect of the larger circumstances and background within which particular historical processes take place.

Rightly or wrongly, then, Reformation historians have traditionally cast their glance backwards over the two or three centuries of the "late Middle Ages" to discover some clues as to why the Reformation succeeded so well

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[1] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 12-15.

[2] Miriam U. Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform: A Study in the Process of Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 81, 93-97, 117, 138, 155-176.

[3] Fischer, p. xii.

and so quickly. Many scholars have focused their research on the impact of printing, the disruptive character of humanist values, the emergence of an educated laity and of self-conscious individuals, the rise of "nationalism," and changes in the social and economic structure of Europe which made likely, if perhaps not inevitable, the collapse of the medieval church.

Historians inclined toward a more strictly religious interpretation speak broadly of "the decline of the medieval church" in this period. On this view, intractable abuses abounded at all levels. Men increasingly saw the popes as responsible for this lamentable state of affairs in one way or another. The popes at Avignon overcentralized and exploited the church; those during the Great Schism spread confusion and dismay by their conduct; and those of the Renaissance scandalized all by their worldliness. This cancer spread from the head to all the members of the Church Militant. What rendered this decay all the more deplorable was the increasing inability or unwillingness of a rigid church to respond to and incorporate new spiritual needs and demands. Although the spirit of apostolic poverty had been uneasily absorbed into the church in the formation of the mendicant orders in the early thirteenth century, ever since then the church had proved itself too inflexible in organization and too narrow in viewpoint to adapt to changing times. Alienation resulted, and from the thirteenth century onward one can trace a growing distinction, on the popular level, between "religion" and the church[4] and, in the intellectual realm, between the visible and the invisible church.[5]

Each of the elements in this complex picture deserves examination in its own right. The sole object of this essay is to re-examine the alleged unresponsiveness of the church to the wishes and requirements of those whom it was supposed to serve. This assertion appears frequently in secondary works. Let two examples suffice of the many that could be cited. Gordon Leff regards the establishment of the mendicants as the church's last successful solution for the growing problem of "how to remain spiritually comprehensive and yet institutionally effective." Thereafter the church failed to counterbalance its moral deficiencies with positive spiritual values. Men now had only the choice of forming unofficial groups without ecclesiastical sponsorship (e.g., the Beghards or the Beguines) or of becoming heretics. Here Leff goes rather beyond most historians in arguing that "heresy was the outlet of a society with no outlets."[6] R. W. Southern's treatment differs somewhat from Leff's.

[4] Thus Bernd Moeller, "Piety in Germany Around 1500," in Steven E. Ozment, ed., *The Reformation in Medieval Perspective* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 60; or S. Harrison Thomson, *Europe in Renaissance and Reformation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1963), p. 454: "The low repute of the church among all classes of the German people was strangely dissociated from the common interest in religion."

[5] Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 27-28, dates the increasing importance of this distinction to the period of the Great Western Schism.

[6] Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent c. 1250-c. 1450* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), I, 14-16, 29-30, 47. The quotations appear on pp. 14 and 47.

While more sympathetic to the problems of the late medieval church, Southern sees as crucial the failure of papal leadership and dates it specifically to the condemnations of the Franciscan doctrine on poverty culminating in 1323. As a result, "in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries everything that was most alive in political, ecclesiastical, or theological speculation, in devotional life or religious organization, was in some degree alienated from or indifferent to papal authority."[7] With variations this is the picture that emerges from virtually all discussions of the church in the two centuries preceding the Reformation, particularly those treatments which both mold and reflect the conventional historical wisdom.[8]

It is essential to remark here on the regrettably misleading character of the term "the medieval church," for it implies a well-defined, homogeneous, and static church which remained unchanged for centuries and was clearly set apart from the rest of society. None of this is true. The structure of the church embraced a hierarchy descending from the pope down to the ordinary parish priest and beyond to the large semi-clerical world of scholars and students in minor orders. This hierarchy broadly mirrored the social hierarchy, and in many other respects "church" and "society" were so intertwined as to make the two inseparable. Even within the recognizably clerical church there obtained little unity or harmony. Century after century religious orders with new visions, responsibilities, and organization had appeared, often in the face of bitter opposition from the established clergy. The Cistercians contemned the "unreformed" Cluniacs,[9] but both allied with the other orders to resist the admission of women into their ranks in the twelfth century and the foundation of the mendicants in the thirteenth.[10] In both instances the papacy overrode their objections. What constitutes "the church" here? Because the diocesan clergy or an order like the Dominicans opposed a move-

[7] Richard W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1970), pp. 44-45, 169. The quotation is from p. 169.

[8] E.g., Geoffrey R. Elton, *Reformation Europe 1517-1559* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1963), pp. 27-34; Denys Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), pp. 301-332; Joseph Lortz and Erwin Iserloh, *Kleine Reformationsgeschichte* (Freiburg i. B.: Herder, 1969), pp. 17-26; Karl H. Dannenfeldt, *The Church of the Renaissance and Reformation: Decline and Reform from 1300 to 1600* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), pp. 9-29; Lewis Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), 1:20-61; Harold Grimm, *The Reformation Era 1500-1650*, 2d ed. (New York: 1973), p. 75; John Headley, in Richard L. DeMolen, ed., *The Meaning of the Renaissance and the Reformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), pp. 134-142. For a similar assessment of modern scholarship, see Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 21.

[9] See David Knowles, "Cistercians and Cluniacs: the Controversy between St. Bernard and Peter the Venerable," in his *Historian and Character and Other Essays* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1963), pp. 50-75.

[10] On women and the mendicants, see Herbert Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter*, 3rd expanded ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), pp. 127-56, 170-354; Southern, pp. 272-299, 309-331; and John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

ment does not necessarily mean that "the church" did, particularly if the papacy sheltered it. We must exercise care, therefore, in using terms like "the medieval church" and "the church."

This essay will attempt a brief reconsideration of the putative inflexibility of this "church" under three different rubrics: mysticism as a refuge of the discontented; the status and role of the laity in the late Middle Ages; and the state of the clergy, those charged with discharging the church's mission. This essay is intended neither to be exhaustive nor to offer the findings of my own new research, but rather to take a fresh look at some old evidence and to suggest some plausible alternatives to established patterns of interpretation. Although specialists will quickly recognize my debts to the work of many scholars, it is hoped that they will find here some useful suggestions and insights. In any event, it is essential periodically to bring the results of their labors to the attention of other specialists and, just as important, of a wider audience of readers interested in the complex relationships between the late medieval church and the Reformation.

The fourteenth and sixteenth centuries were perhaps the greatest in the history of Christian mysticism.[11] Why? Historians have shown a marked tendency to link fourteenth-century mysticism with demands for reform, the urge to dissent, the need to escape from a confining church — in short, to associate it, if only by implication, with heterodoxy.[12] It is true that mysticism poses a variety of theological problems potentially heretical or questionable.[13] It is true that mysticism could be regarded as subversive of the sacramental system and hence of the institutional church. It is true that a number of fourteenth-century mystics did call out for reform: Meister Eckhart, Brigitte of Sweden, Catharine of Siena. But it is also true that many other mystics could and did live well within the church: Pierre d'Ailly, Jean Gerson, Richard Rolle, Juliana of Norwich, Walter Hilton, Margery Kempe. And what is one to make of the great flowering of Spanish mysticism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when hundreds of mystical writers flourished and thousands of writings flowed from their pens?[14] Is this activity also a witness to ecclesiastical decay and unorthodox protest against it? Not at all,

[11] David Knowles, *The English Mystical Tradition* (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 1.

[12] E.g., Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *Men and Events: Historical Essays* (New York: Harper, 1957), p. 37; Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation* (New York: Knopf, 1964), pp. 103-104; Thomson, pp. 162-168; Elton, p. 29 (who, however, recognizes the essential orthodoxy of fourteenth-century mysticism); Hay, pp. 313-317; Leff, 1:30-32; Dannenfeldt, p. 28; Grimm, p. 478; Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 1-13; Vivian H. H. Green, *Renaissance and Reformation*, rev. ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), p. 114. But see the sensible remarks of Spitz, 1:43.

[13] See, for example, the propositions of Meister Eckhart condemned in 1329 in H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion symbolorum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 33rd ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1965), pp. 290-295.

[14] Arthur G. Dickens, *The Counter Reformation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969), p. 25.

say its historians, who point to this mystical explosion in Spain as one of the surest signs of the rejuvenated Catholic faith.[15] Nor have they doubted its essential orthodoxy. And have the historians therefore not contradicted themselves? Unless the varieties of mysticism in the sixteenth century differed substantially from those in the fourteenth, how are historians justified in interpreting mysticism in one period as a manifestation of decay and in the other as a touchstone of revitalization?

Certainly no one would speak of the revitalization of the church in the fourteenth century, but it is nevertheless possible to regard mysticism at that time in at least two other ways, the one religious, the other secular. First, mysticism constitutes one of the highest forms of Christian experience and the culmination of the contemplative ideal. As such it is in no wise incompatible with more conventional religious life, nor does it lie beyond the pale of orthodoxy. Indeed, one can and must argue that mysticism grew not apart from, but rather out of the rich soil of medieval Christianity, so many forms of which stressed the primacy of contemplation. If mysticism throve in the fourteenth century, it could do so only because the medieval church had labored so well to Christianize Europe. A flowering of mysticism, therefore, is more logically construed as a tribute to the success of the church than as a commentary on its lamentable condition. A second possible interpretation offers a non-spiritual explanation of this spiritual efflorescene. As A.-J. Festugière put it, "misery and mysticism are related facts."[16] The fourteenth century was without doubt one of the most miserable in European history. Political, social, and economic disruptions, capped by the Black Death, shook Europe profoundly. From this point of view mysticism could represent not so much a testament to the church as a flight from the horrors of ordinary existence. Both these views have some merit as alternative explanations to a decided tendency to consider fourteenth-century mysticism primarily as a flight from the horrors of the church.

Even if mysticism were primarily an avenue of escape, it was one open to relatively few people. What, then, of the millions of ordinary laymen in late medieval Europe? What did "the church" do for them? Or did "it" fail to satisfy their needs and wants? Did "it" quash movements and developments which as a result saw first light only during the Reformation? This is obviously an enormous subject which could easily fill a stout volume or two, not just these few allusive pages. Perhaps the best way of considering it here is to reflect upon several different topics often mentioned in relation to the un-

[15] *Ibid.,* pp. 25-28, 159-164; Green, p. 194; Grimm, pp. 303-304; Helmut G. Koenigsberger and George L. Mosse, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), p. 158; Thomson, pp. 636-637.

[16] Cited in E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1965), p. 100, who considers this observation applicable to the second and third centuries A.D. and also discusses (in n. 1) the correlations noted by W. Nestle between disruptions and "mysticism," broadly defined, in various periods of Greek history.

responsiveness of the late medieval church: lay participation in and control over ecclesiastical affairs; education; humanism and printing; the use of the vernacular and of a vernacular Bible; and the Brethren of the Common Life.

Far from withdrawing or being alienated from the established church, laymen in the late Middle Ages were in every way deeply involved in it. The unprecedented number of altars, confraternities, masses, and benefices they endowed is too well known to require repetition here.[17] The particular kinds of foundations and the stipulations under which they were made reveal the reassertion and extension of lay control in the church in ways which presaged what happened in the Reformation.[18] Founders and collators enjoyed considerable rights over ecclesiastical benefices, particularly those of nomination and presentation of a candidate. Thus in much of Europe laymen chose their priests and administered church property long before the Reformation.[19] Did "the church" oppose this system? Some churchmen did, and possibly one reason for the spate of incorporations in the fifteenth century was to secure proper ecclesiastical disposition over ecclesiastical offices. The vast system of papal provisions, however, so savagely attacked as one of the principal evils in the church and often as the very font of all its problems, did not in the slightest touch benefices in the gift of laymen.[20] Canon lawyers acknowledged the rights of lay collators, who presented whom they wanted and whose candidates usually got through.[21] On several occasions the Council of Trent (1545-1563) reaffirmed the substantial rights of lay patrons.[22] In some crucial respects, therefore, the difficulty lay not in too little, but rather too much, lay control over the church.[23]

[17] See, for instance, the important articles of Lucien Febvre, "The Origins of the French Reformation: A Badly-Put Question?" in his *New Kind of History and Other Essays,* ed. Peter Burke, trans. K. Folca (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 44-107, and Moeller, pp. 50-75 (see n. 4 above).

[18] For a fuller discussion of these issues, see K. L. Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1965), pp. 303-305, 314, and Kathleen Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages,* 2d ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), pp. 286-288.

[19] See Dietrich Kurze, *Pfarrerwahlen im Mittelalter* (Cologne and Graz: Böhlau, 1966), pp. 3, 137-140, 314-324, 434-450, 471-474, 489-490, and Sebastian Schröcker, *Die Kirchenpflegschaft: Die Verwaltung des Niederkirchenvermögens durch Laien seit dem ausgehenden Mittelalter,* Schriften der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft im katholischen Deutschland, 67 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1934). For an instance of lay administrators or *matricularii,* see the visitation reports for the years 1458-1470 from an archdeaconry outside Paris in J. M. Alliott, ed., *Visites archidiaconales de Josas* (Paris: Picard, 1902). I owe this reference to my friend, Professor Joseph H. Lynch of The Ohio State University.

[20] Geoffrey Barraclough, *Papal Provisions* (Oxford, 1935; repr., Westport, Conn.: Green Press, 1971), pp. vii-viii, 10-12, 17, 19-22, 43-44.   [21] Kurze, pp. 532-534.

[22] Sessio XIV de ref. c. 12 (Nov. 25, 1551), and Sessio XXV de ref. cc. 5 and 9 (Dec. 3-4, 1563): Josepho Alberigo et al., eds., *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta,* 3rd ed. (Bologna: Istituto per le scienze religiose, 1973), pp. 718, 787, 789-791 (hereafter cited as *COD*).

[23] I intend to treat in another article the arguments of Ozment, *Reformation in the Cities,* chap. 2, about the nature of lay piety before the Reformation.

It is significant to note not only *that* people continued to give of their wealth to ensure their salvation, but *where* they gave it. No longer did the monasteries and great religious orders attract the offerings of the faithful. For instance, of the 742 Cistercian houses in Europe in 1500, fully 694 had arisen by 1300.[24] In the thirteenth century the mendicants, particularly the Franciscans, found themselves in the embarrassingly contradictory position of receiving pious legacies precisely because in espousing the doctrine of apostolic poverty they were so "relevant."[25] But in the later Middle Ages men willed their money to spiritual causes more local, more private, and more socially useful.[26] Proud burghers built great minsters, but everywhere the local parish church became the focus of attention.[27] In it organs, artwork, and side altars appeared. Altars for the saying of prayers and masses were also built in hospitals, almshouses, and schools, which too were the recipients of lay (and clerical) generosity. In England by the time of the Suppression about ninety colleges and 110 hospitals had been established for the good of founders' souls and were supported wholly or largely by similar bequests. Comparable conditions obtained on the Continent.[28] A final channel of benefactions was the creation of endowed posts for preachers, of which there were no fewer than twelve in the Swiss cantons alone by 1500.[29]

[24] Southern, p. 254. On the decline of monasticism and even of the friars by the late thirteenth century, see A. Hamilton Thompson, *The English Clergy and Their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), p. 162, and Robert Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 238-290.

[25] Southern, pp. 288 ff.; Moorman, pp. 63 ff., 185-187, 307-309, 353-357.

[26] For England, see Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise: Gift Giving and the Aristocracy, 1307-1485* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 32-37, 53-80, 128, 136-137.

[27] Thompson, p. 128: "There is no period at which money was lavished so freely on English parish churches as in the fifteenth century, and there is a curious contrast between the complaints of dilapidation and decay so common in the reports of visitations and the building activity which was prevailing all over the country." What was true of England was true of the Continent as well.

[28] T. S. R. Boase, *Death in the Middle Ages: Mortality, Judgment and Remembrance* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 62, 69. On founders' intentions, see Thompson, pp. 132-133, 146-160, 247-291, and Ernest F. Jacob, "Founders and Foundations in the Later Middle Ages," in his *Essays in Later Medieval History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), pp. 154-174. It is of interest to note the *increasingly* religious character of the foundation charters of Queen's (1341), New (1379), and All Souls (1438) colleges at Oxford: Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages,* rev. ed. by A. B. Emden and F. M. Powicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 3: 209, 220-221, 226-227. On hospitals, see Hubert Jedin and John Dolan, eds., *Handbook of Church History,* trans. A. Biggs, 4 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970): 183-187, and, for Germany, Siegfreid Reicke, *Das deutsche Spital und sein Recht im Mittelalter,* Kirchen-rechtliche Abhandlungen, 111-114 (Stuttgart: Enke, 1932).

[29] Hans Erich Feine, *Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte: Die katholische Kirche,* 4th rev. ed. (Cologne: Böhlau, 1964), p. 423; see also Ozment, *Reformation in the Cities,* pp. 38-42. Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York: Schocken, 1964), pp. 265-267, erroneously believes that pious benefactions before the Reformation were rather indiscriminate and generally went to monasteries.

Thus the emphasis laid during the Reformation on socially useful works and institutions was presaged in the pattern of late medieval giving, above all in education. Monasteries languished, schools and hospitals flourished. Did "the church" oppose these developments? Monks pined for a long lost golden age, and some prelates cast suspicious glances at all this new concern with preaching, pastoral care, and education. But basically "the church" kept in tune with the times and was indeed very much in the vanguard. The great patrons of Spanish universities in the fifteenth century were not kings or nobles or burghers, but prelates.[30] With some variations the same was true elsewhere.[31] The greatest university patrons of all, however, were the popes. Without substantial papal support Europe simply could not have had 79 universities by the year 1500. Of these, 53 were chartered upon or soon after their foundation by the pope, and many others later hastened to secure similar bulls. One of the most important privileges they conferred was the right of a cleric to study at a university for up to five years and still draw the income from his benefice.[32] The system of papal provisions supplemented this support, for the single most important beneficiaries of papal largesse were scholars and students.[33] The popes further aided education through wholesale incorporations of churches, canonries, and benefices into the universities, which then became the collators. In short, the popes, frequently acting in concert with princes and prelates, were rediverting the resources of the church to meet pressing needs.[34] To do so they often overrode the objections of the

[30] Richard Kagan, "Universities in Castile 1500-1810," in Lawrence Stone, ed., *The University in Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 1, 357.

[31] On Oxford, see Guy Fitch Lytle, "Patronage Patterns and Oxford Colleges c. 1300 - c. 1530," in *ibid,* 2, 112, 127-130, 133-134, 143-146. By my count of the list of colleges founded at Paris before 1500 in Rashdall, 1, 536-539, two-thirds of the founders (35 out of 53) were clerics. All three Scots universities were founded at the instance of bishops *(ibid.,* 2, 303-318), and Uppsala in 1477 at that of the archbishop and clergy of Sweden *(ibid., 2,.298-299).*

[32] Lowrie Daly, S.J., *The Medieval University 1200-1400* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), pp. 198-204. For a detailed geographical and chronological breakdown of universities founded before 1500, see Rashdall, 1, xxiv; and for thirteenth-century dispensations for study, see *ibid.,* 2, 68, 77, 107, 165.

[33] Barraclough, pp. 160-161. Rashdall, 1, 555-558, divined the root of this development in attempts by the Avignonese popes to placate university opposition, especially at Paris, to their fiscal system and support of the mendicants. By comparison, Barraclough's view that pressure from impetrants, not papal financial exigency, caused the growth of papal provisions *(Papal Provisions,* pp. 121, 126-127, 134-135, 150-153, 166) has been challenged by Kaminsky, p. 36, n. 1, and Thompson, p. 13, n. 1. Whatever the murky truth may be, it was commonly accepted by the early fifteenth century that university graduates should be promoted to benefices. Thus the Convocation of Canterbury sought to devise between 1417 and 1438 various schemes to relieve the indigent graduates of Oxford and Cambridge by such promotions. No one seems to have objected to the idea as such. See Ernest F. Jacob, ed., *The Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury 1414-1443,* 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), 32-45, 47-51, 63-75, 265-267, 270-279.

[34] Papal agreement was indispensable in this respect. Thus, although Innocent VIII in 1487 acceded to Duke Albert IV of Bavaria's wish to establish a university at Regensburg, the pope effectively blocked the foundation by denying permission for the incorporation of

established clergy, who did not fail to notice that this entailed a kind of secularization of ecclesiastical property.[35]

One might reply that the universities were intended to serve purely clerical purposes as bastions of orthodoxy and as schools for the education of a clerical intelligentsia.[36] Thus, to cite but one instance, the University of Toulouse was expressly created in 1229/1233 to combat Catharism, and it is well known that a great many scholars and students, at least in northern Europe, were clerics. Both points — what was studied and who studied — require some modification and correction. First, universities were hardly seminaries. Besides a faculty of theology, a university might, and usually did, have faculties of arts, law, and medicine. Indeed, a university need not have had a faculty of theology at all. Members of the regular orders, especially the mendicants, studied theology in their own houses, but until 1347 one could pursue a degree in theology at a university only at Paris or Oxbridge. While popes permitted faculties of theology to be erected at Prague in 1347, Toulouse in 1360, Bologna in 1360/1364, and Padua in 1363, they declined such petitions for Valladolid in 1346, Cracow in 1364, Vienna in 1365, Pécs in 1367, Perpignan in 1379, and Buda in 1389.[37] Martin V (1417-1431) resumed this cautious papal approach after the Great Schism, for he regarded

a monastery there (the *Schottenkloster*) into the university: Hermann Diener, *Die Gründung der Universität Mainz 1467-1477* (Mainz: Verlag der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1973), p. 10. For further details, which varied from one country to another, see Rashdall, 1, 497-539; 2, 65, 67, 71, 81-82, 95, 98-100, 106, 109-112, 220-221, 241-283, 290-300, 308-319; 3, 169-235, 293-324. Italy, as always, was different and depended much less than northern European lands on ecclesiastical support (*ibid.*, 2, 39, 45-46, 49), although Rashdall probably underestimated the role of the church here (see the editors' comments in *ibid.*, 2, 2).

[35] For resistance in Upper Swabia, see Gerhard Kallen, *Die oberschwäbischen Pfründen des Bistums Konstanz und ihre Besetzung (1275-1508)* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1907), p. 253. Thomas Gascoigne (1403-1458), several times chancellor of Oxford, objected vigorously to incorporations but not to the conferral of benefices on men of learning: *Loci e libro veritatum: Passages selected from Gascoigne's Theological Dictionary Illustrating the Condition of the Church 1403-1458*, ed. J. E. Thorold Rogers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), pp. 3-5, 51-52, 56, 106, 148, 194, 198. Laymen sometimes protested against incorporations into universities. Such great violence erupted at Rostock over a proposed incorporation that Innocent VIII transferred the university to Lübeck in 1487-1488: Rashdall, 2, 261, n. 6. See also the remarks of Edwards, pp. 20-22, 318-325, and Brentano, p. 6, on the constant re-allocation of the church's resources in the High and late Middle Ages. Jacob Wimpheling defended the use of ecclesiastical resources to support education: Chrisman, p. 63.

[36] The latter terminology, occurs, to give but one instance, in Hugh Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Universities and Society in Pre-Industrial Britain 1500-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 15. Gerhard Ritter, *Die Heidelberger Universität.* Vol. 1: *Das Mittelalter* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1936), p. 79, calculated a steady decline in the number of clerical students at Heidelberg from 48.1 percent in 1409-1419 to 7.6 percent in 1505-1515. See, however, Rashdall, 1, 181-182, 3; 353-355, and Johannes Vincke, *Der Klerus des Bistums Osnabrück im späten Mittelalter*, Vorreformationsgeschichtliche Forschungen, 11 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1928), pp. 19-20, who correctly remarked on the great difficulty of determining in many cases exactly who was in orders.

[37] Rashdall, 2, 15, 71, 96-97, 166-167, 217, 238-240, 250-253, 290, 294-296.

universities, and in particular faculties of theology, as fonts of conciliarist and Hussite ideas. Although he sanctioned the establishment of theology at Valladolid and Montpellier, he flatly forbade it at the new foundations of Dôle, Rostock, Copenhagen, and Louvain.[38] Eugene IV (1431-1447) completely reversed this policy and acceded to these and other requests. Only from his pontificate onward did theology come to be a customary faculty of a university. Thus, all five French universities founded between 1437 and 1464 included theology.[39] But even where theology was taught, it scarcely rivalled the most popular faculty, law, in which thousands of ambitious students read canon or civil law to prepare themselves for careers in the great machines of church and state.[40]

Most of these students, though clerics, preferred arts or law to theology. This suggests the second point, that the term "clerics" is somewhat misleading. To modern ears it connotes a small body of men wearing distinctive garb, trained in seminaries, schooled in theology, given over to specifically "clerical" tasks, and fully ordained in the order of Melchisedech. To impose this conception on the late Middle Ages is to fall victim to a serious anachronism. Aside from the houses of the religious orders, the university community consisted then in good part of a semi-clerical world of scholars and students who enjoyed benefit but not necessarily responsibility of clergy. Legally they were clerics, but practically many were laymen. The abolition of minor orders, which seems not to have been proposed by anyone save Cardinal Wolsey, might have reformed some of the resulting disciplinary problems,[41] but it would also have swept away one of the means through which "the church" could employ its resources to educate Europe. It did so despite the fact that some churchmen must have realized that education was a two-edged sword which could as much undermine uncritical acceptance of ecclesiastical authority as it served the interests of the church.

Similarly, churchmen did not withhold support from two fifteenth-century developments frequently treated as though they were intrinsically incompatible with the church: humanism and printing. Dominicans and other

[38] *Ibid.,* 2, 71, 83, 133, 191, 261, 264; Elizabeth Schnitzler, *Das geistige und religiöse Leben Rostocks am Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Ebering, 1940), pp. 20-21 and n. 53. On papal wariness about the study of theology, see the eloquent remarks of Rashdall, 1, 261-262.

[39] *Ibid.,* 2, 196-206. It is fascinating to speculate on whether a surplus of theologians eventually resulted who, rather like unemployed lawyers in 1848, impelled the spread of the Reformation after 1517. Did a concern for positions in part lie behind the demands of eighteen young masters of theology at the University of Leipzig in May 1521 that the older professors stand aside and allow them to teach? See *Urkundenbuch der Universität Leipzig von 1409 bis 1555*, ed. B. Stübel, Codex diplomaticus Saxoniae regiae, II.11 (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 438-439, no. 321.

[40] Thus Kearney, pp. 15 ff.; Kagan, pp. 367-374; Rashdall, 1, 209, 250-253, 261-262, and 3, 447-449, 457.

[41] Peter Heath, *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 124-125, 189.

conservative theologians recognized some of the dangers latent in the humanist movement with its emphasis on a return to the sources and the restoration of a lost world of pagan or Christian antiquity.[42] That did not prevent prelates, again above all the popes, from patronizing humanists. What happened to Lorenzo Valla, who denounced the Donation of Constantine and the Apostles' Creed and who laid the foundation of critical Biblical scholarship in his *Annotations on the New Testament*? He received a secretaryship from Pope Nicholas V! What happened to Erasmus, who savagely parodied the clergy and nowhere in his *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* mentions the sacraments or the clergy? He was patronized by the bishop of Cambrai and showered with benefices. As late as the 1530s members of the Roman Curia were sharply polarized over whether to burn him as a heretic or to grant him the red hat.[43] His works were later placed on the *Index*, but that decision reflects a later and decisive change of mood.

Printing was even more enthusiastically regarded by churchmen at the outset although some eventually came to have second thoughts. Luther's well-known fervor for the press[44] was anticipated by fifty years when the Cardinal of Aleria, Johannes Andrea de Bussi, wrote to Pope Paul II in 1468, "In our time God gave Christendom a gift which enables even the pauper to acquire books."[45] Even the Dominicans evidently saw some merit in the new invention, for they and the Franciscans produced forty percent of all incunabula.[46] By one estimate, about forty-five percent of all incunabula was religious in character, and seventy-five percent appeared in Latin.[47] Some of this literature was directed in a variety of ways to furthering the work of ecclesiastical reform. Brief manuals for the parish clergy came forth, for example, in Speyer in 1496 and 1498 and in Landshut in 1513, 1514, and 1520,[48] Bishop John III, administrator of Regensburg from 1507 to 1538, in 1508 brought out regulations on clerical morals in German.[49] The statutes of diocesan

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[42] See the summary of the debate between the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati and the Dominican Giovanni Dominici in Berthold L. Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1963), pp. 63-70.

[43] On Erasmus' Roman supporters down to his death in 1536, see Johann Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 185-186.

[44] See Louise Holborn, "Printing and the Growth of a Protestant Movement in Germany from 1517 to 1524," *Church History*, 11 (1942), 123-127.

[45] Cited in Rudolf Hirsch, *Printing, Selling and Reading 1450-1550* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), p. 1.   [46] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129, 132. Countries differed appreciably, however, in the percentage of their incunabula published in the vernacular: Italy, 17 percent; Germany, 19.7 percent; the Low Countries, 24.4 percent; France, 29.3 percent; Spain, 51.9 percent; England, 55 percent (*ibid.*, p. 134).

[48] Friedrich W. E. Roth, *Geschichte und Bibliographie der Buchdruckereien zu Speier im XV. und XVI. Jahrhundert* (Speyer, 1894-1896; repr., Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1966), pt. 2, pp. 43-44; Karl Schottenloher, *Die Landshuter Buchdrucker des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Gutenberg Gesellschaft, 1930; repr., Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1967), pp. 11, 13, 29.

[49] Ferdinand Geldner, *Die Buchdruckerkunst im alten Bamberg 1458-1459 bis 1519* (Bamberg: Meisenbach, 1964), p. 98.

synods and provincial councils were published in surprisingly large numbers: in German-speaking areas, at least 32 by 1512; in French-speaking areas, no fewer than 32 by 1512 and 75 by 1530; and in Italy, nine and possibly eleven by 1530, although these last figures may well be too low.[50] The provincial decrees of Paris in 1480 and of Salzburg in 1491 appeared simultaneously in Latin and vernacular texts.[51] Prelates may have had a primarily clerical audience in mind in bringing forth these texts, but at least one printer, Conrad Hist of Speyer, wanted to reach laymen as well.[52] Such publications forged a two-edged weapon. They might have convinced laymen not only of the widespread efforts at reform but also of the widespread problems of the church; and they very probably raised in some circles expectations which could not be easily realized. The potential for scandal was exacerbated by the occasional publication of sermons originally delivered in ecclesiastical convocations which often harshly denounced clerical abuses.[53]

Vernacular texts posed difficult and even more sensitive problems, and in 1515 Pope Leo X, following the precedent set by the archbishop of Mainz in 1485, required prior licensing of all translations from Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Chaldaic into Latin and from Latin into the vernacular.[54] Roman churchmen were not, however, the first or the only ones to hit upon the idea of censorship. Rudolf Hirsch has pointed out that the first known case of censorship occurred in Cologne, where the city council in 1478 sought to silence a cleric inveighing against its efforts to reduce the economic privileges of the clergy; that in the 1520s censorship in England passed out of the hands of the church and into those of the crown; and that Luther in 1525 asked the Elector of Saxony to prohibit Carlstadt's writings and in 1530 effected the closing of the press of the Brethren of the Common Life at Rostock.[55] Those convinced they are right — and who was not in the sixteenth century? — are always tempted to quash their opponents.

[50] A nearly complete list for French dioceses has been drawn up by André Artonne, Louis Guizard, and Odette Pontal, *Répertoire des statuts synodaux des diocèses de l'ancienne France du XIIIe à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, 2d ed. (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1969). An appendix in Silvino da Nadro, *Sinodi diocesani italiani: Catalogo bibliografico degli atti a stampa 1879-1960 con un'appendice sui sinodi anteriori all'anno 1534* (Milan: Centro studi cappucini lombardi, 1962), pp. 96-110, lists those for Italy. This compilation is, however, "quite incomplete," according to Richard C. Trexler, *Synodal Law in Florence and Fiesole, 1306-1518*, Studi e testi, 268 (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1971), p. 1, n. 5. No comparable register seems to exist for the Empire, so I have had to compile a list from various catalogues of incunabula and early sixteenth-century books. American libraries possess a blessedly large number of these texts: see Frederick R. Goff, ed., *Incunabula in American Libraries: A Third Census . . .* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1964). pp. 572-573.   [51] *Ibid.*

[52] Hist announced his intentions in the forward to his edition of the *Statuta provincialia Moguntina* (Hagenau, 1512), f. 2r, the text of which is reprinted in Roth, pt. 2, p. 52.

[53] For example, at Speyer in 1499, Bamberg in 1501, and Oppenheim in 1505: Roth, p. 45; Geldner, p. 95; and Friedrich W. E. Roth, *Die Buckdruckerei des Jakob Köbel, Stadtschreibers zu Oppenheim, und ihre Erzeugnisse (1503-1572)* (Leipzig, 1879: repr., Wiesbaden and Nendeln: Kraus, 1968), p. 5.   [54] Hirsch, pp. 88-90.   [55] *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 91-93, 96.

The question of the vernacular is a crucial one and warrants closer consideration. Did "the church" discourage laymen from reading vernacular texts for fear that new ideas might contaminate them? It is reasonable to suppose that many churchmen felt such misgivings. Yet Rudolf Cruel in his study of sermons in Germany noticed a remarkable reversal in many preachers' attitudes between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Whereas they had condemned the reading of German texts in the thirteenth century, by the fifteenth they sanctioned the limited use of vernacular books and by the early sixteenth positively exhorted their congregations to buy and read them. One manual of preaching, the *Plenar* of 1514, laid it down as the duty of a preacher to urge his hearers to use German books and to tell them to be ashamed if they could not read. Of course, not all clergy agreed with this position. Johann Busch, a prior of the Windesheim congregation (died 1479) and its chronicler, once heard a Dominican lector in Zutphen publicly forbid laymen to possess German books. The preacher soon changed his tune, however, after Busch had successfully won over the Dominican prior as well as the bishop and cathedral chapter of Utrecht to his view that many German books could contribute to moral improvement.[56]

But what of the Bible? Should laymen be allowed to read Scripture at will in their own tongue? Some late medieval churchmen thought not, whereas the Reformers on principle thought they should. Two points deserve mention in this connection. First, at least twenty-nine complete vernacular Bibles had appeared in Europe by the year 1500, with little or no opposition registered by ecclesiastical officials.[57] The Reformation was the heir rather than the initiator of this development. Second, the clergy understandably had misgivings about unguided lay reading of the Scriptures. Our modern democratic prejudices incline us to murmur sceptically at the expression of such reservations. But consider the other point of view. The Bible is a very complex work whose frequently conflicting passages render the task of interpretation immensely difficult. It is, moreover, the most sacred book of Christianity, the proper exegesis of which touches matters salvific. After their long years of study[58] theologians naturally considered themselves professionals and the only ones fully qualified to expound Scripture. No matter how rapidly the educational level of Europe may have been rising on the eve of the Reformation,[59] it was still hardly sufficient to allay the suspicion of the theologians that a

[56] Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense und Liber de reformatione monasteriorum*, ed. K. Grube, Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen, 19 (Halle, 1886), pp. 730-732. The story is recounted in Rudolf Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter* (Detmold, 1879; repr., Hildeheim: Olms, 1966), pp. 626-627.

[57] Hirsch, p. 93, n. 63.

[58] At Paris the length of the course in theology increased from five years in 1215 to sixteen by 1366. Cardinal d'Estouteville in his reforms of 1452 reduced it to fifteen! The arts course, by contrast, had shortened over the same time period: Rashdall, 1, 471-473.

[59] The great growth of popular education in Germany from the mid-fifteenth century has been underscored by many historians since Janssen.

little learning is a dangerous thing. Historians reading this essay will appreciate this position if they recall how they cringe when the average layman casually observes that "history repeats itself." We too are professionals, guardians of a sacred segment of the truth; nor are we so egalitarian that we would normally submit ourselves to the medical ministrations or legal counsels of laymen untutored in such matters.[60]

Many clerics regarded themselves as more qualified expositors of the Bible than laymen, but a fair number did not think that they were necessarily better Christians. Indeed, it is a conspicuous feature of late medieval life that so many clerics proclaimed the equality of the clergy and the laity. The best known movement which embodied this idea was the *devotio moderna* or "modern devotion," particularly that aspect of it called the Brethren of the Common Life. Since the whole movement is commonly considered *the* hallmark of late medieval piety,[61] it is important to examine its origins and development, its principal expositors, and the reaction of "the church" to it.

Gerard Groote (1340-1384), deacon, canon of Aachen, and holder of numerous other benefices, fathered the *devotio moderna* in 1374 by giving over his house in Deventer to a group of women intent on living a simple and pious life. Such communities of the "Sisters of the Common Life" soon grew up elsewhere, and after Groote's death similar houses of men appeared, whence the name "Brethren of the Common Life." These men and women devoted themselves to a life of simplicity and lived by their own labors, notably the copying of manuscripts and later the printing of books. Although religious communities in a sense, they differed significantly from formal religious orders in that they comprised both clerics and laymen and had no distinctive vows, rule, garb, or patron saint.[62]

Underlying this movement was Groote's rejection of the traditional understanding of *religio* and *religiosus*:

[60] Thus Sebastian Brant doubted the wisdom of putting the Scriptures in the hands of the people: Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages,* trans. M. Mitchell and A. Christie, 2d rev. English ed. (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1905), 2, 303. His fellow reformer at Strasbourg, the distinguished preacher Geiler of Keisersberg, opposed not lay reading of Scripture, but rather private interpretations which might not accord with those of the Church: E. Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Justification in Late Medieval Preaching: A Study of John Geiler of Keisersberg* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), pp. 36, 75.

[61] Regnerus R. Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation With Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), pp. x-xi, 8, 15-17, 27-28, 60-64, 303, 364, 552-584, 624-631, strongly and on the whole rightly criticizes the many historians who have tended to subsume all "progressive" elements in late medieval religion under this rubric. See, however, the incisive summary and critique of this book by Helmar Junghans in *Luther-Jahrbuch,* 37 (1970), 120-124. Post's views do not, in any event, substantially affect the discussion below.

[62] See Busch, pp. 251-265; Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the "Devotio Moderna,"* 2d ed. (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965); Ernest F. Jacob, *Essays in the Conciliar Epoch,* 2d ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 121-153; Southern, pp. 331-358.

If devout women separate themselves from the world, and try to serve God in the privacy of their homes, without taking monastic vows, they are just as religious as the nuns in their convents. To love God and worship him is religion, not the taking of special vows. For the cause and purpose of things give them their names and forms. If it is, therefore, one's aim to live a religious life, his way of living becomes religious in God's opinion, and according to the judgment of our consciences.[63]

Or on another occasion:

Truly religious men are not confined by place, time, or manner of men . . . . All these who live aloof from the world to serve God, who despise temporal honors, leading chaste lives, obedient and poor: they are religious people.[64]

Groote's conviction perhaps went only halfway toward the sixteenth-century view, championed by Reformers and Jesuits alike, of the sanctity of all work in the world provided it be dedicated to the greater glory of God;[65] but it was in its time radical enough to arouse opposition in certain quarters. How did "the church" react to Groote and his followers?

Groote embroiled himself in controversy immediately by preaching, from about 1379 on, against clerical laxity. The fierce complaints of the native clergy, secular and religious, prompted the bishop of Utrecht to rescind the right of deacons to preach.[66] Interestingly, through the intercession of one of Groote's friends at Rome, Pope Urban VI restored his license, but Groote died before he learned of the pope's decision.[67] Opposition by no means abated, however. One Dominican in particular, Martin Grabow, vigorously attacked the orthodoxy of the Brethren and denied that one could practice "true religion" except as a member of a religious order. The counterattack of the Brethren was led by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen (1367-1398), who among other things asserted the right of laymen to read Scripture in the vernacular. What was the upshot of this encounter? Grabow, not Zerbolt, was condemned in turn by the bishop of Utrecht, the Council of Constance, and Pope Martin V, who in 1419 consigned Grabow's writings to the flames and

[63] Cited in Hyma, p. 25.

[64] *Ibid.,* p.. 25. For similar sentiments expressed by Groote elsewhere, see Busch, pp. 256-259, 262-265, and *Gerardi Magni epistolae,* ed. W. Muldur, S.J. (Antwerp: Sumptibus Societatis editricis Neerlandiae, 1933), pp. 229-230, no. 61. Groote's assertions, of course, were not novel. In the twelfth century Philip of Harvengt and Rupert of Deutz had debated these issues in a somewhat different way: *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia,* eds. and trans. Giles Constable and Bernard Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. xxvi-xxvii.

[65] On the supraconfessional character of this activist spirituality of the sixteenth century, see H. Outram Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation,* ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: the University Press, 1968), pp. 129-132.

[66] Jacob, *Conciliar Epoch,* pp. 143-144.

[67] Hyma, p. 514.

Grabow himself to imprisonment.[68] Martin's successor, Eugene IV, granted various privileges to the Brethren.[69] Finally, one of the most distinguished Brethren of the mid-fifteenth century, Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489), held opinions on indulgences, monasticism, and the relation of law and gospel which Luther found remarkably akin to his own. Nevertheless, when Gansfort went to Rome in 1469, he was befriended by Cardinals Bessarion and Francesco della Rovere, the future Pope Sixtus IV.[70] In other words, despite their aversion to merely formal religion, despite their "Erasmian" piety, despite their refusal to become as one with the religious orders, at every turn the Brethren and their foremost spokesmen enjoyed protection from prelates on high against bitter hostility from below. Although in time the clergy came to dominate the Brethren, they nevertheless held true to Groote's fiercely independent ideals.[71]

In fine, laymen in the late Middle Ages did not necessarily face the dilemma of choosing between mysticism and outright heresy in order to express their religious sentiments. Their wealth they continued to donate to the church to insure their salvation. The patterns of giving changed, and in ways which both restored to laymen greater disposition over ecclesiastical affairs and also closely linked piety and social utility. The church could do relatively little to deflect these developments, and in fact the popes and canon lawyers scrupulously acknowledged the rights of lay benefactors. Far from opposing the growing importance of the laity and of social concerns, the popes and numerous prelates positively encouraged them by massively subsidizing educational institutions which served the state and society at large as much as they did the church. Popes and prelates patronized humanists who helped directly or indirectly to undermine the authority of the church in late medieval society. Churchmen at all levels made extensive use of the printing press to discuss issues publicly and to push forward the work of reform and education of clergy and laymen alike. Finally, popes and prelates took under their aegis the *devotio moderna,* the principles of which strikingly foreshadowed the worth and dignity fully accorded laymen by the reformers of the sixteenth century.

[68] Busch, pp. 172-174; Hyma, pp. 63, 72, 543; Post, pp. 273-292; Southern, pp. 342-343; John H. Mundy, in *The Council of Constance: The Unification of the Church,* trans. Louise R. Loomis, eds. John H. Mundy and Kennerly M. Woody (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 35.

[69] Hyma, p. 543.

[70] Jacob, *Conciliar Epoch,* pp. 130-131.

[71] See the statement of the prior of Hildesheim in 1490 quoted in Southern, pp. 344-345. On the Brethren in Germany, see William M. Landeen, "The Beginnings of the *Devotio Moderna* in Germany," *Research Studies of the State College of Washington,* 19 (1951), 162-202, 221-253; 21 (1953), 275-309; 22 (1954), 57-75. Post, pp. 290-291, admits that, although the Brethren were not anti-monastic, their insistence that they were not monastic helped to create the impression that they were anti-monastic. The support they nevertheless received from the hierarchy must be considered in this light.

What, then, of the late medieval clergy, whose duty it was to minister to the faithful? It is easy to fault them for their failings and inadequacies. It is also probably impossible to demonstrate that they were more corrupt or neglectful of their duties than they had been earlier. To judge from the extant medieval attacks on the immorality and malfeasance of the clergy, one scholar has intelligently observed, it would seem that conditions had steadily deteriorated since the days of Charlemagne.[72] The great majority of these denunciations came from preachers and others whose purpose was moral improvement, not factual description, and who for that reason often exaggerated. If their strictures grew sharper in time, they may well reflect rising subjective expectations more than declining objective conditions.[73]

These problems in the handling of such sources notwithstanding, the plaints of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have usually been construed rather literally for several reasons. The Reformers and their defenders understandably sought unconsciously to justify their break with the Roman Church by dwelling on its ineradicable corruptness. The printing press inadvertently helped their historians to confirm this depressing picture, for between 1460 and 1500 over five thousand volumes of sermon literature were published,[74] the sheer bulk and repetitiousness of which introduce a potentially significant bias into the evaluation of evidence. If the sermons of the thirteenth century were similarly available, one would probably conclude that the church sadly wanted great reform then too.[75]

Nevertheless, Catholic and Protestant historians alike largely concur on the "immorality" of many clergy on the eve of the Reformation. What this ordinarily means, in the good modern Western tradition, is sexual immorality.

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[72] Friedrich Wilhelm Oediger, *Über die Bildung der Geistlichen im späten Mittelalter* (Leiden: Brill, 1953), p. 135. See also the incisive comments of Oskar Vasella, *Reform und Reformation in der Schweiz: Zur Würdigung der Anfänge der Glaubenskrise* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1958), pp. 7-23, and of Heiko Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), pp. 5-6, 10-11.

[73] See the sensible remarks in Douglass, pp. 3-4, on the methodological problems entailed in using sermon literature as sources. G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c. 1350-1450* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1926), pp. 33-34, concluded that late medieval sermons were so successful that "The price to be paid was the unlovely Puritanism of the reformers; and the Puritan temper of the seventeenth century can only be fully explained by reference to the pulpit message of the later middle ages." This conclusion may be disputable, but at least it raises the important question of the extent to which preaching molded popular attitudes. This question I intend to take up in a forthcoming article on "The Clergy and the Reformation."

[74] Hirsch, pp. 129-130.

[75] Certainly if one is to judge from the sermons of Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) in C. Horoy, ed., *Medii aevi bibliotheca patristica* (Paris, 1879-1883), 1, 609-975, and 2/1, 1-395. I owe this kind reference to Mr. R. Emmet McLaughlin of Yale University. An index of the extant sermons of the High Middle Ages is available in Johannes Baptist Schneyer, ed., *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters*, 5 vols., Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 43 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969-1974).

It is distinctly possible that clerical celibacy in the fifteenth century was more honored in the breach than in the observance.[76] When Cardinal Ximenes (1436-1517) swept like a whirlwind through the houses of the Conventual Franciscans of Spain after 1479, it is said that from Andalusia alone four hundred friars chose to remove to north Africa and convert to Islam rather than give up their "amicas."[77] A tract, composed in 1522 by the Franciscan superior Sebastian Meyer, charged that in the diocese of Constance under Bishop Hugo von Landenberg (1497-1529, 1531-1532) the clergy sired 1,500 bastards per year, for each of which the bishop exacted a fine of four gulden (five from 1521 on).[78] According to Thomas Gascoigne, John de la Bère, bishop of St. David's in Wales from 1447 to 1460, twice rejected the petition of his concubinical clergy to put away their mistresses because he preferred to collect similar fines.[79] Any clergy who felt the prick of conscience had merely to look to the example of the later fifteenth-century popes although J. R. Hale has remarked that none of the accusations of personal immorality against the popes can be proved once they entered office.[80]

[76] Whether the problem had in fact grown more acute is, of course, indeterminable, as Albert Braun aptly remarks: "Wir haben demnach hier das eigenartige Phänomen zu verzeichnen, dass Zeiten, für die sehr viele Delikte überliefert sind, Zeiten der Einkehr und Umkehr und des moralischen Aufstiegs sein können, während Zeiten, für die sich keine Fehltritte nachweisen lassen, gerade Zeiten eines moralischen Niedergangs und sittlichen Stumpfsinns sein können" (*Der Klerus des Bistums Konstanz im Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Vorreformationsgeschichtliche Studien, 14 [Münster: Aschendorff, 1938], p. 168). In any event, Georg Denzler, "Grundlinien zur Zölibatsgeschichte vom Constanciense bis zum Tridentinum (1414-1545)," in Remigius Bäumer, ed., *Von Konstanz nach Trient: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kirche von den Reformkonzilien bis zum Tridentinum. Festgabe für August Franzen* (Munich: Schöningh, 1972), p. 358, estimates that one-third of the clergy at this time lived in concubinage. In general, see Henry Charles Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1957), chaps. 24 and 28; John E. Lynch, "Marriage and Celibacy of the Clergy. The Discipline of the Western Church: A Historico-Canonical Synopsis," *The Jurist*, 32 (1972), 14-38, 189-212 (with extensive bibliographical references at p. 15, n. 1); August Franzen, *Zölibat und Priesterehe in der Auseinandersetzung der Reformationszeit und der katholischen Reform des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969), and Joseph Coppens, ed., *Sacerdoce et célibat: Études historiques et théologiques* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1971), especially the article by Alfons M. Stickler, "L'évolution de la discipline du célibat dans l'Église en Occident de la fin de l'âge patristique au Concile de Trente," pp. 373-443.

[77] John H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716* (New York: St. Martin's, 1963), pp. 92-94.

[78] The text of the "Ernstliche Ermahnung Hugo von Landenbergs, Bischofs zu Konstanz, zu Frieden und christlicher Einigkeit. . . ." was edited by Karl Schottenloher and published in *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation*, ed. Otto Clemen, 4 (Leipzig, 1911; repr., Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1968), 305-306.

[79] Gascoigne, pp. 35-36. For a discussion of this story and of incontinent clergy in Wales, see Glanmor Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962), pp. 305-306, 338-342.

[80] John R. Hale, *Renaissance Europe 1480-1520* (London: Fontana, 1971), pp. 226-227. Michael Mallett, *The Borgias: The Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Dynasty* (London: Paladin, 1969), p. 106, very circumspectly says that Giulia Farnese was Alexander VI's mistress "both before and immediately after his election" and concludes that Alexander may have sired one of the three children ascribed to him as pope (*ibid.*, pp. 258-259).

How did the population of Europe react to all this? Interestingly, clerical concubinage was generally accepted in Italy and perhaps as much in Switzerland.[81] It was apparently so common in fifteenth-century Spain that Castile had the evidently unique custom of honoring the right of a clerical bastard to inherit if his father died intestate.[82] The sole instance of popular criticism in England discovered by Peter Heath occurred in Cade's revolt in Kent in 1450, where rebels called for the castration of incontinent priests.[83] Within the church a debate raged over the question from the Council of Constance onward. While the advocates of celibacy numbered such distinguished churchmen as Jean Gerson, Bernardine of Siena, and Gabriel Biel, the proponents of clerical marriage included no less eminent spokesmen than William Durandus, the famous canonist Panormitanus, the future Pius II, and Cardinal Cajetan.[84] The anonymous author of the celebrated *Reformation of the Emperor Sigismund* (ca. 1438) considered clerical celibacy the cause of all hostility between the clergy and the laity. To rectify the situation he proposed that every parish be staffed by two priests, who should serve in alternate weeks and be allowed to have intercourse with their wives only during their week free of liturgical duties.[85]

What I would like to suggest here is that, given widespread clerical concubinage in the fifteenth century, popular indifference to or acceptance of it, and considerable sentiment among clerics for clerical marriage, it is just possible that clerical marriage would have been officially accepted in the sixteenth century had not the doctrinal issues of the Reformation intervened. This is of course pure speculation, and it rests partly on a distinction between doctrinal and disciplinary issues which a sixteenth-century Roman churchman might have regarded as false. The Emperors Charles V, Ferdinand I, and Maximilian II, and Dukes Albert V of Bavaria and William V of Julich-Cleves-Berg brought great pressure to bear on Rome to permit marriage of the clergy, and they received support from Erasmus, Julius von Pflug, Georg Witzel, Johannes Cochlaeus, Cardinal Cajetan, and Bishop Johannes von Maltitz of Meissen (1539-1549).[86] But by the 1540s hopes of reconciliation had largely faded, any concession seemed like *the* hole in the dike, and the rigid "Tridentine"

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44; Vasella, p. 30.

[82] Elliott, p. 92.

[83] Heath, pp. 10, 192.

[84] Denzler, "Grundlinien zur Zölibatsgeschichte," pp. 343-356. In fact, the forcible imposition of celibacy had already been attacked by no fewer than five writers in the High Middle Ages. See John W. Baldwin, "A Campaign to Reduce Clerical Celibacy at the Turn of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Études d'histoire du droit canonique dédiées à Gabriel Le Bras* (Paris: Sirey, 1965), 2, 1041-1053.

[85] Text in Gerald Strauss, ed. and trans., *Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 14-15.

[86] Stickler, pp. 432-434; J. Coppens, "Erasme et le célibat," in Coppens, *Sacerdoce et célibat,* pp. 443-458, especially p. 454, n. 87; Franzen, pp. 32-52, 56-63, 79-85.

mentality was beginning to take shape. However much he worked for abolition of required celibacy, Erasmus reacted instinctively in castigating the Reformers when they married. Philip II, Cardinal Campeggio, and Peter Canisius all suspected that the concession of clerical marriage would inexorably lead to doctrinal innovations. Many German bishops considered such relaxation futile because they believed that those clergy who had married had already gone over to the new teachings.[87]

But it is anachronistic to judge the constantly changing pre-Tridentine Church by what came after it. Down to the 1530s events were perhaps moving toward acceptance of clerical marriage, and Rome was sometimes willing to concede it as well as utraquism as the price for maintaining unity and preventing further losses of clergy.[88] The crucial conclusion here is that, if enforced celibacy had been formally dispensed with in the sixteenth century, the clergy of the pre-Reformation Church would not now be condemned for immorality but rather perhaps praised for leading the church to abolish an outmoded requirement: so, too, might those bishops like Hugo von Landenberg and John de la Bère, who conceivably may have contented themselves with the exaction of fines not primarily because they were greedy, but perhaps because they, like many of their contemporaries, did not regard concubinage as their most pressing problem or, if they did, were confronted with it on such a massive scale that they preferred fines to the far more drastic penalty of suspension, which clearly would have adversely affected the pastoral care of souls.[89] But because the Roman Church at Trent chose to retain celibacy, historians of the Reformation have been able anachronistically to brand the late medieval clergy as immoral.[90]

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[87] Stickler, pp. 432-434; Franzen, pp. 78, 83.

[88] On these heavy losses, see Franzen, pp. 29 and 73; Vasella, pp. 57-58. In *Die Matrikel des Hochstifts Merseburg 1469 bis 1558,* ed. Georg Buchwald (Weimar: Böhlau, 1926), the list of ordinands between 1500 and 1520 fills 82 pages (61-143), whereas that for the period 1521-1543 only fills 33 pages (143-176).

[89] The Council of Basel (Sessio XX, Jan. 22, 1435) had in fact ordered eventual suspension of incorrigible offenders and forbidden such fines, but bishops could not easily implement these decrees (see *COD*, pp. 485-487). On the problems Johannes Busch faced as archdeacon in trying to extirpate clerical concubinage, see his *Chronicon,* pp. 450-452. See also the remarks of Vasella, pp. 42-44, and, more generally, Martin Boelens, "Die Klerikerehe in der kirchlichen Gesetzgebung zwischen den Konzilien von Basel und Trient," *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht,* 138 (1969), 62-64.

[90] The problem of clerical concubinage proved seemingly ineradicable despite Tridentine legislation. The majority of the clergy of the bishoprics of northwestern Germany remained unreformed for at least a century after Trent, and many of their offspring came to hold positions in the governments of these principalities: Clemens Steinbicker, "Das Beamtentum in den geistlichen Fürstentümern Nordwestdeutschlands im Zeitraum von 1430-1740," in Günther Franz, ed., *Beamtentum und Pfarrerstand 1400-1800: Büdinger Vorträge 1967* (Limburg: Starcke, 1972), pp. 135-142. Franzen, pp. 97-98, believes that the situation remained fundamentally unaltered until the changes in the benefice system and the economic status of the clergy wrought during the Napoleonic period.

Whether the clergy were generally "immoral" or not, the more germane question is whether they ministered adequately to the needs of their flock. This was increasingly the criterion by which many clergy judged themselves in the fifteenth century. As early as the Council of Constance Cardinals d'Ailly and Fillastre as well as Gerson openly questioned whether monks properly belonged to the ecclesiastical hierarchy since their pastoral responsibility was negligible.[91] Evaluating whether the rest of the clergy lived up to that standard requires careful handling of evidence and consideration of possible alternative explanations. It is sometimes charged, for instance, that the late medieval clergy neglected preaching or at best preached uninspired sermons.[92] Yet the five thousand volumes of sermon literature published before 1500 reveal great concern with preaching. On the other hand, it is not necessarily fair to appraise the quality of sermons on the basis of these texts alone. If Bernard of Clairvaux is considered the norm of twelfth-century preachers, then Bernardine of Siena, Savonarola, and Geiler of Kaisersberg must be regarded as representative of those of the fifteenth century.[93] If we knew as much about the "ordinary" twelfth-century sermon as we do about its pre-Reformation counterpart, we would likely have to conclude that the quality of preaching had improved appreciably over the course of three centuries.

Or consider pluralism and absenteeism, which are frequently construed as abuses and signs of decay and pastoral neglect. Pluralism was common, but one must distinguish here between benefices with or without the cure of souls. Many pluralists held benefices without pastoral obligations. Such additional offices carried honor, income, and rights, but their conferral did not jeopardize the church's pastoral work.[94] If a benefice existed for the cure of

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[91] John H. Mundy, in *The Council of Constance*, pp. 33-34, and Cardinal Fillastre's diary in *ibid.*, pp. 212-215. Gascoigne railed against monks for similar reasons, pp. 20-21.

[92] E.g., Heath, pp. 93-103; Franz Lau and Ernst Bizer, *A History of the Reformation in Germany to 1555*, trans. Brian Hardy (London: Black, 1969), p. 13; Bernd Moeller, *Spätmittelalter*, in *Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte: Ein Handbuch*, eds. Kurt Schmidt and Ernst Wolf, 2/H1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), pp. 38-40; Owst, pp. xi, 33-34, 55-95, 238-239, 243, 248-253, 311-312, 345, presents sometimes conflicting opinions.

[93] For a detailed discussion of the many significant reform preachers in Europe from Wycliffe onwards, see Edward Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching* (New York, 1905; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 1, 289, 310-358.

[94] According to some historians most fourteenth-century papal provisions in much of Germany affected only benefices without the cure of souls: Barraclough, pp. 44-45, and Alois Schröer, *Die Kirche in Westfalen vor der Reformation* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967), 1, 38, n. 101. The same held true of pluralists in fourteenth-century England: W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1955), 36-38. If this was so, and if it was true of most other countries, it raises serious questions about when and why benefices with the cure of souls fell into the hands of pluralists — insofar as they did. Could the popes, whose real control over benefices declined gradually after 1378, have been largely responsible? What of the consequences of lay patronage, of the plague, of wars, of the creation of so many parishes which often could not support a full-time priest?

souls, the holder as absentee beneficiary was required in canon law to provide a suitable vicar and pay him a living wage. Whether the vicar was sufficiently educated and paid was, of course, another matter, and there were other social and structural difficulties in the system which obstructed the church's discharge of its obligations.

Much pluralism resulted from the domination of the church in large areas of Europe by the aristocracy, who hungrily consumed the revenues and privileges of as many benefices as possible. The papacy could do little to break this control, at least without the cooperation of kings and princes. The latter were, in turn, partly responsible for absenteeism, for they used benefices to reward their followers and servants. To be sure, many of these servants were technically "clerics" who derived all the benefits from a system which defined "clerics" too broadly and hence opened up innumerable opportunities for less than pious careerists. But even when the system functioned for the good of the church, it encouraged absenteeism in that beneficed clerics who attended a university to better their education necessarily had to be absent.[95] The number of clerics who attended university differed considerably from diocese to diocese. Oediger, working principally with German materials, found that it varied between twenty percent and fifty percent.[96] From the diocese of Bamberg alone, for example, about 2,100 clerics matriculated at a German or a foreign university in the period 1400-1556.[97] Now unless a cleric had already studied before his installation, the church was in a sense bound to suffer. Either an unschooled cleric held a post or else became an absentee in order to be schooled. The church would have profited more had it stipulated that such clerics study theology rather than permit them to read law, although the ordinary course of theological study was prohibitively long;[98] but otherwise there seemed to be no way out of this dilemma until the establishment of seminaries in the post-Tridentine era.[99]

[95] For similar remarks, see Vincke, pp. 21-22. For an instance of what happened at Didcot when the local parson went off to study at Oxford in 1465, see *The Stonor Letters and Papers 1290-1483*, ed. Charles L. Kingsford, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 29 (London: the [Royal Historical] Society, 1919), pp. 67-69.

[96] Oediger, p. 136. Moeller, *Spätmittelalter*, p. 43, found between thirty and fifty percent of the south German clergy had studied. For German cathedral chapters, see the research summarized by Johannes Kist, *Das Bamberger Domkapitel von 1399 bis 1556: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner Verfassung, seines Wirkens und seiner Mitglieder* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1943), pp. 91-96. In selected English dioceses, Heath, pp. 81-82, found that university *graduates* comprised ten to twenty percent of the beneficed clergy.

[97] Johannes Kist, ed., *Die Matrikel der Geistlichkeit des Bistums Bamberg 1400-1556* (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1965), p. xx.

[98] On the length of the theology curriculum at Paris, see n. 58 above. Rashdall, 2, 314, suggests that many secular clerics acquired the elements of law in order to act as notaries. Perhaps they sought thereby to supplement their income, but in any case as notaries they contributed to the establishment of an ordered society and filled what might otherwise have remained a regrettable gap.

[99] For an intelligent discussion of absenteeism in the diocese of Worms, see Hildegard Eberhardt, *Die Diözese Worms am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Aschendorff,

In brief, it is extraordinarily difficult to reach fair and unbiased conclusions about the quality and conscientiousness of the late medieval clergy. Problems like absenteeism and concubinage which are ordinarily labelled "abuses" can be understood a bit differently if judged not by hindsight but instead in the light of contemporary circumstances. The level of clerical learning before the Reformation was clearly rising,[100] and Jacob Wimpheling (1450-1528) observed that the printing press had accelerated this process.[101] Obviously that level was not rising sufficiently rapidly to meet expectations, nor were clerics always studying the right subjects. Again, while many clergy and laymen shared a common concern about preaching and pastoral care, the system in many ways did not function to realize that concern. Untold benefices supported aristocrats, scholars, and others whose interests lay elsewhere; and the *cursus honorum,* then as now, attracted men of ability upwards and away from the parish.[102] There were unfortunately too few men of adequate training, and the system as it worked could not educate enough of them to keep pace with demand.

Nevertheless, it is not only the Reformers and Protestant historians who have seen in the Catholic clergy a principal cause of the Reformation. The major Catholic reformers from Eck to Canisius also singled out the clergy as the leading source of the church's troubles.[103] These men had in mind many less than exemplary ecclesiastics who fanned the fires of anticlericalism by their conduct. But in fact what proved far more destructive of the medieval church were the words and ideas of clerics, ideas born of an impatience with the imperfect established church and a moral vision of a purified Christianity. Who proposed a wholly new set of relationships between society and a church stripped of its temporal power? Clerics like Marsiglio of Padua and John

1919), pp. 85-89. On the work of Trent, see James A. O'Donohoe, *Tridentine Seminary Legislation: Its Sources and Foundations* (Louvain: Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1957).

[100] Oberman, *Forerunners,* pp. 7-8, believes the clergy were better trained in 1500 than ever before. From the time of Ferdinand and Isabella the Spanish Church valued highly clerics holding university degrees: Kagan, p. 368. Kearney, p. 16, notes that the percentage of graduated Exeter cathedral prebendaries rose from twenty to sixty-seven percent between the early fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries (and two-thirds of the latter held degrees in canon law).

[101] Oediger, p. 136. Margaret Bowker, *The Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Lincoln 1495-1520* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1968), p. 181, remarks on the mixed benefits of printing: "The printed book not only made possible a new standard of education amongst the priesthood; it also created the possibility that the priest would have to defend his faith to a better-informed laity."

[102] Thus Schröer, 1, 189, estimated that only five to eight percent of the lower clergy in Westphalia (outside the Electorate of Cologne) had attended a university. The patronage system compounded the difficulties, for as Margaret Bowker observes, "The clerk most likely to catch the eye of a patron was least likely to reside in a parish" (p. 180).

[103] Joseph Lortz, *The Reformation in Germany,* trans. R. Wall (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1968), 1, 135.

Wycliffe. Who denounced the falsity of the Donation of Constantine? Not only Lorenzo Valla, but also clerics like Bishop Otto of Freising (died 1158), Bishop Lupold of Bamberg (died 1362),[104] and Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa. Who asserted the essential equality of the laity and the clergy? Clerics like Jan Hus and Gerard Groote. Who implied the dispensability of the clergy and of the sacraments? Clerics like Erasmus and Johann von Wesel.[105] Who pushed beyond this to formulate a theology of justification by faith? Clerics like Johann von Staupitz[106] and Martin Luther. Who brought these new teachings to the masses? Printers to be sure, but hundreds of clerics as well.[107] One can continue at much greater length this list of clerics who, however moderate and well-intentioned, in a variety of ways toppled the medieval church. They had in a sense turned against "the church," but they could and had to do so only because the church had educated them in their responsibilities and brought them to expect great things of it. For them, as for the laity, the church in the late Middle Ages had provided only too well.[108]

[104] Arthur G. Dickens, *The German Nation and Martin Luther* (London: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 3.

[105] On Johann von Wesel, see Gerhard Ritter, "Romantic and Revolutionary Elements in German Theology on the Eve of the Reformation," in Ozment, *Reformation in Medieval Perspective*, pp. 30-32.

[106] See David Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei: The Theology of Johannes von Staupitz. Its Late Medieval Setting* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

[107] Dickens, *German Nation*, pp. 102-103, stresses the importance of printing but also of the pulpit in the spread of reformed teachings. Heiko Oberman, "The Shape of Late Medieval Thought: The Birthpangs of the Modern Era," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 64 (1973), 16-17, particularly emphasizes the role of the Franciscans as pastors of the masses in the late Middle Ages and as molders of late medieval spirituality with their disruptive anti-intellectualism, non-violent revolutionary eschatology, and psychological theology.

[108] Hajo Holborn, "The Social Basis of the German Reformation," *Church History*, 5 (1936), 333-334, trenchantly remarked that one consequence of the convergence of "church" and "state" (or secularization, if one will) in the later Middle Ages was a shift among many clergy from service to the church to service to the community.