Re-examination of the Reformation in its Context of Political and Theological Struggles

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father, Mr. Yun Chin, who is now 95 years old, and my mother Yueh Yun, who brought me up in the Christian faith. I also dedicate this thesis to my wife, Jane Wong-Chin and our three daughters, Asiana, Chynala, and Xiana. I also dedicate this thesis to all the brothers and sisters of our Greater China Regional Family of Churches that have nurtured my faith and supported my spiritual growth as a leader. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my Lord Jesus Christ, the author of life. To him be the glory!

Declaration

Student Number: 64083845

I hereby declare that this thesis, which is based on my research on the *Re-examination of the Reformation in its Context of Political and Theological Struggles* is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I have committed myself to avoid plagiarism on every level of my research and have fully cited, according to the Harvard Method, every source that I used, including books, articles, internet sources, and images.

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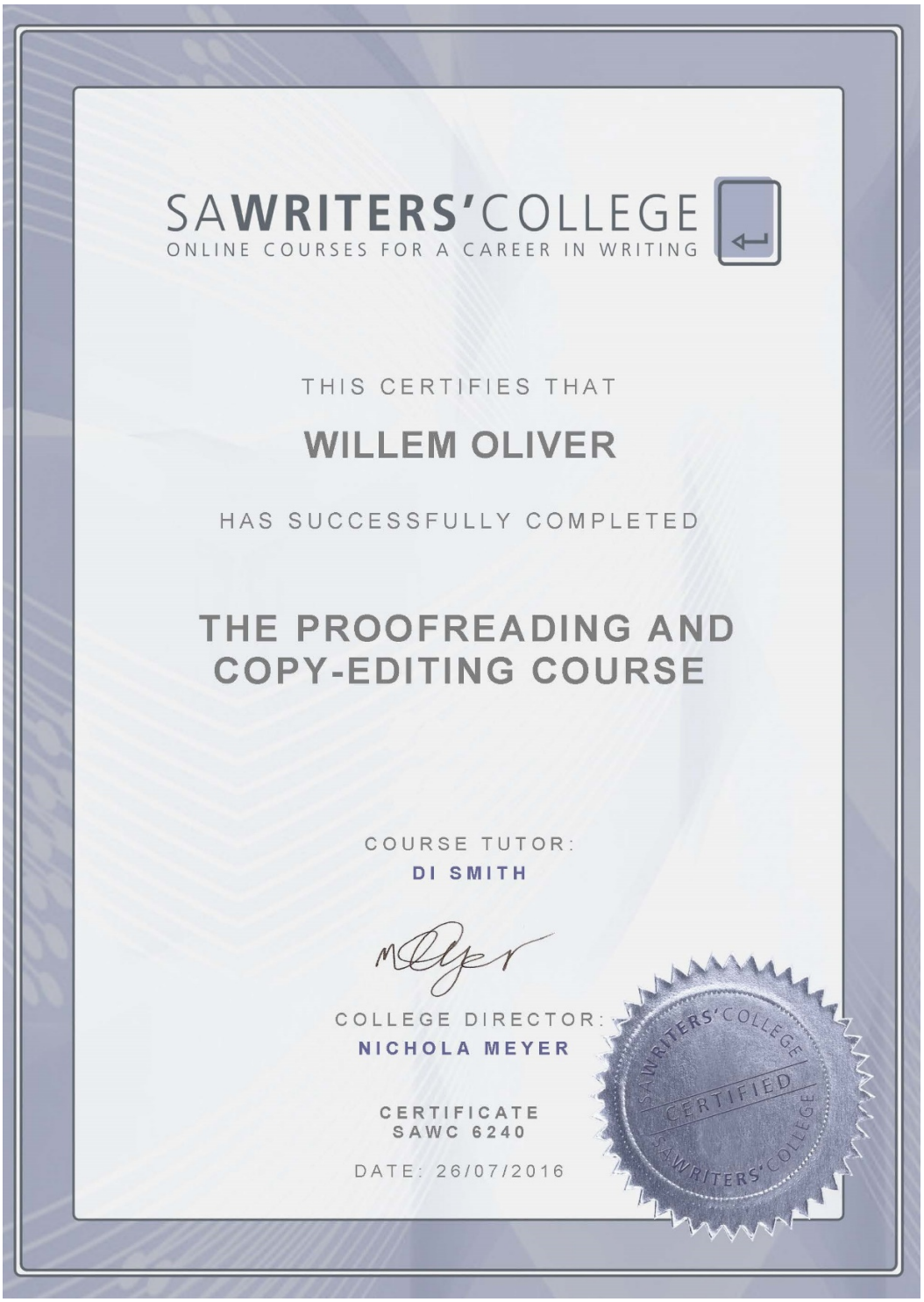

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Summary

With the celebration of the 500 years of Reformation in 2017, unsurprisingly, much has been written about this phenomenon as it unfolded in the 16th-century Europe. Any world-changing event not only deserves the attention of historians and scholars alike, but also merits closer scrutiny, to reveal its important lessons. One of the ways in which to achieve this goal, is the search to understand the event in context. While religious contexts are often discussed within the framework of the 16th-century Reformation, the political contexts have not been sufficiently elucidated to uncover their impact on the theological stances of early reformers.

In this study, a re-examination of the early Reformers will reveal that their political contexts greatly affected the outcomes of their theological struggles, mostly causing those Magisterial Reformers who accommodated and collaborated symbiotically with their political partners, to thrive. In short, ideology without ample political muscle has invariably been relegated to the footnotes of history, whereas theology, supported by political patronage, has come to define Reformation historiography. This finding is important in the ongoing ecumenical conversation, as far as all sides have realised that their confessional foundations are perhaps products of their historico-political contexts, thereby removing any entrenched personal grandiosity, to make room for pragmatic humility as part of a constructive dialogue.

Through the use of Document Analysis, this study aims to investigate various early Reformers and their political contexts, to determine how the latter swayed the theological leanings of the former. These political contexts include the influence of localised princes, city magistrates, and even peasants, as well as the broader contexts of geopolitical events. A large volume of relevant literature will be used and analysed to ascertain the historical accuracy of accounts surrounding political events, as well as individual Reformers' theological tenets. Primary sources will be given priority, while secondary sources will be carefully evaluated.

Keywords: Protestant Reformation; Radical Reformation;16th century political context; Martin Luther; Ulrich Zwingli; John Calvin; Anabaptists; Thomas Cromwell; Thomas Cranmer; John Knox.

Afrikaans

Die vyfhonderdste herdenking van die Reformasie (Hervorming) in 2017 het tot gevolg gehad dat menige outeurs oor die Reformasie van die sestiende-eeuse Europa geskryf het. Enige gebeure wat die gang van sake in die wêreld verander, verdien nie net die aandag van beide historici en geleerdes nie, maar ook ’n noukeurige ondersoek om sodoende belangrike lesse daaruit te verkry. Een manier om hierdie doel te bereik is om die gebeure binne konteks te verstaan. Terwyl die godsdienstige konteks waarbinne die sestiende-eeuse Reformasie afgespeel het, reeds menigmaal bespreek is, is die politieke konteks nie genoegsaam behandel nie, veral ten opsigte van die invloed wat dit op die vroeë Hervormers se teologiese posisies gehad het.

In hierdie studie wys die in-diepte ondersoek na die vroeë Hervormers uit dat die politieke kontekste waarbinne hulle opgetree het, hulle toelogiese worsteling grootliks beïnvloed het. Dit het tot gevolg gehad dat die gesaghebbende Hervormers wat met hulle politieke eweknieë saamgewerk het, meestal gedy het. In kort, ’n lewensbekouing sonder genoegsame politieke krag word na die voetnote van die geskiedenis verskuif, terwyl teologie wat deur politieke beskerming ondersteun word, die reformatoriese geskiedskrywing sou definieer. Hierdie bevinding is belangrik binne die raamwerk van die voortgaande ekumeniese gesprek, in sover al die partye besef het dat hulle belydenisgrondslag moontlik die produk was van hulle histories-politiese kontekste. Op hierdie wyse kon hulle enige verskansde selfverheffing verwyder en ruimte maak vir pragmatiese nederigheid binne ’n konstruktiewe dialoog.

Deur gebruik te maak van Dokument-analise, het hierdie studie ten doel om navorsing te doen oor verskeie vroeë Hervormers en hulle politieke kontekste, om daarmee aan te toon hoe laasgenoemde die Hervormers se teologiese rigtings beïnvloed het. Hierdie politieke kontekste het prinse, dorpslanddroste, en selfs plattelanders ingesluit, asook

uitgebreide kontekste van geopolitiese gebeure. Die navorser het ’n groot aantal relevante bronne gebruik en ontleed om die historiese akkuraatheid van die politieke gebeure te verseker en seker te maak van die teologiese leerstellings van die onderskeie Hervormers. Primêre bronne geniet absolute prioriteit, terwyl sekondêre bronne deeglik geëvalueer word.

Northern Sotho

Ka ge go be go ketekwa mengwaga ye 500 ya Diphetogo ka 2017, seo se ilego sa se makatše ke gore, tše ntši di ngwadilwe mabapi le tiragalo ye ge e be e thomišwa ka ngwagakgolo wa bo 16 ka Yuropa. Tiragalo efe goba efe ye e fetošago lefase ga se ya swanelwa fela go hwetša šedi ya bangwadi ba tša histori le ya dirutegi, eupša gape e hloka go lekodišišwa ka tsinkelo, go utolla dithuto tše bohlokwa tšeo re di hwetšago go yona. Ye nngwe ya ditsela tšeo ka tšona re ka fihlelelago nepo ye, ke go nyaka go kwešiša tiragalo ye ka seemong sa yona. Le ge e le gore maemo a tša sedumedi gantši a a ahlaahlwa ka gare ga tlhako ya Diphego tša ngwagakgolo wa bo 16, maemo a tša sepolotiki ga se a lekodišwago ka fao go lekanego, ka nepo ya go utolla seabe mabapi le maemo a tša sedumedi a batlišadiphetogo ba peleng.

Ka mo dinyakišišong tše, tekodišišoleswa ya batlišadiphetogo ba peleng e tla utolla gore seemo sa bona sa tša dipolotiki se amile kudu dipoelo tša mathata a bona a tša sedumedi, gomme se sa baka kudu gore batlišadiphetogo bao ba bagolo bao ba amogetšego le go dirišana le badirišani ka bona ba tša sepolotiki go atlega. Ka boripana: dikgopolo tša go hloka maatla a o a lekanego a tša sepolotiki di beetšwe kgakala go histori, mola e le gore sedumedi sona, ge se thekgwa ke maatla a sepolotiki, se ile sa hlaloša Diphetogo go ya ka dinyakišišo tša histori. Kutollo ye e bohlokwa ka dipoledišanong tšeo di tšwelago pele tša kwano ya sekhriste, kudukudu ka ge mahlakore ka moka a lemogile gore metheo ya tumelo ya bona mohlomongwe e bakilwe ke seemo sa bona sa histori ya tša sepolotiki, go realo e le go tloša maemo a godimo a batho, ka nepo ya go direla boikobobetšo sebaka bjalo ka karolo ya dipoledišano tšeo di kgwagalago.

Ka go šomiša mokgwa wa tshekatsheko ya dingwalwa, dinyakišišo tše di ikemišeditše go nyakišiša ka ga batlišadiphetogo ba peleng ba mehutahuta le maemo a bona a tša sepolotiki, ka nepo ya go tseba ge eba maemo a a sepolotiki a hueditšego dithuto tša sedumedi tša batlišadiphetogo. Maemo a a sepolotiki a akaretša khuetšo balaodi ba kgauswi, bomaseterata ba ditoropokgolo, le ge e ka ba badudi ba maemo a fase, gammogo le seemo ka kakaretšo sa ditiragalo tša dipolotiki mafelong a itšego. Bontši bja dingwalwa tša maleba bo tla šomišwa le go sekasekwa ka nepo ya go tseba nepagalo ya kanegelo ya histori mabapi le ditiragalo tša sepolotiki, gammogo le maemo a tša sedumedi a batlišadiphetogo. Dingwalwa tša motheo di tla šomišwa peleng, mola e le gore dingwalwa tša tlaleletšo di tla sekasekwa ka tlhokomelo.

CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, Christians around the world celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. However, things are usually more complicated than everyone envisions. Pointing to the intra-faith conflicts, one scholar has asked, “Is there any cause for celebration?” (Milbank 2017). Many scholars asked the same question (Hawkins and Pathway 2016). However, they referenced a Baptist minister, Albert Newman, from more than a century ago, who warned against “a blind hero-worship of certain religious teachers of the sixteenth century [who] would not have hesitated to urge our extermination by fire, sword, or water, if we had been their contemporaries” (Newman 1884:1). More poignantly, Hawkins and Pathway are challenging their readers to embark on a “serious investigation into the lives and doctrines of the Reformers” (Hawkins and Pathway 2016) including Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli. It is presumed that once such investigation is completed, one would not be so easily following and blindly worshipping these famous and world-changing Reformers. No doubt, five centuries since the Reformation, the Reformers continue to generate interests and controversies. The goal of this study is to understand these early Reformers and how their theologies were shaped by their political contexts and affiliations.

This study will focus on the political contexts and relationships surrounding the various early Reformers of the 16th-century Europe. In light of the limited scope of the study, the investigation will mainly focus on the first 50 years of the Reformation, from 1517 to about 1570, in both Europe and England. This is also the period in which the Reformation reverberated and spawned multiple strains that competed for legitimacy and influence.

This study will examine famous Reformers like Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and John Knox, as well as some of the not-so-famous Anabaptists who dotted the Reformation landscape. These Reformers will be given opportunities to unpack their re-

lationships that may have influenced their theological tendencies. These relationships could also include one another, but more importantly, the political relationships or affiliations in which they were involved. At the same time, the geopolitical context of the time will be discussed to cross-examine the intricacies of those personal political relationships, as this study argues that it underpins the Reformers' theological formations.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The hypothesis of this study is that the theology one espouses could be a product of one's environment, which includes the people with whom they associate. In the 16th-century Europe, where church and state existed as one, each of the Reformers was to a great extent likely influenced by their local politics. Therefore, in order to better understand the Reformers' developing theologies, it seems imperative to examine such political influence on them, as exerted by the state actors that they were associated with. Additionally, the insights thus assembled could be helpful within the scholarly debate that is often fraught with nationalism and confessional bias. If ecumenism is a goal, this study could provide a new starting point for mutually beneficial dialogue.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.3.1 Introduction

How did the political context of the 16th-century Reformers influence their theological outcomes? The answer to this question begins with the understanding of the political settings of the European states, as well as the geopolitical struggles that were present at the time. Attention will be given to the individual Reformers and their political associates in the context of their geopolitical realities. While many studies may have focussed on either the political situation of the 16th-century Europe or the theologies of the Reformers, only a few studies have delineated the evolution of the Reformers' theologies *vis-à-vis* their individualised political context. This study will unpack the degree of changes which the Reformers' theological tenets may have undertaken within each of their political realities. The literature review in this section is a brief summary, as the aim of the Document Analysis is to interact with the data collected in the discussion part of this study.

1.3.2 Seminal Works

The 16th-century Europe saw a wide range of complicated political systems in various places (Morris 2002). In order to delineate the various political systems in the different localities that the early Reformers were associated with, plenty of literature and documents, both secular and religious, will be required for this study. Some well-researched seminal works will be gleaned for relevant data regarding the specific political landscape of the 16th century, as well as detailed information on the early Reformers. The data gathered will be observed and synthesised for this study.

The work by Morris, *Europe and England in the sixteenth century* (Morris 2002) is a good starting point to provide a layout of the land regarding the social, economic, religious, and political conditions which acted as a prerequisite for the Reformation.

George Williams, the Harvard Divinity professor, coined the term "Radical Reformation" in the 1962 edition of his book with the same title (Williams 1992:7). He divided the different strains of Reformation tendencies into two categories: The *Magisterial Reformation* and the *Radical* Reformation. Venerated names such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin formed the Magisterial Reformation, whereas the rest of the Reformers were categorised as part of the Radical Reformation. Williams' simple demarcation, although it was convenient and gained wide acceptance, is not without critique, as he "rejected the terms, such as The Radicals or the Left-wing of the Reformation, and counter-proposed the term of The Stepchildren of the Reformation" (Verduin and Littell 2001:12-13). Still, others regard Williams' attempt as "terribly complicated, [while the Anabaptists'] story hardly got told at all" (Hillerbrand 2003:527). Nevertheless, the debates on how to categorise certain groups of people, have been common in the scholarly world and will remain for a long time. Additional works like those by Eire (2016) and Lucas (1960), provide excellent backgrounds and introductions to the significant historical figures surrounding the early Reformers. Justo Gonzalez, in particular, provides a fitting backdrop of the sociopolitical context to the Reformation, in the two volumes (González 1970) of his *Comprehensive history of Christian thought*. The Reformation, which was no doubt a

product of various forces, was preceded by a complex movement that occurred one or two centuries previously.

In addition, Ulinka Rublack wrote the first *Handbook of the Protestant Reformation* (Rublack 2016), providing a wide touch to survey the entire movement, yet also providing nuanced discussions to the various Reformers and their theological tenets. Other seminal works that focus on individual European spheres to provide more specific relevant data include Von Ranke, Austin, and Johnson (1966) on the German, and Dickens (1991) on the English Reformation. Diarmaid MacCulloch's comprehensive work, specifically on Thomas Cranmer (MacCulloch 1996) and Thomas Cromwell (MacCulloch 2018) are also invaluable resources, as each book chronicles a specific Reformer against the political backdrop of King Henry VIII.

1.3.3 Additional Journals and Periodicals

An abundance of online journals provides background information to synthesise with the transitional 16th-century political and theological landscapes of the Reformers. Various journals, for example, detail the organisational structure in the city of Geneva during the time of Calvin (Greene 1923; Monter 1976; Naphy 1995), thereby facilitating a better understanding of how such a Magisterial Reformer interacted with the governing leadership of the city. Additional information on the population of Geneva is also provided by Monter (1979). At the same time, Gäbler (1985) details the political setting in which Zwingli operated in Zürich.

It is interesting to note the levels and dimensions of the political struggles that Zwingli had to deal with. Between the City Council, the Catholic Church, and the Swiss Confederacy, Zwingli had to contend with the troublesome teachings from the Anabaptists in Zürich. Gäbler sheds additional background into the political intrigues that many Reformers of the time had to face for survival, as well as the close relationship between the City Council and Zwingli, which Gäbler calls *teamwork* (Gäbler 1985:151). In addition, Edward Furcha writes about the contemporaries who were critical of Luther's reformatory positions (Furcha 2017:17). As a founding figure of the Reformation, Luther's

reputation was, and still is to a large degree, beyond reproach. Furcha examines the individual writers of that time critically to provide a different perspective that is often overlooked today.

Once the historical backdrop is better understood, the lives and political associations of individual Reformers are investigated. The theoretical framework that asserts a given political system which inevitably impacts one's theological expression, has been documented (Wuthnow 1985). Searches for the specific geopolitical contexts and political affiliations of the individual Reformers through the abundant works that include journals and periodicals have been fruitful.

Geopolitical contexts of the 16th-century Europe – events such as the invasion of the Turks, the Peasants' War, and the Münster Rebellion – framed the backdrop to both the state actors and the Reformers and complicated scholars' classification of the non-monolithic movement. James Stayer has chronicled the Münster Rebellion between 1534 and 1535 (Stayer 1988) and argues for the participants to be classified as "genuine Anabaptists." Other scholars like Mergal, may not agree with this position (cf. Williams 1957). On the other hand, the Magisterial Reformers' political associations are also probed. They received not only much adulation from their own confessional followers but also high coverage in scholarly writings, often providing diverse interpretations and evaluations. John McNeill, for example, refers to Calvin as "ecumenical" (McNeill 1988:43), while other scholars label him as "a tyrannical dictator" (Cottret 2000:xiii) or the "joyless tyrant of Geneva" (Bouwsma 1989:68).

The scholarly debates regarding each of the Reformers range from Luther to Knox. However, this study is more interested in the evolution or changes of their theological leanings when political expediency was demanded. Such information can only be gleaned from their writings, around the timeframe of relevant political events that bored down on them. In fact, regarding Calvin, one persistent controversy worthy of our investigation is the death of Michael Servetus. It could serve as an anchoring point to re-examine the event to see how, if anyhow, Calvin's theological position on religious tol-

erance had changed. While many writers either gloss over the thorny issue or defend Calvin's innocence (cf. Curley 2003), the primary sources found in his letters to a few confidants valuable clues to investigate this affair (Calvin and Bonnet 1980). Additionally, well-researched works such as Corner (1995) and Rives (2008), draw on these primary sources for their conclusions.

The theory that a person's relationships with others also shape their theological transformation, has been well established (Lowe and Lowe 2013). The investigation of each Reformer's relationships can be drawn from historical records or personal letters.

Fortunately, the primary sources for such data are widely available. The collected writings of Luther (Luther, Bergendoff, and Lehman [1523] 1948) are readily available online, as well as Calvin (Calvin 1536) and Laing ([1558] 1841). William Naphy compiled informative letters written during the Reformation period (Naphy 1996). Even unpublished letters by Knox have been made available (Dawson, Glassey, and Knox 2005).

Additional primary sources on the lesser-known Reformers, such as the Anabaptists, are available in the works of Michael Baylor, who edited and translated some of their more important writings (Baylor 1991). George Williams and Angel Mergal also edited several Anabaptist writings of the same period (Williams and Mergal 1957). Walter Klaassen has organised the theological convictions of the Anabaptists into various themes, with edited writings by these Reformers (Klaassen 1981). Issues ranging from the Lord's Supper to the Baptism are adequately expounded and quoted to provide a detailed understanding of Anabaptism. When examining these data, this study engages the opposing Magisterial Reformers' condemnations to arrive at a more informed understanding of the persecutions of the Anabaptists.

1.3.4 Additional Literature Review on Anabaptism

The rise of the Anabaptists in the 16th century has been a subject of scholarly debate for some time, especially along the line of its confessional patronage. What is not up for

debate is the number of independent strains within the Anabaptist typology. A *polygenesis* model has been proposed by Stayer, Packull, and Depperman (1975), soon followed by the post-polygenesis model of Snyder (1981). It can be concluded that Anabaptism was not a monolith. However, two difficult questions remain: First, can it be said that *all* Anabaptists were radical? Second, who can be considered as the founder of Anabaptism? Each of these questions has polarised scholars with different theological persuasions.

To address the question of the radicalness of Anabaptism, Abraham Friesen outlines the different strains within the Radical Reformation (Friesen 1984), attempting to delineate the differences among the Anabaptist groups. He intends to explore if any political motivations might have caused these differences. Hillerbrand raises the objection that all Reformers could be called radical as they sought to break away from the religious *status quo* (Hillerbrand 2003). Dickens has reviewed Williams' book, *The Radical Reformation* (Dickens 1964) and agrees and emphasises that the Münster Rebellion has tarnished the reputation of Anabaptism and removed any remaining sympathy from all moderate Reformers. Again, this is rather unfortunate, as this rebellion lasted only 16 months, as the theological tenets that the Rebellion stood for, were remarkably different from those of the other Anabaptists of the time. Additionally, McLaughlín has reviewed Hillerbrand's book, *Radical tendencies in the Reformation: Divergent perspectives*, and provides the backdrop to the justification for East German communism (McLaughlín 1989). This shows how politically motivated some of the Reformers were, as they sought a religious pretext for sociopolitical equality. Finally, Dipple outlines the state of scholarly research about the Radical Reformation (Dipple 2009) and encourages further investigation in the spirituality of both Anabaptism and Reformation. He also refers to the various scholars engaging in this field of study, and this information proves to be helpful. Through these data points, this study seeks to cast doubt on the designation of *radical* being given to Anabaptism that was largely pacifist, but certainly diverse in nature.

Regarding the identity of Anabaptism's true founder, one is hampered by the fact that there was a number of distinct Anabaptist groups in the 16th century. Harold Bender and Arnold Snyder, both Mennonite historians, were students of Davis and Klaassen. Bender argues that Conrad Grebel was the "founder of the Anabaptist movement" (Bender 1938:158). However, Snyder (1981:277) later argues that Michael Sattler was the actual founder of the Swiss Anabaptism group. Other scholars identify both Grebel and Hübmaier as the key figures (Seiling 2014:43). Additionally, Calvin Pater, a Presbyterian historian and a graduate of Harvard, being a doctoral student of Williams (George 2014:par 4) and chair of Church History at Knox College at the University of Toronto from 1978 until his retirement in 2005 (Jackie 2012), demonstrates the primary role played by Andreas Karlstadt in the rise of Anabaptism (Pater 2019:11). It is interesting to note how a confessional divide underpins the different interpretations of the same set of data.

1.3.5 Summary

The selection of literature that covers the overarching socio-economic and geopolitical landscapes have been identified. Such data point to multifaceted political contexts in the 16th-century Europe with the rulers determining the local political realities. These distinct realities exerted pressure and shaped the evolution of many of the early Reformers. A plethora of documents attests to the changes in the Reformers' theological expressions under such influences, and also clarifies when these changes did not take place. Primary sources are used to support or question the positions of the current scholarship, as the latter often polarises along confessional lines. The quantities and qualities of the relationships that the Reformers engaged in, as revealed by the available literature, are particularly interesting and illuminating. There can be no doubt that many, but not all, Reformers had their theologies altered under multiple political sways.

1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The 16th-century Reformers founded various confessions. Many of these confessions currently still form the foundations of specific Christian denominations. Due to a loyalty to these founders, many ecumenical dialogues find resistance to an open process and

fruitful outcomes. Are these loyalties to men who lived 500 years ago founded on the romantic notion of hero-worship, or will a re-examination of these Reformers against their political contexts reveal that they were also mere mortals who were subjected to the sway of their external circumstances? Could the restoration of the Confessional founders' human imperfections – thereby demystifying their demagoguery – actually facilitate an ecumenical discourse in today's increasingly polarised world? Perhaps, a thorough re-examination of these 16th-century Reformers' theological stances within the contexts of their political affiliation and geopolitical dynamics could better appraise their theologies and reveal their fallibilities.

1.4.1 Research Questions

The main research question is: *How did the 16th-century political context influence the theology of the Reformers?* The sub-questions are:

1. What were the political contexts in which the Reformers lived and worked?
2. Who were the major Reformers and with whom were they politically associated?
3. What were the theological changes or shifts, if any, that the Reformers underwent as a result of their political contexts and affiliations?

It is not hard to imagine people being a product of their environment, but according to research, "people are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them" (Bandura 2006:164). The 16th-century Reformation was launched by the efforts of many Reformers whose theologies and actions shaped the Reformation as a movement. At the same time, the political context of the Reformation period also shaped the Reformers' theologies and actions. Through the influential relationships and political demands of their times, the Reformers could have adjusted or even compromised their theological positions, in order to expedite outcomes that were consistent with their political priorities. As great thinkers and founders of many confessions, these Reformers were mere mortals who were not able to avoid this fate, as they adapted and changed their theological tenets for political expediency. What were the specific political contexts and the relationships that influenced the early Reformers, and how did these factors contribute to the changes or evolutions in their specific theological stances?

The fact that these extraordinary Reformers modified their theological convictions because of the political pressures of the times in which they lived, often eludes today's confessional faithful, who through zeal and loyalty, may exhibit the previously mentioned *blind hero-worship* phenomenon that Newman talked about more than a century ago, which is not conducive to today's ecumenicalism (Devine 1956), if this was a goal to strive for.

As this study investigates how the early Reformers, who set the foundations for today's myriads of confessions, mostly succumbed to the political forces of their day – just as any imperfect soul today would do – it is hoped that theological discourses could continue with their followers without any misplaced devotion towards preceding or enshrined dogmatic adherences.

1.4.2 Aim and Objectives

The research aim is to identify the political background and the relationships of the 16th-century Reformers in order to examine how these factors changed the Reformers' theological positions throughout their careers.

The objectives are to

- identify the historico-political setting of the 16th-century Europe;
- identify the political figures with whom the Reformers interacted; and
- evaluate the theological influence that a given political context had on each Reformer.

1.4.3 Demarcation

Some scholars argue that the 16th-century Reformation started as early as the late Middle Ages (Gorski 2000), and indeed great Reformers like John Wycliffe and Jan Hus paid dearly for their criticisms against the Catholic Church more than one hundred years prior to the coming of Luther. However, today's confessional evangelical Christian branches mainly trace their roots to Luther and those who came after him. Since these

same esteemed Reformers defined the confessions that came after them, this study will focus on the period between 1517 to about 1570, which will cover both the continental European and English Reformation, as well as the founding of Scotland and its national church.

The study will examine the Reformers in the continental European Reformation, such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. As they represent the foundations for the Lutheran and the reformed confession, their political associations and the contexts through which they developed their theologies will be important anchors for this study. Because the Ana-baptists of the first half of the 16th-century were of various strains and groups, different representatives will be examined to see how their political affiliations influenced their theological leanings, if any.

For the English and Scottish Reformation, this study will focus on key figures, such as Cromwell, Cranmer, and Knox. As they represent the Anglican and Presbyterian traditions, their theological journeys *vis-à-vis* their interactions with their respective monarchies, as well as their respective political contexts, will also be investigated.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

When interpreting the source material written by the Reformers in the 16th century, most researchers have mainly employed the Historical Methodology, which is the process through which evidence is gathered and ideas formulated about the past. It is also the framework or the lens through which past events are examined and constructed (O'Leary 2014). This qualitative research methodology wants to engage the past through the examination of historical sources (McDowell 2002), as well as the careful evaluation of source material. Special care must be taken, as authors who compiled primary sources – voluminous writings of the Reformers – could potentially include subjective interpretations, intentionally or otherwise. As such, critical caution will be needed when engaging all secondary sources. This methodology's framework, design, and method will be discussed in the sections below.

1.5.1 Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how the political contexts during the first half of the 16th century influenced the various European Reformers' theological leanings. At the same time, the political contexts of the time were further amplified by the relationships experienced by the Reformers. As such, there are two theoretical frameworks that underpin this study to ensure that all relevant aspects are addressed.

1.5.1.1 Multifaceted Political Landscape of the 16th-Century Europe

Among the many historical surveys, Morris' theory (Morris 2002) emphasises a multi-faceted political context in the 16th-century Europe. It is argued that at the beginning of the 16th century, "Western Europe displayed a wide and complex variety of political systems" (Morris 2002:5). More specifically, while some regions were developing rudimentary state systems, "the shape and nature of the early sixteenth-century state were determined by the persons and policies of its rulers" (Morris 2002:5). As the rulers in the 16th-century Europe dictated their specific political realities within their own realms, the average Europeans of the time would experience different political forces, according to their specific locations. It is the intent of this study to investigate the specific political microcosms, including its rulers, as it was experienced by the different Reformers in the early 16th century.

1.5.1.2 Political Contexts Influence Theological Thoughts

In addition to complex political factors, Wuthnow provides a framework to synthesise the theological impact as a result of one's political environment (Wuthnow 1985). As mentioned, a person in the 16th-century Europe could encounter a different set of political systems, depending on different localities and magistrates. For example, within the Roman Empire that dominated the political landscape, the "traditional principalities such as Saxony and Bavaria…and many independent cities governed by bourgeois oligarchs (Strasbourge, Nuremberg or Frankfurt)" (Morris 2002:7), all had their own political systems. It is further asserted (Moaddel 1989:473) that a strong state-sponsored Reformation programme could ensure its success. Moreover, it is contended that "the manner

in which people experienced political sovereignty had a direct impact on the content of their religious ideas" (Wuthnow 1985:802). One can easily conclude that the various political systems exerted a strong influence on the early Reformers from Wittenberg to Edinburgh. These influences, as Wuthnow states above, inevitably changed or added to these early Reformers' theological tenets, as it was tested and scrutinised in its applications.

1.5.1.3 Relationships Shape Transformation

As previously described, any political reality in the 16th-century Europe was heavily dependent on the inclination of its particular prince. It is also theorised that relationships and social networks influence one's spiritual formation and transformation and that such relationships can be described as a "reciprocal ecology" (Lowe and Lowe 2013:5). Whenever these state actors formed a relationship with the early Reformers under investigation, this study aims to delineate how each individual relationship contributed to the political forces that exerted influence on a given Reformer. This vital component of the theoretical framework stipulates careful investigations, connecting the Reformers' theologies to their reciprocal political relationships.

1.5.1.4 Summary

Built on the framework of these theories, this study intends to re-examine – to some degree – if the early Reformers' theological leanings were impacted by their distinct political realities. Each of the key Reformers will be probed in their relationships for any political associations, as well as their unique geopolitical surroundings. These influential factors will be inspected and synthesised with each of the Reformers' theological development.

1.5.2 Research Design/Approach

This study employs both descriptive and historical research designs to investigate how the Reformers' theological positions were impacted by their political contexts.

1.5.2.1 Descriptive Research Design

“Descriptive research is essentially a fact-finding procedure with an interpretation of how the facts relate to the problem under investigation” (Espenschade and Rarick 1973:271). It can be further defined as an approach to “provide answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how” (Lynn and Lynn 2019). This design paradigm will assist in obtaining historical and factual information relevant to this study.

Additionally, a collection of historical data or documents will not suffice without a suitable analysis. The research “must go beyond data gathering” (Espenschade and Rarick 1973:271). In fact, descriptive research requires a study to systematically describe the relevant data, through qualitative “content analysis” (Atmowardoyo 2018:198) and the synthesis of various components. In providing a backdrop of the sociopolitical landscapes of the 16th-century Europe, it is vital to sift through volumes of written documents in order to synthesise and effectively describe the important contributing factors that may have influenced the minds of the people, especially the Reformers of that time.

The socio-economic forces, combined with the political directions, no doubt allowed many thinkers and Reformers to appear on the scene in the tumultuous 16th-century Europe. The design of descriptive research endeavours to “classify and analyze” (Espenschade and Rarick 1973:271), in an effort to arrive at a “better characterization” (Millner, Robinaugh, and Nock 2020:711) and understanding of the various early Reformers in this study.

1.5.2.2 Historical Research Design

Histories furnish records of past events that allow clarifications to what happened at the time. Historical Research Design enables the collection and selection of historical evidence and documents to provide a “unique potential for understanding complex phenomena measured in terms of their scope and duration” (Porra, Hirschheim, and Parks 2014:537). Since this study plans to do broad research about various state actors who were affiliated with the early Reformers to ascertain the influences which the former had on the latter, the Historical Research Design will be most beneficial and even obligatory.

It has been poignantly stated that "[t]he distinctive contribution of the historical method is in dealing with the 'dead' past – that is, when no relevant persons are alive to report, even retrospectively, what occurred and when an investigator must rely on primary documents, secondary documents, and cultural and physical artifacts as the main sources of evidence" (Yin 2003:7). Indeed, a study of the details of the 16th century can only be done through collecting primary and secondary sources by way of extensive research. Fortunately, the examination of historical material has been made less demanding through the internet and search engines. At the same time, plenty of books and records can be found in various libraries. While the actual data gathering could be exhaustive, the analysis and assessment of "the origination and intent of the source and its trustworthiness" (Wilson 2007:27) must be critically carried out. As such, the Document Analysis research method will be essential.

1.5.3 Research Method

1.5.3.1 Introduction

This study has utilised Document Analysis as a principle research method. The role of documents as a data source in qualitative research cannot be over-emphasised. It was pointed out that "[t]he analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents" (Bowen 2009:28). No doubt, the analysis, as well as the interpretation of documents relevant to this study will yield important insights.

1.5.3.2 Rationale for Document Analysis

Document Analysis is an important research method for qualitative research that employs "a systematic procedure to analyze documentary evidence and answer specific research questions" (Frey 2018:8). More importantly, qualitative research would "seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources" (Bowen 2009:28). The indispensable operating concept within this research method is called *triangulation*, whereby data assembled from multiple sources converge into identifiable realisations that become more persuasive and credible in support of a given hypothesis (Bowen 2009:38; Denzin 2017:101). At the same time, corroborating data in documents

throughout research would reduce the possibility of a single author's bias and guard against the potential accusation of the study's own bias.

1.5.3.3 The Advantage of Document Analysis

Just like the various qualitative research methods, Document Analysis also has its own sets of advantages and limitations. Bowen (2009:31) outlines a number of the advantages this method enjoys:

1. *Efficiency*: Selecting and collecting data from documents are not done in the field, so it is less time-consuming.
2. *Availability*: Many documents are in the public domain and available through the internet or research libraries.
3. *Cost-effectiveness*: The use of the internet and libraries is often free, and the data from the documents have been compiled. The only important task is to evaluate the content for its quality.
4. *Stability and exactness*: No manipulation can alter the data being studied, as documents can suffer repeated reviews without its integrity being compromised. At the same time, details such as dates, names, and such would remain mostly intact for continued investigations.
5. *Coverage*: Documents cover a long period, a wide range of events, and include various individuals and locations. Both the details and broad strokes of historiography can be covered by a plethora of available documents.

1.5.3.4 Limitations of Document Analysis

Given the many advantages of Document Analysis as a qualitative research method, rather than disadvantages, the limitations of this research method are merely considered as being "potential flaws" (Bowen 2009:32). One of the more important limitations or flaws has been identified as "biased selectivity" (Yin 1994:80; Bowen 2009:32). Care would be taken to investigate the original purpose or intent, as well as the intended audience or readers that a creator of the document could have had in mind. Since the study will be "working with pre-produced texts" (O'Leary 2014:178), caution should be taken with the potential bias of an author. Therefore, information of its author and

sources should also be considered and scrutinised, as much as the content itself. In short, the origin and purpose of the material must be investigated for its proper use (Babbie and Mouton 2001:509). Moreover, the laborious nature of Document Analysis could come from documents containing only pieces of relevant information, while other documents contain none at all. The responsibility will be on the researcher to evaluate the quality of the gathered data and avoid potential flaws and bias (Bowen 2009; O'Leary 2014).

1.5.4 Trustworthiness

Confessional bias in the study of historiography in Christian religion has clearly been noted (Gregory 2006:132). This study intends to include sources from all perspectives, across confessional lines, as well as secular ones. Nevertheless, in the interest of full disclosure, this researcher is concerned with a broader ecumenicalism in Christianity. By uncovering the founders of various Christian confessions and their theological expressions as products of political necessities, it is hoped that an ingrained dogma on all sides would be minimised to facilitate better ecumenical dialogue. Additionally, the researcher is more sympathetic towards the Swiss Anabaptists, as its apolitical core tenet indeed largely minimised or even rejected any politicised doctrinal positions in the 16th century. Be that as it may, care will be taken to avoid bias towards all groups, as the investigation delves into each group's political background and theological positions through sources from all viewpoints.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Symbiosis

Symbiosis is a term borrowed from the discipline of biology, describing two different organisms living closely in a mutually beneficial way, with each providing in the needs of the other. In this study, it is used to describe the relationships of individuals or groups of people that derive mutual advantages through their associations.

1.6.2 Libertine

This term denotes a person indulging in sensual pleasures without moral guidance. In this study, it is used to describe the political faction opposing Calvin in the city of Geneva.

1.6.3 Pedobaptism

This is the belief and practice of infant baptism.

1.6.4 Sacramentarian(ism)

It is a belief that the Eucharist only holds symbolic meaning, with the bread and wine being only the metaphorical, not physical, body and blood of Christ.

1.6.5 Gynarchy

Gynarchy refers to a government that is ruled by a woman, and in this study, Knox was the only Reformer contending in this situation, as he was routinely under the government of several female monarchs.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The first chapter serves as an orientation and introduction to this study. As an important event in human history, the Reformation of the 16th-century Europe happened a little over 500 years ago. Academics need to revisit and re-examine the often taken-for-granted events and figures that shaped the religious historiography. This chapter outlines the background and methodology with which the data will engage and be analysed in order to make conclusions at the end of the study.

Chapter 2 delves into the specific circumstances which gave rise to the Reformation. The sociopolitical context preceding the 16th-century Europe, as well as the technological advances that functioned as the catalysts will be discussed. More importantly, the theological voices espoused by important figures are put forward as possible precursors to the Reformation. This chapter provides the stage in which the Reformers made their case when interacting with their political contexts.

Chapter 3 outlines the degree of complexity inherent in a movement such as the Reformation. Some examples of theological contentions that divide the Reformation theologians are laid out. Various Magisterial Reformers of the 16th century are discussed and dissected for their theological evolutions against the backdrop of their political situations. The Reformers' political associations and relevant geopolitical factors are also considered and investigated to ascertain the theological changes. Important state actors, such as the German princes, as well as significant events, such as the invasion of the Turks, are evaluated for their impact on the theologians.

Chapter 4 focusses on the Anabaptists. As a multi-faceted group, several prominent leaders within this nomenclature are discussed. Each of these leaders, with many of them short-lived, is introduced and investigated for their theological positions. Events that may have maligned the group, such as the Münster Rebellion, are also inspected. Although their theologies were diverse, they had one thing in common: All of them were persecuted. The reasons for these persecutions are briefly explored.

Chapter 5 moves away from continental Europe to examine the English Reformation. Two important Reformers, Cromwell and Cranmer are discussed. Although they both served King Henry VIII and both ended up being executed, their theological oscillations under Henry's political whims receive close investigation.

Chapter 6 takes the study to Scotland, where Knox became the pivotal figure in the Scottish Reformation. Unapologetically larger-than-life, Knox personified such a struggle and is cross-examined in his relationships with the four female monarchs. Knox's encounters with various Reformers are also discussed and synthesised for his theological development.

Chapter 7 is the final and concluding chapter of the study. A summary of the literature review, the data analysis, a synthesis of the research findings, and the answers to the research questions forms the first part of this chapter. Additionally, a discussion of pos-

sible typologies to Reformation is proposed. Certain limitations of the study are mentioned, and future recommendations for additional research are suggested.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter is an introduction to the re-examination of the 16th-century Reformers and their political contexts. More importantly, it outlines the investigative direction to understand how the political contexts influence their theological outcomes. Both the objectives and the methods are set forth for careful and unbiased analysis. The literature review follows the direction outlined by the methodological and theoretical framework, as well as the broad historiography of the 16th-century European socio-economic and political settings. Additional literature and periodicals are reviewed to dissect the issues or dissenting voices focussed on by this study. The data collected through the books and journals that have been identified and reviewed above are considered a reliable foundation for this study to ascertain historical connections between the Reformers' political contexts and corresponding theological modifications. In the following chapters, the research questions and the context of this investigation will be presented, argued, and answered.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXT OF THE 14TH- AND 15TH-CENTURY EUROPE

2.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1.1 Introduction

This study sets out to investigate how the 16th-century early Reformers' political context influenced their theological outcomes. As the Reformation celebrated its 500th anniversary in 2017, the subject of ecumenicalism seems to be important once again, especially in light of the sporadic global conflicts along the lines of religion. It has been pointed out that "[t]heology is linked with discord; and in a post 9/11 world religion is seen as a promoter of discord and its experts, theologians, seen as stoking the fires of discord" (O'Loughlin 2013:132). Therefore, a better understanding of the confessional differences in their theological origins, in the context of the political environment that gave birth to them, could provide a new perspective in the ongoing ecumenical conversation. In order to achieve that aim, the sociopolitical context leading up to the Reformation of the 16th century must be examined.

2.1.2 The Socio-Economic Conditions

Life was tough for most people living in the 15th-century Europe. It is argued that the great plague of the second half of the 14th century caused a sudden economic collapse and continued stagnation (Robinson 1959:63). A figure as high as 40% is postulated for the effects of the plague and famine in reducing the total population of some cities (Thrupp 1966:482). Sullivan also concurs with the dire assessment by quoting Cantor poignantly, "Medieval civilization received its mortal wound between 1270 and 1325 and there remained only the long death agony of chaos and malaise during the next 150 years" (Sullivan 1981:554).

It is during this late medieval period that the feudal system exacerbated the socio-economic crisis by providing additional antagonism and conflicts to the peasants and their landlords. The latter included monks who levied heavy taxes on the peasants (Morris 2002:45). These exploitations led to numerous conflicts, and it was often the lo-

cal bishops or abbots who led the armed responses against the rebellious peasants who refused to pay their dues (Blickle and Catt 1979:229). From the hostile taxation to the manipulation of the peasants' rights of inheritance, these conflicts dramatically increased the tension in the decades leading up to the turn of the 16th century, setting the stage for the Reformation.

2.1.3 The Political Conditions

On the political front, the old feudal system of barons and knights gave way to the emerging princes, with many of them cooperating with, or subjugated by, the clergy, who as the representatives of the church, had become the largest landholders. Indeed, the church had become the dominant financial power, and with it, wielded unchallenged authority that burdened all classes (Meinbold 1972:25). A record shows one such monastery with lands in Bavaria that had some 4,500 peasants living on it, and it was the harsh treatment by the clergy for many decades that eventually drove most of the latter to join the Peasants' War in 1525. Unsurprisingly, the despised monastery was eventually burned and ransacked, with its clergy kicked out (Sreenivasan 2001:34). The intricate relationships between the political elite and the ecclesiastical authority, were not only inseparable, but also defined the lives of the masses. To the peasants, these people in power (political or clerical) might as well be one and the same, for both were loathed equally. At the same time, the feudal states, having morphed into *free and imperial cities* with their own princes as rulers, allowed each to act independently and embraced different strains of reform thoughts. It is estimated that, by 1500, there were at least 65 such cities in Germany (Whaley 2012:41).

Sociopolitically, on a macro level, it is asserted that when the pope was in Rome, Italy benefited from tax collections from all over Europe, but when the pope was in Avignon in the 14th century, France benefited. This left Germany holding the proverbial bag when it came to receiving any benefit from clerical taxation, and that "the Catholic church owned half of Germany, while only a fifth of France" (Varickayil 1980:16). Soon afterwards, such unreasonable financial arrangements and irregularities fomented ample re-

sentment for the German princes and cities to embrace the Reformation much more readily.

2.2 THE OTHER CATALYSTS THAT LED TO THE REFORMATION

2.2.1 The Invention of Printing and the Renaissance in Europe

The socio-economic crisis alluded to in the previous chapter, not only pushed Europe as a whole into a chaotic turmoil, but also set in motion additional catalysts that gave birth to the Reformation. One of the pivotal catalysts was the Renaissance Humanism. However, it is well argued that the advent of printing, beyond any other contributing factors, was responsible for the beginning of the Renaissance Humanism (Eisenstein 1969; Woodward 1980).

It took about two decades for Johann Gutenberg and Johann Fust to arrive at a working model of the printing press, and within 15 years, printed books were available all across Germany (Rublack 2016:373). As a direct result, the exchange of learning and information was propelled to a level never seen before. With so much learning in the hands of the commoners and scholars alike, the Renaissance Humanism was born. It has been indicated that the term “Renaissance” or the Italian term, *Rinascimento*, connoted a condescending rejection of the culture of the Middle Ages, while the term “Humanism” confirms a higher sophistication of human existence through the process of learning (Lucas 1960:208-209). Indeed, the printing-assisted awakening of the Renaissance was intricately intertwined with the 16th-century Reformation, as the production of Gutenberg’s great Bible, being printed from the second half of the 15th century onward, quickly spread across Europe (Morris 2002:52).

It is with this enlightenment, that the paradigm of the Middle Ages was examined and subsequently rejected. The Renaissance was also the time that universities were founded and flourished across Europe. Within a few decades, the number of universities almost doubled from 29 to 57 before the turn of the 15th century. These universities “hosted innovative research in many fields and changed forever European religion and society” (Grendler 2004:1-2). Although it may not have been the intention at the begin-

ning, it seems that it was inevitable that science in the form of technology and inventions would come to question the dogma of the church.

As alluded to earlier, in addition to empowering the Renaissance Humanism and university learning, printing is reported to have published, “between 1457 to 1517, more than 400 editions of the Bible” (Varickayil 1980:20). Furthermore, by the time the Diet of Worms was held four years later, Luther had already published and sold “30 items and more than 300,000 copies of his writings” (Varickayil 1980:22). Such was the power and the crucial role of printing in the Reformation.

2.2.2 The Age of Exploration and Discovery

While Humanism excited the European academics, the exploration and discovery of the western coast of Africa in the first half of the 15th century and the discovery of the Caribbean islands in 1492 by Christopher Columbus (Lucas 1960:380-383), took the Renaissance to a feverish level, as well as confirming its judgement of rejecting the old while embracing the new.

In contrast to the exciting new knowledge and inventions brought on by the Renaissance Humanism, the 15th century was marked by religious corruption and papal incompetence (Maseko 2008:58; Deidda Gagliardo 2013:568). For a few 100 years during the Middle Ages, the feudal lords and the religious establishments were regarded as being together in the proverbial bed regarding their exploitations of the peasants. By serving in the civil administration that included birth registrations, wedding ceremonies, deaths, inheritances, etc., the church dominated the lives of the commoners, even the feudal lords themselves. At the same time, the latter “regularly appointed bishops and priests according to their own interests” (Fischer 1992:438). It is not hard to understand how mutually beneficial it was for the feudal lords and their religious counterparts to work together closely. By the dawn of the 16th century, these feudal lords were gradually being replaced by the emerging powerful princes, and the church by the upstart Reformers. The *modus operandi* for mutual benefits would remain the same, but the operators were evolving, as the 16th century marched on.

2.3 KEY THINKERS AND INFLUENCERS OF THE TIME

2.3.1 Background: The Corruption of the Papal State

With the socio-economic upheaval of the 15th century and the political powers shifting from the castles to the cities, the ancient European religion was set for a widespread spiritual awakening. The papal state, ironically, facilitated this unwelcoming surprise that led to the Reformation within a couple of centuries. One of the facilitating factors was the unprepossessing power struggles at the very top of the ecclesiastical leadership. From 1309 to 1378, there were seven successive popes at Avignon. Then, beginning in 1378, the Great Western Schism resulted in two popes, one each in Rome and Avignon (Nievergelt 2015:403). Then followed the age of the Councils, or the conciliar movement from 1409 to 1449 that attempted to utilise Cardinals to check the powers of the then three concurrent popes, resulting in "one of the tragedies in the history of western civilization" (Biechler 1975:5). It is said that the famed William of Ockham published radical pamphlets around the time of the seven popes and challenged the authority and infallibility of the pope that later left a profound impact on Luther (Lucas 1960:79-81). It is also during this time of chaos that the peasants' taxes and financial exploitations, such as the selling of indulgences were expanded, as well as the selling of the ecclesiastical offices for financial gain (Morris 2002:44).

2.3.2 John Wycliffe (ca. 1330-1384)

While William of Ockham only published a few tracts against the church, he nevertheless auspiciously propagated enough antagonism that later influenced several formidable opponents for the Catholic Church to contend with. One such important figure of the time was John Wycliffe. He was a professor at the University of Oxford around the middle of the 14th century, and is sometimes referred to as the "Morning Star" (McFarlane 1953:186) of the Reformation, the "forerunner of the sixteen-century Reformers" (Black 2019:141), or the "great precursor of the Reformation" (Ormerod 2014:283).

Although Wycliffe's university was not located in continental Europe, the universities of Bologna, Paris, and Prague all looked up to the authority of the University of Oxford (Odlozilik 1929:634). Wycliffe criticised the church on many fronts. He rejected the in-

dulgences on the ground of its lacking of scriptural authority (Wycliffe 1845:16; Shaffern 1998:644). He called the pope, the *Anti*-Christ, and claimed that such office was not even biblical. He regarded the church property to be a social evil that required to be purged and disowned. He elevated the authority of the king above the church, and called the people to submit to the rule of the former, regardless of his righteousness (Rao 1942:377; Black 2019:142). It is no wonder that such convictions were of welcoming nature to the ears of the earthly princes that were at odds with the church at the time. Even more dangerous for the established religious order, however, was Wycliffe's accusation of the clerical corruption, the unbiblical nature of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that all Christians should read and interpret the Scriptures on their own (Brandolino 2013:413). It is important to point out that Wycliffe's teachings did generate a following – the Lollards – who inspired and influenced the reforming minds in central Europe during the early 15th century (Odlozilik 1929:638). Through his teachings and influence, both in England and continental Europe, as well as doctrinally and politically, Wycliffe represented a major catalyst in setting the stage for the Reformation which would take place one century later.

2.3.3 John Hus (ca. 1369-1415)

John Hus (or Jan Hus) attended the University of Prague, where Wycliffe's teachings, even years after his death, found a perfect breeding ground. By 1401, the year when Hus became the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Prague, the religious discontent was palpable in Bohemia. Although pre-Hussite reform movements had been started by the likes of Matthew of Cracow and Mathias of Janov, it was Hus who became the face of the Bohemian struggle for religious independence (Betts 1939:97). Betts further argued that for Hus (as well as Wycliffe for England), the Bohemian reformation "was as much a protest against foreign domination as against purely religious evils" (Betts 1939:108). Once again, it seemed as if the religious reformation and political struggles for independence were inseparable in the century leading up to Luther's actions. Hus' violent death by burning on 6 July 1415 (Fudge 2011:47) motivated his followers to continue his fight. In addition to the politico-religious struggle, it is argued that the Hussite movement was the *first* modern European revolution, in that its social

action was a product of “theological controversy” (Fudge 1994:100). Indeed, the followers of John Hus demonstrated that during the period before the Reformation of the 16th century, Europe was full of social, political, and religious upheavals. It is the researcher’s viewpoint that the theological variants of the Reformation can only be understood through such complexity of context. If Fudge is correct, the social chaos was the result of the inseparable interactions between the *theological controversy* and the political struggle. Then it follows that a thorough re-examination of the Reformation through these two important and intertwined factors is more than warranted. It is the purpose of this study to elucidate such interlaced and symbiotic relationships, as they pertain to the theological credence of the Reformers.

2.3.4 Erasmus of Rotterdam (ca. 1466-1536)

Another important figure at the dawn of the Reformation was Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. Although Erasmus was not sure which year he was born, scholars have the opinion that it was in 1466, 1467, or 1469 (Grendler 1983:89). Nevertheless, born in Rotterdam, Erasmus is estimated to be approximately 17 years older than Luther (Bishop 1906:129). He advocated practical teaching on Christianity and a new approach to theology through a new humanist method, but more importantly, he paraphrased “the New Testament for lay people in an accessible and popular style” (Christ-Von Wedel 2013:255). Indeed, Erasmus was ahead of his time. Throwing off the shackles of the wearisome scholasticism of medieval times, Erasmus brought a breath of fresh air to theology. He is well-known for being a Renaissance humanist and “a Catholic Reformer who criticised the Church” (Dodds 2013:274) without ever leaving Catholicism. Although he was sympathetic to Luther’s cause (given that Erasmus agreed with Luther regarding the urgent need for clerical reforms), Erasmus nevertheless eventually distanced himself from Luther. His reason for doing so is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is important to note that it was the kind and generous recommendation from Erasmus to Frederick the Wise that more than assisted and furthered the cause of Luther (Christ-Von Wedel 2013:168). Once again, it was through the relationships with the political elite, such as Frederick the Wise and Charles V of the Habsburg dynasty (Bejczy 1997:395), that Erasmus was able to shield Luther’s criticism of the church from bring-

ing any physical harm to himself. This is not to say that Erasmus' criticism, mostly academic in nature, was ever a serious threat to the *status quo*. In truth, Erasmus' innocuous reproves of the church inspired a class of Evangelical Rationalists in the decades that followed (Caspari 1947:78).

2.4 CONCLUSION

At this stage of the study, it is important to note that the connection or the patronage that these Reformers enjoyed with their political princes was of life-saving importance. Wycliffe had John of Gaunt (Manning 1926:67; Dahmus 1960:51), Hus had King Wenceslas (Betts 1939:97), and Erasmus had Charles V of the Habsburg dynasty (Bejczy 1997:396) as their all-important personal champions. These symbiotic relationships, through which the Reformers' theologies justified the agenda of the princes, and the latter in turn provided protection and a platform for the former's theological crusades, proved to be a successful formula for not just survival, but prosperity. However, once this symbiosis ruptured, like in the case of Wycliffe who insisted in his criticism of transubstantiation, or in the case of Hus' condemnation of the sale of indulgences, the respective patron princes had to reluctantly sacrifice their theologian partners. Although Wycliffe died of a stroke, the ecclesiastical authority eventually dug up his body and burned it to ashes; Hus was burned alive at the stake (Foxe 1978:103-104). Erasmus, on the other hand, enjoyed his fame and untarnished symbiotic relationship with Roman Emperor Charles V, then died at a ripe old age of 70, followed by a great ceremony in the Basel Minster cathedral (Brennan 1924:303). The Reformers that followed, either heeded to such history lessons or suffered the same unwelcoming fate some 100 years later.

CHAPTER 3
THE REFORMERS AND THE REFORMATION COMPLEXITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the important background factors, such as the socio-economic and political contexts, as well as the technological catalysts that led to the Reformation were highlighted. More importantly, the religious thoughts that often assisted the masses in coping with the challenging external conditions were shaped by important theologians who are now considered to be the forerunners of the Reformation. This chapter explores the next generation Reformers, especially the Magisterial Reformers who have shaped the theological landscapes. Additionally, examples of doctrinal differences that divided the Reformers are delineated to reflect the complexity of the Reformation.

3.2 THE REFORMATION COMPLEXITY

The complexity of the Reformation, as an "epoch-making event" (Evener 2017:310) has been well-argued. In order to answer the research questions adequately, it is important to identify and investigate the Reformers individually and critically. While the non-Magisterial Reformers are discussed briefly, the main focus of this chapter will be on the celebrated Magisterial Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

3.2.1 The Legend of Martin Luther

It is agreed that the forces that ushered in the Reformation, gathered momentum at least a few centuries before, and that the corruption of the church made changes indisputably urgent (McNally 1967:439). Luther's legendary 95 theses that he allegedly nailed on the door of the Wittenberg church, were simply the fuse that ignited the proverbial powder keg. However, as history can be easily embellished by later memories, Luther's iconic act of nailing the theses on the door of the Wittenberg church was never mentioned by himself, but only reported once by his loyal friend, Philipp Melanchthon (Driscoll 2019:246), who was not even in Wittenberg at the time (Krey 2017:1). That was the first and only public testimony throughout history, but it was enough for this image to sear into Luther's followers' collective consciousness, completed by several 19th-

century artists who etched the act of posting of the document forever in the public's imagination (Dixon 2017:535). However, some current scholars would argue that, "[i]n fact, it is unlikely that such an event ever took place" (Whaley 2012:143).

It was not Luther's intention to break away from the church when he published his theses (Wengert 2015a:4-5; Whaley 2012:169). However, he wanted to reform it from within (Von Ranke *et al*. 1966:217; Nelson 2017:91). His idea soon spread to other parts of Europe through the newly arrived technology of the printing press.

3.2.2 Ulrich Zwingli and Anabaptism

Another notable Reformer this study intends to focus on is Zwingli, whom some assert to have derived his Reformation theology independent from Luther (Eccher 2017:33). Although he died in a battle against the army backing the Catholic Church in 1531, he nevertheless incubated a strain of Anabaptism – the Swiss Brethren (Thompson 2009:6), who contributed to the multifaceted Reformation of the 16th century.

About the same time, in 1524, another strain of Anabaptism, more radical, under the leadership of Thomas Müntzer, made headlines when they joined in the Peasants' War. At first, Müntzer was influenced by Luther's theology, especially the latter's end-time eschatology. However, he eventually adopted the opposite position at the rebellion (Kuenning 1987:305). This tragic event, known as the Peasants' War, strengthened the symbiotic relationship between Luther and his benefactor, Frederick the Wise, as well as tarnished the reputation of all strains of Anabaptism. With the subsequent Münster Rebellion a decade later, Anabaptism in *all* forms has unfortunately been labelled as the *radical wing* of the Reformation (Williams 1992:7; De Groot 1993:200; Roth 2002:523).

It is clear that many of the Reformers in the early 16th-century Europe espoused different theological positions. This study will briefly discuss some examples of theological issues below, and then engage each Reformer's key doctrinal positions against their individual political contexts in the later chapters.

3.2.3 Various Strains of Theological Thoughts Dividing the Reformation

It is stated that "during the formative years of the Reformation there was however no sign of a single agreed response" (Zitzlsperger 2014:311). Therefore, it is important to understand the different strains of theological thoughts underpinning the Reformation, by delineating the major theological issues that diverted the various groups. When Luther published his theses, it was mostly against the teaching and practice of the indulgences. As such, from its inception, the Reformation was to disagree with a few issues and to merely reform certain practices. However, in less than a couple of decades, theological debates grew to include issues such as the Eucharist, pedobaptism, and the relation between church and state. These theological divergences inevitably splintered the nascent movement.

3.2.3.1 Issues of the Eucharist

While Luther did not stray far from the official Catholic teaching of transubstantiation and insisted on Jesus' physical presence being *somewhere* in the Eucharist, Zwingli strongly argued for a mere symbolic meaning in the Eucharist (Henning 1986:319). Landgrave Philip of Hessen wanted to resolve this conflict between these two prominent Reformers in order to present a unified front against Charles V and the Catholic Church. However, Philip's valiant effort failed on one of the fifteen points, namely the issue of real presence or symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist, and it was enough to sabotage the desired unity (Appold 2017:58). The political contexts of this intriguing event will be further explored in the ensuing chapters. Besides the interpretation of this sacrament, the practice of one kind or both kinds fell into a dispute as well. The traditional Catholic practice of the clergy placing merely the bread onto the tongue of the faithful was gradually changed to the reformed congregants partaking in both the bread and the wine (Magee 1993:365).

3.2.3.2 Issues of Pedobaptism

While the practice of pedobaptism can only be inferred in the New Testament Scriptures, by the end of the 2nd century, the African church father, Tertullian, in his *On Baptism* 18 (Schaff n.d.:1180-1181), hinted at its prevalence and commented on its controversy

(Schaff n.d.:1180; Evans 2016:101; Knell 2017:67). However, there is no doubt that by the 16th century, everyone in Europe was baptised as an infant. Needless to say, any deviating practice would bring about a strong pushback from the *status quo*.

Through the printing press and volumes of tracks written and read by many common people and theologians alike, the teaching and practice of pedobaptism came into question during the early days of the Reformation. The first group that would eventually be called the Anabaptists who objected to pedobaptism and insisted on adult re-baptism, was the Swiss Brethren, with Grebel as one of the group's principal leaders. Suspecting that Müntzer was also against pedobaptism, and therefore, a possible ally, Grebel wrote to him for confirmation in a personal letter, *Letters to Thomas Müntzer by Conrad Grebel and Friends* on 5 September 1524 (Grebel 1991:45). Although Grebel's letter never reached him, it is argued that Müntzer continued to practice pedobaptism, even though he was against it (Friesen 1986:148). Despite the popular acceptance of Müntzer as an undisputed and recognised Anabaptist (Packull 1986:61), it is clear that within such typology, there existed significant differences among the so-called Anabaptist groups, even when it comes to the practice of pedobaptism. Therefore, if Friesen is correct, then the designation of Müntzer as an Anabaptist could be called into doubt.

Less than a year after Grebel's inquiry of Müntzer's position on pedobaptism, Grebel led a disputation with Zwingli on the same issue and lost. As Zwingli and the Zürich City Council firmly held on to pedobaptism, Grebel and others were disappointed and started to break away as a distinct group. They first (re)baptised one another, as a collective statement of their rejection of pedobaptism. Unfortunately, this non-violent group would eventually pay dearly for their insistence on such unconventional and innovative beliefs (Bender 1938:171).

3.2.3.3 Issues of Church and State

The ecclesiastical and political powers have become inseparable after Constantine became the Roman Emperor (Armstrong 1964:6). This long and unbroken 1,200 years of close association before the time of the Reformation was sure to bound most people to

the *status quo*, whether they realised it or not. Nevertheless, many theologians over this long stretch of time had espoused different interpretations on this problematic issue regarding church and state.

Augustine wrote the *City of God* in the early 5th century, and it is said that he propagated the separation of the church and state, or at least sow such seeds for others to follow (Feldman 1998:26). It is asserted that, echoing Augustine, Luther also delineated the reality of two kingdoms that co-exist as God governs his people (Carty 2017:37-39). However, around the same time, it is considered that Zwingli preferred to hold that "church and society are not to be viewed as two separate entities" (Raath and De Freitas 2002:45), and as such, an armed struggle against any political authority was justified. For this conviction, Zwingli died in such a battle in 1531. It is claimed that Zwingli's position "decisively shaped the political views of the Genevan Reformer John Calvin" (Raath and De Freitas 2002:47).

During the next couple of centuries, the conviction of the Reformers on the issue of political authority *vis-à-vis* ecclesiastical authority, state vs. church, or Magistry vs. ministry, determined the outcome of their theologies, their influences, and even their lives, for better or for worse. In this regard, the Anabaptists fared the worst, as they were persecuted by both the Magisterial Reformers as well as the Catholics (Pietersen 2020:288).

3.2.4 Symbiosis of the Magisterial Reformers

The term "symbiosis" derives from the Greek term that can be split up in "*syn*" (that can be translated with "together with") and "*bios*" (that can be translated with "life"). The term describes a relationship through which both parties derive a mutual benefit (Rostorfer 1930:23). Many of the famous Reformers were enjoying such symbiotic relationships with their princes and cities. While it is not a criticism of their characters, it demonstrates their political acumens, sometimes at the expense of their theological convictions or conscience, amidst the turmoil of the 16th-century Europe. These famous Reformers are often termed "Magisterial Reformers," and they have been described as "still largely medieval men who ultimately took refuge in existing structures and attempted reform

through compromise" (Furcha 1972:20). Indeed, the Reformers, when working closely with magistrates to embark on collective efforts for reformation, would no doubt accommodate and prioritise the needs of the political authorities over theological ambiguities. This study aims to explicate any symbiotic amalgam of religiopolitical nature that was formed when the Reformers collaborated with their political partners.

For example, it has been pointed out that the Reformation started and blossomed in Germany at the beginning of the 16th century because Germany "had suffered the worst form of Papal exactions" (Varickayil 1980:16). The German princes were more than ready to throw off the shackles of the papal dominance. This important factor would allow Luther to work in conjunction with these princes to execute his reform with more success than his predecessors in other countries ever could.

3.2.5 The Difficulty of Radical Reformation as a Concept

Williams' seminal work in 1962 coined the term "Radical Reformation," but it also raised quite a few doubts or objections (De Groot 1993:199-200). It would be easy to disparage the concept of Radical Reformation as a convenient burial ground for the different strains of the Reformation, other than those classified as the *Magisterial Refor*mers, like Luther and Calvin. Yet, for all intended purposes, the lack of theological unity among the non-Magisterial Reformers does present a problem in the attempt for classification (Dipple 2009:243-244).

It is noted that Williams divided the Radical Reformation branch into three distinct groups: The Anabaptists, the Spiritualists, and the Evangelical Rationalists, where the last two groups were "fewer in number than the Anabaptists" (Fix 1987:64). Therefore, this study will examine some of the Reformers from this *radical* camp, mainly focussed on the Anabaptist group, to contrast with the Magisterial Reformers. The study is interested in how each group differed in dealing with the political issues they encountered.

3.3 MARTIN LUTHER AT WITTENBERG

3.3.1 Background

Much has been written on the life of Luther (Kolb 1999; Marius 2000). This study is interested in his association with various political figures and examines how such associations or relationships may have shaped or influenced his theological tendencies.

Luther was ordained to the priesthood in 1507 and it is deduced from some of his writings that he had already disagreed with indulgences as early as 1509 (Wicks 2015:4). Within three years after Luther has published his theses at Wittenberg, he was officially excommunicated by a second bull from Pope Leo X, on 3 January 1521, as his heretical teachings were banned. This turn of the event necessitated personal protection, which came in the form of Frederick the Wise (Lull and Nelson 2015:340). Scholars concur that the alliance between the German princes was as much political as it was religious, with both politics and religion presenting their own set of problems and dilemmas as well as opportunities (Muller and Bouman 1977:127; Christensen 1984:421; Jensen 2018:9-10).

The pivotal years for the Reformation, between 1529 and 1530, saw the reaction of the holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in dealing with the splintered but powerful German princes. Some of these princes remained loyal to Catholicism and the Habsburg dynasty, while others supported Luther or took Zwingli's side. It is around this time that Luther realised that besides the power of his preaching and writing, his reform would require a partnership with the civil authority (Jensen 2018:12). In fact, there would be more than a few political partners that Luther eventually found himself with. This study will examine the following individuals and inspect Luther's relationship with them, as he navigated his theological priorities.

3.3.2 Frederick III the Wise, Elector of Saxony (ca. 1463-1525)

In 1502, Elector Frederick the Wise founded the University of Wittenberg to which Luther enrolled six years later. With the Renaissance Humanism and the pursuit of intellectual excitement at its height, any enlightened prince with financial means would want

to build a university to enhance his own prestige and influence (Silver 2010:130) and also to ameliorate the human resources capability in the land he ruled. In the same way, the Landgrave of Hesse, who later on became a close associate of Luther, also founded a university in Marburg in 1527 (Kolb 2018:21). However, Frederick the Wise never had a personal relationship with Luther. The former offered protection for the latter because of several different reasons. First of all, Erasmus, a close and trusted friend of Frederick the Wise, advised the latter to assist Luther (Lull and Nelson 2015:112). Second, Luther was an exemplary student at Frederick's Wittenberg University. Third, it is asserted that Frederick the Wise, a devout Christian, had agreed with Luther on many of his teachings (Dillenberger 1993:955). Fourth, Luther's teachings against indulgences were helpful for Frederick who forbade such sales that benefited the neighbouring princes and Rome (Wicks 1983:525). The irony has been pointed out as Frederick also had the similar indulgences sale of his own at the same time (Kolb 2018:213). Apparently, Frederick did not want competition from the papist friar Johannes Tetzel, who was selling indulgences on behalf of a neighbouring prince, Albrecht Mainz, in the spring of 1517 (Whitford 2016:534). Finally, the princes had a "political desire to be out from under the authority of the Habsburgs and the papacy" (Sorensen 2016:104). Frederick the Wise did not personally engage Luther (except for observing the latter from a distance at the Diet of Worms), but instead, utilised an intermediary, George Spalatin, to communicate and arrange for Luther's protection. In that regard, Luther was respectful and grateful, by keeping Frederick and Spalatin up to date, as well as providing consultations when occasions arose. It worked out to be a mutually beneficial arrangement (Maxfield 2016:435-436).

It was the reform by Frederick, with the other regional princes, that limited the expansionist dreams of the holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I of the House of Habsburg (Brady 1990:307). It was not an easy feat for, since 1438, the House of Habsburg had continuously occupied the throne of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, Frederick the Wise, through his pious example, "commanded widespread respect in the German Empire and beyond" (Kolb 2018:212-213). With Frederick's powerful influence in Germany, Luther was able to find protection from harm during the most treacherous time of the

early days of the Reformation. Furthermore, although Frederick kept his distance, his family members, such as Christina of Saxony, assisted greatly in spreading the Lutheran influence, even as far as Scandinavia, when she married King Johann of Denmark (Kolb 2018:235). Undoubtedly, Luther's political connections helped in the spread of the Lutheran Reformation – far and wide.

3.3.3 Johann the Steadfast, Elector of Saxony (ca. 1468-1532)

Johann the Steadfast, also called John the Constant or John of Saxony, was the younger brother of Frederick the Wise and was more vocal in his support of Luther's reform, to the extent that he would frequent parishes to ensure that they followed the reformed practices prescribed by Luther. He also formed an alliance with Philip of Hesse, another Lutheran loyalist German prince (Kolb 2018:214), albeit with some hesitation (Christensen 1984:421). After the death of his brother, Frederick the Wise, John was even more fervent in supporting Luther's reform. Along with Philip of Hesse, John was instrumental in facilitating the drafting of the *Schwabach Articles* (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2021b), which a year later formed the basis for the famous *Augsburg Confession* (McCain 2022) in 1530 (Cahill 1995:190).

In order to oppose the holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who succeeded his paternal grandfather Maximilian I in 1519, the two German princes, John of Saxony and Philip of Hesse, built their own pro-Reformation alliance to include Margrave George of Brandenburg-Ansbach and other states. When John asked Luther what he thinks of such an alliance, the latter surprisingly opposed it. In his *Letter to Elector John*, dated 22 May 1529, Luther gave three reasons: 1) It could entice the enemy to attack first; 2) the alliance could be forced to align with the Zwingli camp, whom Luther considered as opposing the word of God; and 3) citing the Old Testament that human alliance would show a lack of trust in God (Luther [1529] 2003:327-329; Christensen 1984:423; Jensen 2018:14). There can be no doubt that Luther, the theologian, was also well-versed in a geopolitical strategy. Although he argued against it, the evangelical alliance known as the Schmalkald League was eventually formed in 1531, a year after the Diet of Augsburg (Haug-Moritz 2008:433).

Luther had also argued to submit to the earthly authority, which in this case, was Emperor Charles V. However, when John of Saxony asked Luther if it would be right to defend against the emperor's attack, surprisingly, Luther replied that the elector had the right within his domain to oppose any authority that threatened the faith of the people (Jensen 2018:21-22). Such advice was certainly music in John's ears.

On a relational level, John had more contact with Luther than his brother Frederick ever had. For example, during a dispute in 1531 between Luther and the Town Council of Zwickau over the firing of a pastor, John presided over their reconciliation meetings (Kolb 2018:96). However, it is only fair to point out that their relationship was not always conflict-free. In May 1528, John wrote a letter to Luther inquiring about his publications that were critical of John's cousin, Duke George of Saxony, who was known for his opposition to the Reformation. John subsequently requested that Luther's future correspondence of political or religious nature to George be approved by established protocols. For close to three years, Luther was compliant, until April 1531, after George again complained to John about Luther's alleged insolent letters. This time, Luther defended himself and chastised John for not being more supportive, by referencing how the other Catholic princes supported their theologians (Edwards 1983:42-46). Scholars continue to debate the German princes' motivation in supporting Luther's Reformation and conclude that their "genuine political and religious goals were so enmeshed that it would be artificial and speculative to separate them" (Hendrix 1994:211).

3.3.4 Philip I, Landgrave of Hesse (ca. 1504-1567)

Landgrave, like Duke, was a title of nobility. Philip first met Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521, at the age of 17. Since Luther was 21 years Philip's senior, the latter must have been quite impressed by the reputation and eloquence of Luther (Lull and Nelson 2015:124). We do not know if it was this chance encounter that started Philip's interest in the evangelical cause, but there is no doubt that Philip later became one of Luther's most important allies.

Against his father-in-law, Duke George of Saxony, and other powerful princes who were loyal supporters of the Catholic faith, Philip of Hesse embraced Luther's reforms and struck an alliance with the Ernestine Saxon brothers, Frederick and John (Muller and Bouman 1977:126). Eventually, it was Philip's divorce that placed Luther in a difficult political quandary that further revealed his theological adaptability.

3.3.5 Intolerance of Heterodoxy

Before being accepted into the Diet of Augsburg in 1555, the doctrine of *cuius regio, eius religio* (which simply meant that the religion of the ruler is the religion of the people), had already been a deep-rooted European belief since the late-medieval period demanding that "any deviation from the interpretation of Christianity accepted by the state [is] a political crime" (Beck 1986:139; Varickayil 1980:25). However, the irony should be pointed out that, while the budding *reformed* Christianity was judged by Rome as violating such doctrine, only a century later, the Reformation also used the Justinian law codes to make heresies a crime against the state in the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 (Jensen 2018:10). It is with this dichotomy of mind that the Reformers tried to negotiate the intricate political and religious struggle in their city-states at the onset of the Reformation. Among the Reformers, Luther could not be accused of as being soft on heterodoxy. One report has it that upon hearing from Landgrave Philip that Bucer wanted to deal with the Anabaptists less severely, Luther insisted that, like the Jews, they should be banished if they did not want to change their ways (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:232).

If Luther ever considered that the use of force was unjust, he eventually changed his mind. His close relationship with the princes, it is asserted, allowed him to call on "secular powers to deal with blasphemy and sedition and so began the persecution of the Anabaptists that continued relentlessly through the century" (Raitt 1998:766). Indeed, it is stated that in 1534, Strasbourg, a city heavily influenced by Lutheranism, decreed that any doctrine that deviated from the *Augsburg Confession* would not be tolerated, and anyone refusing to conform, "they, with wife and child, would be exiled within fourteen days and forbidden to return under penalty of death" (Kreider 1955:109). It is no wonder that John Agricola, one of Luther's favourite students, reported having criticised

his teacher for utilising the “coercive power of the civil authorities” (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:172). Calling it a tyranny, it is further stated that Agricola reminded Luther that the latter had argued for the freedom of conscience when rebuking Karlstadt for forcing people to follow certain Evangelical ways of worship back in 1522. It seemed, to Agricola at least, who certainly knew Luther well, that a Reformer’s theological position could change a great deal, depending on the circumstances. In fact, in Luther’s sermon on Matthew 13:24-30, the Parable of the Tares, he preached against the inclination to *uproot* or *destroy* the “heretics and false teachers” (Luther 1528:82). It is certainly one thing to preach about religious tolerance, but an entirely different thing when it comes to putting it into practice in the 16th-century Europe.

3.3.6 His Political Considerations

To be fair, the Wittenberg theologians may have been wary of another disaster breaking out, like the Peasants’ War, if discipline were not applied (Stewart 2009:89). In such a case, the political consideration would still be paramount in the mind of Luther. This has also led to another possible reason for the change of Luther’s position on whether or not to utilise the civil authorities to enforce proper worship and discipline. It could be that, by this time, Luther had become wielding much more influence, both ecclesiastically and politically.

Furthermore, by 1525, Frederick the Wise had passed away, and his brother, Elector John became the chief prince. While Frederick kept his distance, John had a good relationship with Luther and supported him well. As such, Luther’s opinion was sought more frequently, and he was more involved in the affairs of the Saxon realm. It was one thing to be on the sideline, espousing idealistic theories, but it was another to find ways to pragmatically fix or improve certain situations, as issues came up in the Saxon territory. According to a report, Luther soon found that the commoners were peasants who “were a harsh, crude folk who far preferred fairs and hard-drinking to church services” (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:174), and therefore required more discipline. With Luther taking on more responsibility for the evangelical movement, politics started to increase its demands on him. Is it possible that, for Luther, out of political necessity, theological

positions could be modulated or altered at will? Would his theological position be a price to pay for political expediency? This dilemma would continue to be a challenge, not only for Luther, but for many Reformers as well, even as the Reformation gathered momentum.

To gain more insight into Luther's theological stance in dealing with various issues, it is important to delve into his writings. The theological issues that confronted Luther, which also carried political ramifications, required political considerations. These issues included, but are not limited to the following:

1. The Anabaptists.
2. The Peasants' War (including the Münster Rebellion).
3. The Visitation.
4. The Eucharist.
5. Luther and the Marburg Colloquy.
6. The Divorce of Philip of Hesse.

Each of these issues will be examined for theological changes in Luther's actions when confronted by political pressure.

3.3.6.1 Martin Luther and Anabaptism

"Anabaptism" refers to the belief and teachings of those Reformers who insisted on being baptised again as adults. The Greek term, *ana*, can be translated with "again" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2021a). It is observed that "the early Anabaptists had at one time been ardent followers of the Reformers" (Hillerbrand 1960:404), but were disappointed at the unresponsiveness of the latter's reform. The first time that Luther came across Anabaptists was through Müntzer and the Zwickau prophets, who visited Wittenberg in December 1521 (Friedmann 1940:341).

Müntzer studied under Luther, who also recommended him to preach in Zwickau in 1520. Zwickau was about 160 kilometres south of Wittenberg and by far a much less influential city. The Zwickau prophets have been identified as Nicholas Storch, Marcus

Stübner, a former student from Wittenberg, and Thomas Drechsel, a blacksmith (Eire 2016:190). They all claimed to have a direct connection with the Holy Spirit, and they influenced Müntzer's theology towards spiritualism (Stayer 1990:660; Milway 1991:379). The Zwickau City Council expelled these men, so they went to Wittenberg. Their claim of direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit and the angel Gabriel, as well as advocating the establishment of a political kingdom, first alarmed Melanchthon, who then alerted Luther who was sheltered at Wartburg at the time. Eventually, Müntzer and the Zwickau prophets left without convincing the Lutheran leaders (Graybill 2015:265-268), except Andreas Karlstadt, who will be discussed later in this study.

Although Luther's interaction with these spiritualists was minimal, it was enough for him to be cautious of any teachings other than his own. In fact, it is claimed that Luther condemned all who taught contrary to the gospel as he understood it, and he played no favourites in doing so. From Eck to Zwingli, or Oecolampadius to Erasmus, for Luther, they were all instruments of Satan. But he viewed the Anabaptists with particular suspicion since they preached and practised ideas that even Rome and Zürich would not tolerate (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:200). Such was Luther's regard for the Anabaptists, for he was certain that their teaching undermines the stability of a society. It is rather unfortunate that these apocalyptic spiritualists came to represent Anabaptism in Luther's mind.

The Reformation was a young movement in the first half of the 16th century, and chaos was the norm as people searched for ways to move forward, even as they interpreted the Bible for themselves after printing became prevalent. The charismatic spiritualists from Zwickau easily attracted and convinced more than a few commoners of Wittenberg. Sensing instability, Luther returned to Wittenberg a few months after the Zwickau prophets left, and delivered no less than eight sermons to calm those who were stirred up by the spiritualists' radical teachings. Sociopolitical stability was vital to the early Reformation, and Luther fully understood that.

Actually, the Zwickau prophets were not the first Reformers to disrupt stability in Wittenberg with their teachings. Andreas von Karlstadt, a colleague of Luther at the university, caused violence and destruction with his teaching of iconoclasm in 1521 (albeit with the blessing of the City Council), to the point that schools had to be closed. Soon afterwards, the imperial government and the pope ordered the Elector of Saxony to undo the damage (Lull and Russell 2012:289). At this stage of the Reformation, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, was still ambivalent. Any disruptive social or theological reform could unleash further trouble for the Reformed-minded Frederick, who was not yet fully in the reformed camp. Therefore, through his eight sermons (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol. 51:69-100) preached at Wittenberg, Luther appealed for patience. Scholars are in disagreement as to how similar or different the theological positions were between Luther and Karlstadt (Sider 1974:143-144; Forell 1976:114). Nevertheless, with these sermons preached at Wittenberg, Luther has been called a *Gentle Reformer*, suggesting that he was not interested in a theological debate against what he perceived to be false teachings (Mosig 1999:340). Instead, he exhorted on love and faith, but more importantly, he instructed on tolerance and patience (Leroux 1998:68). It seems as if Luther took a long approach to reform, with sociopolitical stability as a priority, and with it, the assurance of incremental steps towards a successful Reformation. However, some two years after preaching his eight sermons, in 1524, the Peasants' War broke out. With the unfortunate association to this conflict and its entanglement in violence, the Anabaptists, as a diverse group, took on collateral damage in reputation, as well as lives. Luther's soft tone of love and faith soon turned decisively dark against the Anabaptists.

3.3.6.2 Martin Luther and the Peasants' War

As alluded earlier, life was particularly tough for many peasants around the turn of the 16th-century Europe. Both the feudal lords and the clergy exploited the lower class. Such bitter sentiment was exemplified by a popular but anonymous writer, the *Revolutionary of the Upper Rhine* (Haupt 2011), who utilised the discontent into "humanist imperial nationalism and popular millenarianism" (Whaley 2012:121) that later fostered the Peasants' War. Also with reference to these peasants, fact was that "all layers of society

now saw in the Reformation a road out of their social dilemma" (Drummond 1979:66). It can be no doubt that such exploitation provided the necessary catalyst for a class struggle in the 16th-century Europe.

Many studies have researched the reasons and scope of the 16th-century German Peasants' War (Stayer 1994; Pantoja 2001; Heidenreich 2018). While there could have been many causes, the scholars agree that with the exploitation by both the secular and ecclesiastical landlords (Oberman 1976:114), the peasants longed for hope and deliverance that eventually came from the Reformers. Indeed, the "practical-minded reform theology encompassed secular laws and the secular order, intended to improve the life of this world according to the demands of the gospel" (Blickle 1975:185). This paradigm propelled the Reformation towards revolution. Luther advocated the communal election of pastors, which would give the control back to the peasants. Zwingli taught that only the gospel, not authority, be it clerical or political, should govern the lives of the peasants. Millenarian Reformers like Müntzer argued for the "sword against constituted authorities in extreme situations" (Kuenning 1987:314). Beginning with sporadic *tithe strikes* in a few localised villages, by the summer of 1524, the rebellion was widespread (Whaley 2012:222-225).

While Luther and Zwingli may have sown the seeds of rebellion in the minds of the peasants, it was the radical tone of the apocalyptical Reformers or the spiritualists that armed the latter with violence. The most famous spiritualists were the Zwickau prophets. They believed that they had a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, and in order to usher in the return of Christ, a political kingdom on earth had to be established, even with the ungodly being put to the sword (Graybill 2015:267-268). Müntzer, although a student of Luther in the beginning, was greatly influenced by the Zwickau prophets. As such, Müntzer later became one of the main theologians associated with the Peasants' War (Friesen 1970:20; Pantoja 2001:31) or at least the persistent scapegoat theologian for the losing side.

Scholars and historians have studied millenarian movements around the world that attracted a large number of adherents by promising an impending and complete redemption with grandiose expectations. They conclude that movements like these are prone to splintering and ultimate failure, because “they preach Rebellion against authority and probably attract rebellious, non-conformist and contentious people” (Talmon 1966:171). As predicted, by September 1525, the rebellion was eventually put down and an estimated 75,000 peasants lost their lives (Whaley 2012:234), with other estimates reaching 100,000 (Raath and De Freitas 2005:5).

Drummond states that “[w]hile Luther was alternately announcing the end of the world or seeking an alliance with the princes of Germany, the lower social groups were alternately idolizing Luther or massing behind local radical leaders” (Drummond 1979:66). Indeed, Luther’s idealistic utopian vision of two kingdoms living in perfect harmony attracted the peasant class and allowed them to follow their local Reformers, even if they espoused violent ways.

During the course of their rebellion, the peasants even composed a document known as *The Twelve Articles of the Swabain Peasants* (Robinson 1906), which contained Scriptures and Luther’s theology, with the guidance of “Zwinglian Protestants from Zürich” (Durant 1957:384). Eventually, 25,000 copies were circulated. Concurring with Luther, the peasants opted to elect their own pastors, as well as exercise their Christian freedom. However, as the Peasants’ War turned more violent and bloody, Luther’s stance turned from acquiescent to belligerent. Arguing that the violence was endangering the common good, Luther called on the princes to crush the rebellion (Cahill 2019:194). The intensity of Luther’s hostility towards the movement is summarised in his brief and infamous treatise of May 1525, *Against the murderous, thieving hordes of peasants*, when he compared the peasants to *mad dogs* and claimed that, “if you do not strike him, he will strike you…[and] let everyone who can, smite, slay and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful or devilish than a rebel” (Luther 1525; Carty 2017:94).

John Cochlaeus, a Catholic scholar, was an opponent of Luther since 1521 when the two had a debate. At the onset of the Peasants' War, Cochlaeus held Luther responsible for stirring up the conflict, when the former quoted from Luther's treatise, *Exhortation to peace, on the Twelve Articles of the peasants of Swabia*, "A sword now hangs over the necks of you Princes, but nevertheless you still think that you sit so firmly in your seats that no one can throw you down. This security and stubborn presumption will break your necks" (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol 4:165; Vandiver, Keen, and Frazel 2010:162). Further on in the same treatise, siding with the peasants, Luther also warned the princes, "since you are the cause of this wrath of God, without a doubt it will be poured out upon you, unless you reform yourselves in time…If you will not do this in a friendly and voluntary manner, you will have to do it through violence and ruinous disorder" (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol 4:165-166; Vandiver *et al*. 2010:163).

Apparently, at the beginning of 1524, Luther believed that it was not the peasants, but God, who opposed the tyranny of the princes and lords. Nevertheless, as the rebellion was crushed a few months later, Luther published *Against the murderous, thieving hordes of peasants,* with a complete turnabout, "The peasants are now no longer fighting for the gospel, but have openly become faithless, perjured, rebellious, seditious highwaymen, robbers, and blasphemers" (Luther 1525; Carty 2017:94). As if that was not enough, Luther continued his diatribe in the same treatise, "These times are now so much to be wondered at that a prince can merit heaven by pouring out blood better than others can by prayers" (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol. 4:190; Vandiver *et al*. 2010:163). One certainly cannot accuse Luther of a lack of drama. However, can one blame Cochlaeus for indicting Luther on being opportunistic or even duplicitous? It is said that even Erasmus was shocked at Luther's about-turn and accused the latter of stirring up the peasants into a frenzy and then betraying them (Kolb 1978:104; Varickayil 1980:23).

It is also important to note that on 1 January 1523, after Suleiman triumphed against the defenders of Rhodes with 400 ships and 200,000 men, the surviving Christians fled the island for good. The young and ambitious Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was poised to advance towards central Europe (Burlamacchi and Roberts 2013:24-27). It is of little

doubt that many Europeans, including Luther, were aware of the ominous threat. As such, it is safe to surmise that in the minds of the common people, a divided Christendom between the Catholics and the Protestants certainly would not help in alleviating the anxiety of a possible annihilation of Christian Europe.

The German states had to avoid all internal strife if they wanted to stand a chance against the mighty heathen army of the Sultan. Could this geopolitical crisis have played a role in Luther's change of posture regarding the peasants' rebellion against the German princes? At any rate, Blickle summarises, "with help from the theologians, the rulers tried to restore their own legitimacy by turning the gospel squarely against the common man" (Blickle 1975:185). This conclusion seems to confirm the symbiotic relationship between Luther and the political authorities. Other scholars take the accusation further by concurring with the German historian, Dorpalen (quoted by Whaley 2012:63), "the ultimate effect of Luther's actions was to reinforce the feudal regime in Germany." In addition, it is asserted that although scholars in the second half of the 20th century glamorised Luther's image, his "siding with the princes against the peasants and acting as the 'lackey ('*Tellerlecker*' or, literally, 'plate-licker') of absolute monarchy'" (Whaley 2012:63), no doubt ensured the survival of the feudal social structure.

3.3.6.3 Martin Luther and the Visitation

When Frederick the Wise died in 1525, his younger brother, John the Constant, continued the former's reformed direction. By this time, Luther has established himself as the voice of the Reformation, and the new Saxon prince was more than happy to oblige. Although it is argued that it was Elector John who proposed the visitation to check on each parish and to develop Lutheran evangelical services (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:172), it was Luther who went around visiting many parishes and found the situation deplorable. Luther wrote in his *Preface to the Small Catechism*:

> Mercy! Good God! what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and

> incompetent to teach (so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it). Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive the (common) holy Sacraments. Yet they (*do not* understand and) cannot (*even*) recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs (Luther 1986b:par 1; Wengert 2016:212; Haemig 2019:41-42).

Such was the state of Christianity in which both the ecclesiastical and political authorities found themselves in the Saxon territory. Undaunted, Luther on the one hand persuaded John to appoint ministers to visit the parishes to ensure that his reformed teachings were followed. On the other hand, it is agreed that Luther wrote both the *Large catechism* (Luther 1986a) and *Small catechism* (Luther 1986b) as manuals for the leaders and people to follow (Schwarz 2015:41; Loewe 2016:179-180; Carty 2017:114-115).

Ideally, the reputation of the Reformation would be glorified over the corrupt Catholic Church if the common people under Luther's teachings would become spiritual and faithful. However, after the chaos that Luther encountered at Wittenberg from the teachings of Karlstadt, Müntzer, and the Zwickau prophets, as well as the bloody Peasants' War, it is understandable to see Luther advocating education and training for the parishioners. Yet not everyone was readily obedient to the new confession for a transformed life, and not every parish welcomed visitations and oversight. Luther soon found that without discipline, no amount of education or training could be effective. In his *Instructions for the visitors of parish pastors in electoral Saxony*, Luther called them "the undisciplined heads who out of utter perversity are able to do nothing in common or in agreement, but are different and self-centered in heart and life" Luther, Bergendoff, and Lehman [1523] 1948, Vol. 40:273). As a German, Luther also reflected in *The German Mass and order of service* in 1526: "For we Germans are an untamed, crude, boisterous folk with whom one ought not lightly start anything except under the compulsion of a very great need" (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol. 6:126). With statements like these, it is con-

cluded that the “coercive power of the civil authorities” (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:172) were called on by Luther to punish those who were unruly and out of line.

It would seem that Luther was embarking on a nation-building trajectory. He and his fellow Reformers called on the magistrate authority to enforce education for all, believing that the Turks would take “every third child” for training in the empire Luther, Bergendoff, and Lehman [1523] 1948, Vol. 40:257; Haemig 2019:49). Luther also translated the Bible into German vernacular for an easy accessibility to the common people, who were mostly illiterate (Haemig 2019:50). With education and spiritual discipline, Luther intuitively understood that Germany would become a strong state. It is interesting to note, even 500 years later, that Germany’s educational system is still one of the best in the world (Welsh 2004:359).

One can sense Luther’s broad view of nationalism and desire for a strong Germany, when he wrote as early as 1523, in another of his treatises, *An appeal to the ruling class of German nationality as to the amelioration of the state of Christendom,* “In the same way, the spice traffic ought to be reduced, for it is another of the great channels by which money is conveyed out of Germany” (Luther and Dillenberger 1961:481). In countering Tetzel, a German Dominican friar who sold indulgences in a nearby Catholic territory, Luther wrote in 1520, his *Address to the Christian nobility of the German nation*, “Poor Germans that we are...we were born to be masters, and we have been compelled to bow beneath the yoke of our tyrants...It is time that the glorious Teutonic people should cease to be the puppet of the Roman pontiff” (Luther 1520a:par 19; Varickayil 1980:20). The clear logic for Luther was that a strong Germany would not easily be intimidated by the likes of the Catholic Church and the holy Roman Empire.

Luther’s political acumen, unfortunately, received heavy criticism from one of his favourite students, John Agricola. Agricola was born in 1494 and was 11 years younger than Luther. By 1519, Agricola had become Luther’s trusted disciple when the latter debated with the Catholic scholar, John Eck in Leipzig. As the years went on, Agricola became an Antinomian, for he held the belief that the Old Testament laws and legalism were no

longer applicable in the lives of Christians. As such, in 1527, Agricola became convinced that advocating Christians to do good works amounted to an insistence on legalism. Soon he started to criticise the Lutheran visitations and their coercive emphasis to bring about repentance (Tracy 2015:110-111; Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:228-230).

It is said that Luther would not allow Karlstadt to impose the latter's theological views on Wittenberg, yet he was doing the exact same thing by forcing the schools and parishes to conform to his views through a "heavy-handed oversight" (Sorensen 2016:103). Since Agricola did not criticise Luther directly, but his assistant Melanchthon, it is asserted that the awkward conflict was smoothed over through Luther's mediation (Lull and Russell 2012:176; Wengert 2015b:319). Although Agricola resumed his teaching on Antinomianism and published a series of anonymous treatises a decade later, his relationship with Luther had all but dissolved with the former even attempted to sue the latter (Jacobs and Haas 1899:18).

In 1525, with the new prince John taking over the Saxon leadership from the deceased Elector Frederick, who was never really actively engaged in the Reformation, one can only forgive Luther for his renewed zeal and determination to reform what he saw as a deplorable state of the spiritual kingdom in Saxony. Only a couple of years earlier, in 1523, Luther wrote to the German princes in his famous treatise, *Secular authority: To what extent it should be obeyed* (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol. 3:179-215).

Since then, belief or unbelief was a matter of everyone's conscience, and since this is not a lessening of the secular power, the latter should be content and attend to its own affairs and permit people to believe one thing or another, as they are able and willing, and constrain no one by force. Faith, therefore, is a free action, to which no one can be forced. In fact it is a divine act, done in the Spirit, certainly not a matter which outward authority should compel or create (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol. 3:200; Luther and Dillenberger 1961:385).

This theological position, only a few years before Luther took on a bigger leadership role in the realm of John the Constant, proved to be too idealistic in the face of the daunting challenge to reform the realm. Both John and Luther wanted a strong and spiritual Lutheran Saxony, but the way to achieve that, required more than superficial theologising. One can understand Agricola's criticism, for he studied under Luther during the latter's *theological* phase (before 1525) and believed that, as Luther eloquently argued in his treatise in 1523, *On secular authority* mentioned above, "For Christians must be ruled in faith, not by outward works" (Luther [1526] 1997, Vol. 3:207; Luther and Dillenberger 1961:392). However, by the time the Elector Frederick died in 1525 and Luther assumed larger responsibilities in the realm, the theologian had taken on a more pragmatic stance. Once again, it is worth noting that, for Luther, political expediency could easily sway a Reformer's theological tendency, and neither would it be the last time for him.

3.3.6.4 Martin Luther and the Eucharist

As mentioned earlier, Luther did not have the intention to break away from the Catholic Church. He intended to reform the corrupt ways and practices he saw within the institution. The teaching of transubstantiation was, and still is, a Catholic Eucharistic doctrine whereby, upon the priest's consecration, the physical bread and wine are transformed into the real physical body and blood of Jesus. This implies that the presence of Christ is real and physical, not just symbolic or spiritual (Toner 2011:217-218; Douglas 2012:426). It is logical to believe that at the beginning of the 16th century, the humanist theologians were transitioning themselves from the late medieval scholastic thoughts. As such, attention to a conceptual analysis and distinctions preoccupied the minds of the Reformers. It is argued that Luther, having been influenced by Nominalism espoused by William of Ockham, an English scholastic theologian of the 14th century, sought to simplify the concept of transubstantiation, which requires two actions from God to destroy the bread and wine and replace them with Christ's body and blood (Osborne 2002:64-65). Although the concept of consubstantiation could be traced back to Wycliffe (Thomson 1989:54), Luther made it plain that Christ's body and blood simply are present alongside the Eucharist. Using an arithmetic argument on the passage in the Gospel of the demon-possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes, Luther writes

in *The Lord's Supper*, "[A] whole legion was in one man. That would be about six thousand devils" (Luther, Pelikan, Lehmann, and Brown 1955, Vol. 37:215). It is therefore concluded that "an uncircumscribed presence in a given place" (Krey and Krey 2016:126) could explain the mystery of Christ being physically present in the Eucharist. By clarifying this teaching for his followers, the saving grace of this important sacrament was retained without complications. Luther did not only further define his unique theological position as somewhere between those of Zwingli and the Catholic Church, he also established himself as theologian *par excellence* in the minds of the German princes.

The first formidable opponent to challenge Luther's consubstantial view was Zwingli, who held that the Eucharist was representative, not the real substance, of the body and blood of Christ, for it would be incomprehensible, as Jesus could not be at the right hand of God and at the same time down on earth at the Eucharist (Gerrish 1988:395). Although Luther countered that the virgin birth was also incomprehensible, their debate reached no conclusion (Sasse 2001:231). Zwingli even accused Luther that he "has already made up his mind [with a] prejudice of an heretic" (Naphy 1996:97).[1] Some have argued that Zwingli upheld the dearly beheld view of *sola fide* over sacramental ceremonialism, and as such was, in reality, the guardian of the Reformation against Luther's "creature-deification" (Locher 1965:14) that regards the objects of the Eucharist much holier than it should be. At any rate, under the invitation of Philip of Hesse, in October 1529, these two Reformers, and their respective allies, met in the now-famous Marburg Colloquy.

a. Martin Luther and the Marburg Colloquy

The Marburg Colloquy was an attempt by Philip of Hesse to reconcile the difference over the interpretation of the Eucharist between Luther and Zwingli. The meeting was held at the Marburg Castle, from 1 to 4 October 1529 (Hussman 2018:1). Philip's goal, it is stated, was a political move, at a cost of 6,000 guilders, to unify the two Protestant camps for "a pan-evangelical alliance based on the agreement to be evolved from the

[1] Naphy's primary source is only in German (cf. Koehler 1929).

colloquy" (Byrd 1969:23). Besides Philip of Hesse and his entourage, both Luther and Zwingli brought their delegates (Beto 1945:75), and over the course of three days, the disputation concluded with 15 declaration, which by most accounts highlighted the *fifteenth* point being the irreconcilable difference between the two camps (Hussman 2018:26-27). The political backdrop to the Marburg Colloquy is of particular interest, as this study seeks to investigate the theological evolution in the context of its political climate.

During the late spring of 1529, the Ottoman Turks advanced towards Vienna. Charles V was busy in defence of the city and was in no mood to deal with these German Lutherans, despite the pressure to enforce the Diet of Worms. This provided a great opportunity for the Saxon Elector John and Landgrave Philip of Hesse to form a stronger alliance with other Reformed-minded estates against any potential threat from Charles V (Jensen 2018:14; Christensen 1984:425-426). As mentioned earlier, John consulted Luther, and the latter was against such an alliance. The main theological reason given was that in the Old Testament, forming such an alliance with people, rather than with God, was a recipe for severe discipline from God. Luther wrote in his letter to Elector John on 22 May 1529, "It is certain that such an alliance is not of God and does not come of trust in Him, but is a device of human wits" (Luther, Smith, and Jacobs 1918:479). Yet, it is interesting to note that Luther had no problem with the formation of the Schmalkaldic League just two years later.

Five months after Luther's letter to the Elector John, when Philip of Hesse requested Luther and Zwingli to meet at Marburg in October 1529, it would not be hard for Luther to discern the underlying political purpose of such a meeting. Philip wanted to unify these two theological camps in order to facilitate the forming of a Pan-Protestant alliance against Charles V (Hendrix 1994:211-212). However, it is important to note that, in August, just a few weeks before the Marburg Colloquy took place, the Turkish army had started besieging Vienna, led by Suleiman the Magnificent, and that Luther's *On war against the Turk* had just appeared in print, reaching a mass audience, followed swiftly by his *Sermon against the Turk* (Roth 2017:335). Some scholars believe that the siege

took place after the Colloquy (Jensen 2018:53), or that Luther had only heard of the siege afterwards (Forell 1945:258-259), but others claim that the important siege started *before* the Colloquy began (Flood 2003:155; Miller 2006:208; Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:178). At any rate, it is beyond reason to think that a significant event, such as the Siege of Vienna, would go unnoticed by any learned person living in Europe at the time of the Marburg Colloquy. Therefore, any minimising of the influence of the Turks' invasion on the sociopolitical and even religious lives of Christian Europe, simply cannot be justified. Nevertheless, the timing of these two events must have weighed heavily on Luther.

At that stage, it should be fresh in Luther's mind that only three years before, the same Sultan Suleiman brutalised the eastern half of Hungary (August 1526) and took 100,000 Christians into slavery (Durant 1957:441). While Pope Clement VII urged Christian princes to resist the invasion, it was Luther who advised them to stay home, believing that the Turks could be God's agents, affecting a judgement on the Christendom, and that resisting Suleiman would be resisting God (Forell 1945:270; Buchanan 1956:147). The resulting defeat of the Christians in the hands of the Turks in 1526 was as disastrous as it was humiliating. This time around, Luther may have learned his lesson, and one may be forgiven to conclude that Luther was much more urgent in his effort to stop Suleiman from advancing into the heartland of Christian Europe.

As such, any further action to dismantle the fragile unity of the Christendom at this critical juncture, such as the forming of a strong Pan-Protestant alliance against Charles V, would not be of any benefit to the *Corpus Christianum*, especially after Luther so passionately argued that Charles V should prosecute a war against the Turks (Miller 2006:208). In essence, a Pan-Protestant alliance would force Charles V to contend with both the Turks and the united Protestants. Alternatively, a united Christendom, even if it were largely under the leadership of a non-Reformed-minded Charles V, would still likely be more effective in their defence against Suleiman. Could Luther be apprehensive of additional in-fighting within Christendom? If so, is it possible that he has sabotaged the Marburg Colloquy by refusing to yield on only *one* out of as many as 15 articles that

were the concluding statement of the momentous Colloquy (Rummel and Kooistra [1532] 2015:426; Arand, Nestingen, and Kolb 2012:95; Hussman 2018:26), in order to maintain a semblance of a unified Christian front, even under Charles V, in a possible fight for survival against the Turks? It has also been posited that before 1530, Luther held on to a "hope of an eventual agreement with the Catholics" (Birnbaum 1959:36). Other scholars also suggest that the Lutheran camp wanted to "gain the favor of Charles V and his brother Ferdinand" (Hurst 1900:258). In other words, could it be that Luther's deliberate antagonistic tone and insistence on his view of the Eucharist at Marburg was to ensure the doom of a Pan-Protestant alliance in 1529, which no doubt would strengthen the hands of Charles V against the Turkish aggression? Does Luther's impassionate plea against the Ottomans in *Vom Kriege widder die Türcken* (*concerning the war against the Turks*), published on 16 April 1529, as well as *Eine Heerpredigt widder den Türcken* (*a sermon against the Turks*) in late October of the same year, not seem to demonstrate Luther's priority in urging Charles V to deal with Suleiman without distractions (Setton 1962:149; Miller 2006:208; Romain forthcoming)? The timing of these urgent treatises with the Marburg Colloquy in early October of the same year could not have been a coincidence. No doubt, the survival of Christian Europe was on Luther's mind throughout the course of the Colloquy.

Then, once Suleiman's siege of Vienna was resolved, did Luther not change his original theological position against a humanistic alliance, by endorsing the formation of the Schmalkaldic League (Shoenberger 1979:19) initiated by the two German princes, Elector John and Philip of Hesse? If these conjectures were not without merits, it would not be the first or the last instance of political necessities influencing, or even dictating, a Reformer's theological outcomes.

Unfortunately, not enough attention has been given to the influence that Suleiman the Magnificent and his numerous incursions on Christian Europe had on the Reformation in its infancy. This study hopes to frame the salient Protestant theological debates in their own rightful political contexts of the 16th-century Europe. Although scholars have argued diversely on the finer points from both sides of the Protestant isles regarding the

Eucharistic debate at Marburg, could they have simply missed a few important political circumstances underpinning the Colloquy's curious outcome that saw the nullification of an incredible consensus, in which 14 out of a total of 15 points had been agreed upon by fellow Protestants (Clayton 2016:61-62)?

3.3.6.5 Martin Luther and The Bigamous Marriage of Philip of Hesse

Philip of Hesse was one of the most important "political champions of Protestantism" (Sorensen 2016:86) and a main Lutheran supporter. It is said that before 1526, no German prince dared to embrace the Reformation fully, except for Philip, who was converted by Melanchthon in 1524 (Whaley 2012:256). The young convert soon held a synod of Homberg in his domain, whereby he could consolidate the political and ecclesiastical authority, through the support of Lutheran reform. In fact, Philip simply was responding to Luther's policy in his *To the Christian nobility of the German nation concerning the reform of the Christian estate* in 1520 (Luther 1520a), where Luther opined that since the pope and the clergy would not reform the church, he had to advocate for the temporal authority to do the job (Wright 1973:43). Since Philip was such a devoted supporter of Luther and his reform, it is hardly shocking to see how Philip's application for a bigamous marriage created a dilemma for Luther. On the one hand, Philip was the most valuable supporter and ally of Luther, but on the other hand, bigamy was not only controversial but a reprehensible offense (Faulkner 1913:212).

As early as 1526, Philip started to have second thoughts about his marriage three years before with Christina, the daughter of Duke George of Saxony. Regardless of whether or not it was a politically arranged marriage, or how much Philip disliked Christina, the fact remained that they were legally married before God and humans. Meanwhile, Philip, being a man of power and influence, indulged himself with licentious relationships, despite being a resolute Lutheran. As a result, years later, not only was he inflicted with illnesses of a sexual nature but also filled with shame and guilt of having committed adultery. At the same time, bigamy was unlawful and punishable by death (Lull and Nelson 2015:335). Philip also realised that he could not rule the realm effectively with his own bad example. With these complications and guilt, finally in 1539, Philip wrote to

Luther, asking for the latter's permission to marry Margaret von der Saal (Matzke 1907:237).

In his letter of request to Luther, Philip pleaded for a second marriage by alluding that the Old Testament contained such precedence, the Church Fathers allowed exceptions, the pope permitted it, and even Luther himself seemed to have acquiesced to Henry VIII of England the same bigamy that Philip now desired. He pleaded further "because God forbids adultery and permitted polygamy, and as a remedy against my unchaste living; while the emperor and the world do not permit a second wife but do permit adultery" (Köstlin and Kawerau 1903, Vol. 2:475-476; Faulkner 1913:210). Lastly, the letter contained an ultimatum that if Luther were to decline Philip's request for a bigamous marriage, the latter was to go to the emperor and the pope to seek much-needed consent. Such political blackmail is not lost in the eyes of the observers. Nonetheless, whether Philip was desperate or just manipulative, or even both, Luther found himself without much room for flexibility.

It is recognised that the pope with his dispensation could render a marriage contract void (Muller 2015:283). In 1349, a popular love story befitting a Hollywood movie saw Pope Clement VI nullifying a *second* marriage, in order to reunite Thomas Holand, a lowly ranked English knight returning from crusade to Joan of Kent, the former's secretly wedded wife of royal blood. Apparently, the knight was assumed dead after a nine-year absence during the crusade, and as a result, Joan of Kent remarried. However, unbeknownst to everyone, Holand remained alive and returned to Joan. Their romantic and triumphant love story transpired nine years and a long distance. Their marriage overcame obstacles and challenges that eventually won the approval of the pope, who nullified her later marriage and returned Joan to her original husband (Goodman 2017:39). One can imagine that a famed story so enchanted must have encouraged Henry VIII to make the same request of Pope Clement VII in 1527 when the former fell in love with Anne Boleyn.

These precedents were not few in numbers. In fact, one of Henry's eight sisters, Mary Tudor, secretly married Charles Brandon, first Duke of Suffolk in 1515, and successfully obtained the annulment from Clement VII for the Duke's marriage to his previous wife, Margaret Neville. Around the same time, another of Henry's sisters, Margaret Tudor, also received the pope's approval to divorce Archibald Douglas, sixth Earl of Angus, in order to marry Henry Stewart, first Lord Methven (Fisher 1938:516). With these examples, Henry must have been quite confident to secure the same favourable outcome for himself. The only challenge was that Henry's wife was Catherine of Aragon, the aunt of Emperor Charles V of the holy Roman Empire. The pope was no longer as powerful as before, and Clement VII could not afford to humiliate the emperor and his aunt (Varickayil 1980:25; Dickens 1991:127; Duffy 2006:208). Although Henry failed to procure a favourable ruling from the church, that did not stop Philip of Hesse to apply for his own bigamy. Instead of the pope, Philip first approached his new ecclesiastical authority – Luther. What will Luther do? If there were any hints, the precarious political situation of Clement VII and his subsequent capitulation to Charles V could provide it. It seems, not infrequently, the inconvenient truth has to bend the knee to political obligations.

In 1521, Pope Leo granted Henry VIII the official title of Defender of the Faith, after the latter published *Assertio septem sacramentorum*, or, *An assertion of the seven sacraments against Martin Luther* (Henry VIII 1687) to refute Luther's *Babylonian captivity* (Luther 1520b). In his polemic, Henry VIII called Luther a "poisonous serpent" (Henry VIII 1687:9; Smith 1910:658) and "wolf of hell" (Henry VIII 1687:163; Smith 1910:659), among other unsavoury names. However, by early 1525, Luther had heard from the exiled King Christian II of Denmark that Henry was becoming more open to the evangelical faith (Smith 1910:662). Despite colleagues advising against it, Luther soon drafted a letter of humble apology to Henry, hoping to mend the relationship, even to recant if needed. Unfortunately, Luther's sincere intention was met with a harsh reply the following year (Luther and Brooks 1983:71).

The polemics between Henry and Luther went back and forth a few times, until 1529 when Henry wanted a divorce. Henry was unsuccessful in obtaining permission from Clement VII for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon. As a result, Henry turned to other theologians for help. He even solicited Philip of Hesse to influence Luther with a favourable outcome. Eventually, Luther replied in a letter to Dr. Robert Barnes, an English intermediary, dated 2 September 1531, "Rather let him take another queen, following the example of the Patriarchs, who had many wives even before the law of Moses sanctioned the practice" (Luther and Brooks 1983:300; Smith 1910:666). Although Henry sent more envoys and money to obtain permission for a divorce from Wittenberg, Luther remained unchanged in his position, preferring a double marriage than a divorce (Luther and Brooks 1983:300; Matzke 1907:237). Eventually, as before Henry VIII, Luther left Philip's situation open with conditions or escape clauses, such as high necessity or disfigurement. Both Luther and Philip likely knew that the latter with his stubborn character (as most kings and princes presumably do possess), would get what he wanted. After Luther's strong insistence on Philip's second marriage being done in secret, the former finally acquiesced and regretted since (Faulkner 1913:216).[2]

Catholic scholars have since repudiated and accused Luther of hypocrisy. Some Lutheran scholars even have had a hard time exonerating Luther's decision (Marshall 2017:27). In fact, as early as 1526, when Philip put the question of bigamy directly to Luther, one scholar concludes that the latter "answered with a decidedly refusal" (Moeller 1893:144) by citing Luther's personal letter to Philip in 1526, which was published for the first time in 1852 by the late Prof. Heinrich Heppe of Marburg: "For where there was no necessity or cause, the ancient Fathers did not have more than one wife, as Isaac, Joseph, Moses and many others. Therefore I cannot advise it (taking more than one wife), but strongly advise against it" (Faulkner 1913:207).[3] Some blame Luther's about-turn on some of his colleagues like Bucer and Melanchthon, or that people

[2] Here Faulkner presents the entire translated letter that Luther and his colleagues wrote in answer to Philip of Hesse's appeal through Bucer (Faulkner 1913:213-216). The original copy in Melanchthon's handwriting was in the Cassel archives and was first printed by the late Prof. Heppe. It is from Heppe's copy that Faulkner translated into English (Heppe 1852).

[3] Here too, Faulkner translated a part of the personal letter that Luther wrote to Philip from the document in the Cassel archives printed by Heppe (1852).

viewed marriage in the context of the medieval Old Testament in the 16th century, or even Luther's own lingering Catholic traditions (Bachman 1853:168; Faulkner 1913:218). Tradition or not, or for whatever reason, Luther had miscalculated, for Philip soon found himself relapsing into additional affairs that frustrated and disgusted the Lutheran ministers. To this day, scholars "raised the question of the extent to which political leaders who supported the Protestants could expect to influence doctrinal discussions" (Sorensen 2016:87).

3.3.7 Martin Luther and the Schmalkaldic League

It is worth an investigation into the political backdrop surrounding this unfortunate event for Luther. In 1531, Philip of Hesse and John of Saxony founded a political body in the form of the Schmalkaldic League with other pro-Lutheran cities. A few years later, communication began to go back and forth between France and Germany, for Francis I of France was considering joining the Schmalkaldic League in an effort to find an ally against Charles V (Kess 2004:21). In 1535, England also explored the possibility of an alliance (Smith 1910:667). Two years later, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland – in fact, the whole of Scandinavia – were embracing Lutheranism and looked to join the Schmalkaldic League as well (Nelsen and Guth 2015:78-79; Nelson 2017:92; Bach-Nielsen 2012:295-296). As the League grew in power, the Lutherans expanded their influence across Europe. It is at the height of this religiopolitical alliance that Philip wrote to request Luther's permission for his bigamous marriage. Ever so shrewd, Philip of Hesse may intuitively have understood that no one, not even Luther, wanted the Schmalkaldic League and its key leadership to disintegrate. Indeed, the collapse of such an important political structure would be devastating to Luther's Reformation (Whitford 2003:623), especially when the Turks' threat was nowhere in sight, which understandably would inhibit any potential division in Christian Europe. In fact, Faulkner (1913:226-230), although adopting a more understanding posture, quotes Köstlin, Kolde, Von Bezold, Moeller, and Hausrath, to argue that the Reformers' decision was indeed politically motivated. Concurring with Hausrath, for example, Faulkner explains that the Reformers could not afford to lose the support of the Schmalkaldic League: "The desertion of the landgrave from the Schmalkald League was a tremendous danger for the

Protestants. Not only the German, but the whole European, the situation would have had another aspect if the mighty Protestant commander had stepped over to pope or emperor" (Faulkner 1913:226). Between the Turks and Charles V, the Schmalkaldic League was the only thing that held the Lutherans together. Luther indeed could not afford the loss of Philip's loyalty to the Reformation cause.

Therefore, it is the conclusion of this study that Luther gave in by quasi-consenting to Philip's bigamy under such political pressure. Oftentimes it is believed that military or political leaders would lose a battle, in order to win the war. Could this be another example of political expediency influencing a theological outcome? Given Philip's contribution and support of the Reformation, as well as the strategic significance of the Schmalkaldic League, was it really a surprise that Luther acquiesced to Philip's bigamy in secret, at the expense of Luther's own theological position? Gannon concurs with the observed theological compromise of Luther and states, "His attitude towards the state authorities varies according as they support him or oppose him" (Gannon 1930:318).

3.3.8 Martin Luther's Contradictions

There can be no doubt that Luther was a brilliant and influential man. Yet, oftentimes, a man could easily be esteemed as a saint, and thereby cause his followers to blindly subscribe themselves to his teachings, without the appropriate critical examinations. In fact, it is said that from the 17th to the 19th century, many Lutherans regarded him as "infallible" (Nelson 2017:94). Whether idolising or glamorising, this study has shown, Luther was just a man who was easily influenced by his cultural and political contexts. In his dealing with the heretics, he started out being patient and tolerant, then changed to a preference for death as a punishment, then back to being patient and tolerant as he grew older (Durant 1957:422-423). Nelson, while recognising Luther as "commonly ranked today among the five most important figures for the history of western civilization of the past thousand years" (Nelson 2017:64), also finds it necessary to conclude, "Luther was a complex individual who did and said many contradictory things over the course of his lifetime" (Nelson 2017:64). Luther's theological position regarding the Eucharist was unyielding to the Zwinglians, while his position on bigamy yielded to his po-

litical patron, the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. In every turn of political necessities, be it him dealing with the Peasants' War or the Visitations, Luther had demonstrated his political pragmatism above everything else. It is safe to surmise, without compromising his importance in history, that Luther was first a political strategist and then a dogmatic theologian, with enough fluidity and flexibility to satisfy any crisis (Nestingen 2003:248). Furthermore, it is interesting to point out at least two additional facts why Luther should not be regarded as *infallible*, which to his credit, he never on record claimed to be, except to avow that "whoever does not accept my teaching may not be saved"[4] (Luther *et al*. 1955, Vol. 39:249; Thein 1900:428; Durant 1957:422).

3.3.9 Martin Luther's Psychological Profile

Scholars have referred to the obsessive and compulsive nature of Luther's fascination with hell and death. Some have even used psychoanalytical work in criticising Luther's budding theology, referencing the *Anal eroticism* of Freud with the former's grand illumination "on the privy in the tower" of the Wittenberg monastery (Brown 1985:202; Erikson 1962:201-204). Other forgiving scholars point out that "many men who exhibit pathological traits nevertheless see depths and dimensions of existence and of faith" that others simply failed to see (Luther and Dillenberger 1961:xiii). It seems if most scholars would agree that Luther's mind was as brilliant as it was troubled. In his *A sermon on preparing to die*, written in 1519 (Luther 1969:99-115), one can detect Luther's precarious insecurities, but also his stubborn yearning for salvation. His 20-point reminders in the sermon seems to have been written to convince himself as much as to admonish his audience. In his twelfth point he argued,

> you must not gaze at hell and the eternity of pain in relation to predestination…And do not concern yourself with how many people the whole world over are not chosen, because if you are not careful, that

[4] The extended quote is: "I shall not have it judged by any man, not even by any angel. For since I am certain of it, I shall be your judge and even the angels' judge through this teaching (as Paul says in 1 Cor. 6:3) so that whoever does not accept my teaching may not be saved – for it is God's and not mine. Therefore, my judgment is also not mine but God's." Although some scholars have pointed out that the context of this quote is about Luther's polemical engagement with the papal authority, his words here no doubt betray a sense of self-validated construct of grandiose proportion.

> image (in your mind) can quickly become your downfall and knock you to the ground. Therefore, you have to use force and shut your eyes tightly and not take that look, because it is completely useless (Luther 1969:103-104).

Is it possible that it was he who needed a strong convincing?[5]

3.3.10 Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism

Luther's treatise, *On the Jews and their lies* in 1543 (Luther 1543:121-305), used terms like *gangrene* and *mad dogs* (Luther 1543:292) to refer to the Jews, and was even more scathing in his recommendations on how to deal with them: 1) Burn their synagogues, and *toss it in sulphur* and *hellfire* while doing it; 2) confiscate their sacred writings; and 3) punish by death those who exercise Judaism among the Christians (Luther 1543:285-286; Lull and Russell 2012:502-504).

It is ironic that the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation also called to attention "Luther's shameful record against the Jews" (Cummings 2017:125). It is likely that a 21st-century political correctness did not exist in the early 16th century. While scholars can debate the moral values of someone who lived 500 years ago, it is worth pointing out that Luther was just a human being, susceptible to all cultural-political influences. In fact, it has been asserted that the scholars of the Renaissance, including Erasmus, were all anti-Semitic (Durant 1957:290). To be fair, it has been noted that John Chrysostom was anti-Semitic and Pope Paul IV also denied the Jews basic rights in 1555 (Coren 2017). So, anti-Semitism has been an ongoing issue in the long Church history, and Luther simply "reiterated the traditional church position" (Eckardt 1989:26). Notwithstanding, the purpose of this study will resist such controversial distractions and remain focused on the Reformers' political contexts and corresponding influences on their theological tenets, especially when Luther's disdain for the Jews has been found to be quite consistent throughout his illustrious career (Eckardt 1989:27).

[5] It is interesting to note that other scholars have concurred with the notion that Luther's excessive rumination about his "spiritual standing" was a "subtype" of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (cf. Cefalu 2009).

3.4 ULRICH ZWINGLI AT ZÜRICH

3.4.1 Background

Zwingli was born near Zürich, only six weeks after Luther, in 1484. He grew up in a period of class struggles between the people and their overlords of political and ecclesiastical elites (Eire 2016:220). Such experience made him keenly aware of the intricacies of political factions. He was appointed as a pastor in 1506, at the age of 22, but his life was really *converted* when he met Erasmus about 10 years later (Locher 1965:8). Then, in 1520, Zwingli renounced a papal stipend of 50 guldens and started to preach against many of the Catholic practices that he found unscriptural (Whaley 2012:192). His new style of preaching soon found support with the city's ruling Council because while he preached against tithes for a lack of support in the Bible, he still insisted on the peasants paying it. His reason was that such arrangement was of human agreement that was legally binding (Raath and De Freitas 2005:10). In 1523, the City Council provided a platform for Zwingli to debate with the Catholic clergies in front of 600 people. Zwingli was triumphant with his defence of no less than 67 theses in the Scriptures. Eight months later, after a second debate, the City Council decided to dissolve monasteries, allow clerical marriages, remove images from churches, and abolish the Mass (Butler 2013:120-121), causing the city of Zürich to become a division among the Swiss cantons, many of which were still very much under Catholicism. According to Casparis, such division was demonstrated by four Protestant cantons against as many as seven Catholic confessions (Casparis 1982:596).

A potential war between these opposing cantons was averted in 1529 by the Peace of Kappel. Nevertheless, on 11 October 1531, Zwingli unfortunately died in a battle in such a conflict. After his death, the Protestant cantons either reverted back to Catholicism or allied with the Lutherans. On the subject of the Eucharist, although the Zwinglian camp differed in position from that of the Lutherans, efforts were made to tone down the antagonistic rhetoric, with various degrees of success (Rummel and Kooistra [1532] 2015:50-56). In effect, Zwingli's reformed movement was gradually absorbed into Lutheranism. This study investigates how a few key issues in Zwingli's political context and predispositions might have influenced his theologies.

3.4.2 Zürich City Council and Political Background

In 1519, the Zürich's population was about 60,000, with its wealth deriving from trade. The representatives of the various artisan guilds formed the City Council that governed the city. This system suggested oligarchy in governance (Birnbaum 1959:29-32). Scholars have emphasised that long before the 16th century, the view of society was "a single Christian body" (Winkler 1987:218), whose governing authority would align both secular and spiritual goals to realise God's plan for the world. Naturally, after the Council accepted the reformed teaching, it had elevated itself to replace the Catholic clergy, with a mandate to build a theocracy through the blueprint of Scriptures. Zwingli typified this line of reasoning when he argued, at the hand of Matthew 13:24-30, that both the saved and the unsaved belong to the church. As such, the state and the church were one, with the governing authority enforcing the law to purify the church, which is the community (Winkler 1987:218-219; Raath and De Freitas 2002:50). This logic necessitated the symbiotic alignment of theological direction with the political requisite. For example, the Councils became the arbiters of what should be preached from the pulpits, as well as picking influential but agreeable preachers that became the town's Reformers. As such, most imperial cities had their own Reformers. A typical scenario for reform would start with a popular enthusiasm for reform that demanded changes in the city. The City Council then called for disputations and decided the winner. The losing side, in the case of Zürich, was the Catholic clergy who was then ousted. As a result, the evangelical preachers were tasked with preaching to the people. In essence, the Council cooperated with the Reformers of their choice to govern the city (Whaley 2012:244-245).

In the early 16th century, the Great and Small Council made up the City Council of Zürich. While the Great Council's members were elected for life by the gilds, one-half of the Small Council's members were designated by the Great Council, with the other half selected by the gilds. Such a republican system ensures stability and governance by the elite, making it an oligarchic system in nature (Birnbaum 1959:29-31). For this reason, whenever there might be a conflict between political expediency and doctrinal issues, or faced with a potential disruption of their symbiotic equilibrium, Zwingli never claimed dominance over the City Council. Instead, as Potter (1970:613) claims, Zwingli was

prepared to exercise a considerable accommodation or concession to ensure the support of the Council. This study seeks to investigate and verify such assertions.

3.4.3 Ulrich Zwingli on Military Force and Mercenaries

As always, money and politics are inseparable. Zürich's wealthy elite not only profited from their trades, but they also profited from the foreign powers that employed the Swiss mercenaries. By the 15th century, Swiss mercenaries had become famous for their fighting abilities. They were in high demand, and the foreign power set up an agreement of contracts and payment, called *pensions*, with the Swiss cantons and their brokers (Casparis 1982:597; McCormack 1993:80). These brokers, many of whom were the elite that made up the City Councils, utilised the recruitment of these mercenary soldiers to exploit the countryside peasants, who were beset by poverty and unemployment. However, for Zürich, one problem was that these Swiss mercenaries could end up fighting against the Protestants, as in the case of the Battle of Dreux years later, where the Catholic army defeated the Huguenots (Tallett 2013:164). Although Zwingli has been referred to as the *forerunner of Cromwell* for the zeal to establish the "Kingdom of God with armed force" (Locher 1965:16), and that to Zwingli, theology and politics could and should go hand in hand, it was important for him to ensure that the poor Swiss peasants were fighting on the right side.

Therefore, since the majority of the Swiss mercenaries were fighting for the French king (Percy 2003:729), who was at the time on the side of the holy Roman Empire and the pope, it was only logical for Zwingli to oppose the mercenary system (McCormack 1993:61; Lewis 1978:119). Out of political expediency or just plain common sense, Zwingli opposed the young men of Zürich becoming soldiers for hire, especially by the Catholic princes. Could Zwingli's opposition to the mercenary system be that he wanted to stop the exploitation of the peasants out of compassion for their plight? This question is better discussed in the next section, with the context of his treatment of tithing in mind.

3.4.4 Ulrich Zwingli on Tithing

It has been asserted that the theological understanding and demands of the Reformation by the peasants were threefold: 1) The purity of gospel preaching, the *evangelium*; 2) the election of their ministers by the whole community, the *Gemeinde*; and 3) the authority of the *Gemeinde* regarding doctrines (Blickle 1987:218-219; Sherman 2018:236). However, behind these exigencies, the practical reality was in fact the logistics of paying for their full-time ministers, or more specifically, who should have the control of tithing. For hundreds of years, tithing or the control of it lay with either the political or the ecclesiastical authority. The communal understanding of the Reformation threatened the historical hierarchy. In truth, this was one of the major reasons that contributed to the Peasants' War in the fall of 1524 (Cohn 1979:3). The Magisterial Reformers were confronted with this dilemma: On the one hand, the exploited peasants had no money to tithe, while on the other hand, the ministers had to be paid.

Since the Middle Ages, through the emphasis of doctrines such as the purgatory and priestly administered sacraments, the Catholic Church had generated a steady income from the people, who believed that only the clergy could intercede for the souls endangered by the fire of hell. These practices exploited both the rich and the poor people. At the beginning of the Reformation, evangelical preachers, including Zwingli, certainly advocated freedom in Christ, including financial freedom from various tithes and exploitations, by asserting that any giving would be voluntary. The people embraced the evangelical messages that nullified the purgatory and promised salvation to all "without money and without price" (Harvey 1915:512-515).

In 1523, the year leading up to the Peasants' War, tax strikes by the peasants that led to a refusal to pay rent and other financial obligations, were widespread. Zwingli and other Reformers realised that the people took their evangelical gospel promoting freedom too far and too literally. He clarified his message by admonishing tithing to be paid, out of obedience to established authority (Cohn 1979:7-8; Raath and De Freitas 2005:10). Of course, many issues were not so clear-cut. In one of Zwingli's more important sermons, *Von göttlicher und menschlicher Gerechtigkeit* (o*f divine and human*

righteousness) in 1523 (Zwingli, Egli, and Finsler 1905, Vol. 2:471-525), Baker (1974:52-53) points out Zwingli's two kinds of righteousness: Divine and human. On the one hand, divine righteousness addressed the inner person, but they were unable to fulfil its call, except through faith in Christ. On the other hand, human righteousness was needed for humans to avoid a descent into anarchy.

God provided the magistrate to be obeyed and to punish those who broke this righteousness. The latter was a tool and a must, but not for humans to find justification before God. In his sermon mentioned above, Zwingli points out, "One must be obedient and subject to the human righteousness because of God's command, even though it is a poor righteousness which does nothing except protect from the greatest evil" (Zwingli *et al*. 1905, Vol. 2:497, 23-25; Baker 1974:52-53). Locher concurs and also argues that Zwingli sees the imperfection of the temporal authority and its "broken righteousness" (Locher 1965:16) as a way through which the Christians strive for "the higher righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount" (Locher 1965:16). As such, it seems as if Zwingli's theology prioritised the need of the state, regardless of its imperfection, at the expense of the financial hardships befalling the peasants.

3.4.5 Ulrich Zwingli on Pedobaptism

Although it was not specifically mentioned in the New Testament,[6] the practice of baptising infants or little children was evident by the end of the 2nd century, at least in North Africa (Knell 2017:67; Brewer 2013:290). With the onset of printing and the availability of the Bible in common languages across Europe, people came to their own understanding and interpretation regarding the issue of baptism. When a person in the 16th century would read Acts 2:38 to *repent and be baptised*, the realisation could have been quite startling, for everyone during that time was baptised as an infant and did not even have a chance to believe, let alone repent (Kitson 2009:271). In Zürich, when Zwingli's reformation was taking hold, one of his students, Grebel raised this very issue of pedo-

[6] Although some scholars have argued the fact that the household of Lydia and the jailer in Acts 16:15 and Acts 16:33 were baptised, should imply that pedobaptism were involved in the 1st century, it is important to note that such interpretation is to read much between the lines. While a thorough exegetical debate on such topic is beyond the scope of this study, it is clear that the pages of the New Testament contains neither explicit mention nor command of pedobaptism as a practice.

baptism. It is postulated that in 1523, Zwingli "had been willing to abandon infant baptism" (Bender 1938:169), but his fear of the consequences[7] caused him to not follow through with his conviction. Other scholars assert that Zwingli had admitted that pedobaptism was unscriptural (Friedmann 1940:342; Verkamp 1973:499) and even agreed with Balthasar Hübmaier, an Anabaptist theologian's position (Johnson 1929:51), who called Zwingli "a true son of the Catholic" (Brown 1902:54).

Zwingli once asked the Catholic theologians to provide explicit scriptural warrants on practices such as the celibacy of priests, Mass as a sacrifice, praying to the saints or the virgin Mary as mediators, and so on. The irony was not lost when John Faber, the Vicar General of Constance and a Catholic theologian, criticised Zwingli's position of "not to admit anything unless it be expressly described in the Scriptures" (Zwingli 1901:98), yet when debating with the Anabaptists, Zwingli turned around and demanded to see the scriptural prohibition of pedobaptism. In other words, it was acceptable for Zwingli to practise pedobaptism without explicit scriptural command, but it was not acceptable for the Catholic faithful to purchase indulgences, which was also without explicit scriptural command. Zwingli concluded, just "because this is not written, for there are many things done, both by Christ and the apostles" (Zwingli 1901:141), and therefore, the practice of pedobaptism should *not* be rejected.

In short, Zwingli asked for the explicit command from the Scripture to authorise practices such as the celibacy of priests, but later ignored the Anabaptists' demand for an explicit command for pedobaptism. In essence, Faber used the argument from silence in his polemics with Zwingli to argue for the Catholic practices that the latter rejected it, but Zwingli later turned around and used the same line of argument against the Anabaptists, as he wrote, "we have nowhere the prohibition not to baptize infants" (Zwingli 1901:163). Such about-turn in Zwingli's argument would have pleased Faber who had previously employed the same logic to defend the practice of praying to the virgin Mary, for such act also enjoyed no prohibition in the Scripture. While Zwingli vehemently rejected Fa-

[7] The consequence, according to Bender, refers to the possibility of lacking regenerated true Christians to carry on the function of the church, if adult baptism is applied along with repentant lifestyles.

ber's defence earlier, the former later unabashedly appropriated such argument against the Anabaptists, when it suited him.

To be fair, it is important to be reminded that in the early stages of the Reformation, most Reformers, Luther included, were not eager to break away from Catholicism. They were interested to reform some of the Catholic practices while preserving the state-church amalgam. This line of logic was first and foremost to protect the socio-economic fabric from tearing itself apart through another religious upheaval. Although Zwingli did not agree with the practice of pedobaptism in 1523, and there was no evidence of the Zürich Council influencing Zwingli's teachings (Thompson 2009:4), one is not hard-pressed to imagine Zwingli finding priorities in the social order of the city. It is equally important to keep in mind that between 1523 and 1525, one significant event took place – the Peasants' War – which traumatised much of central Europe. Like most people, Zwingli was also affected by the tragedy. As such, neither should he be faulted for his proclivity for sociopolitical stability.

As the cities of the 16th-century Europe recorded their census through parishioners' infants being baptised and the dead buried, collecting taxes or tithes, performing marriages, etc., the church functioned as an administrative arm of the state. If infants were no longer brought to be baptised, and their names were never recorded at the church, the state would not be able to function properly. It would be the first step in dismantling the state, as Zwingli and the Council must have feared. It is no wonder that the *Free Church*, advocated under the Anabaptism was viewed with broad suspicion or disdain, and their people persecuted for sedition. Since Zwingli held that the City Council was a key agent in reforming the church, and he was involved quite actively within it (Stephens 1994:126), such a nightmare scenario must have sown doubts in Zwingli's mind, as he wrestled with the doctrine of pedobaptism. It is also important to be reminded of the socio-economical context of the time. It is reported that "the increase in silver coinage devalued the currency. Interest rates and taxes soared. Many of the weavers were driven into bankruptcy" (Bainton 1982:6). The disruptive nature of the free church concept espoused by the Anabaptists was preferred by the peasants, who would rather cast off the

shackles of the state and revolt in large numbers. There is no doubt that Zwingli advocated for the duty of tithing and tax to the church-state. It is, therefore, no wonder that the people preferred the teachings of the Anabaptists. As such, if the scholars were correct that Zwingli had doubts about pedobaptism in 1523, his polemics against believers' baptism must point to the possibility of a theological pivot, *vis-à-vis* Zürich's greater sociopolitical priorities.

One final irony deserving a mention is Zwingli's sausage protest and Grebel's believer's baptism. In 1522, Zwingli was at the home of the printer, Christoph Frohschauer, and a number of them ate sausages together during the Lenten fasting. It was a symbolic statement to show that the common observance of Lent had no explicit scriptural support (Whaley 2012:193). Fast forward a few years to 25 January 1525: After their unsuccessful disputation with Zwingli on the practice of pedobaptism, Grebel and others baptised one another to become the first Anabaptists in the Swiss Brethren (Williams and Mergal 1957:44). Just like Zwingli had done with the eating of sausages during Lent, these Anabaptists sent a symbolic statement to the Zürich authority, as they believed that the common practice of pedobaptism had no explicit scriptural support. The only difference was that the latter's statement of action carried far more disruptive and unintended consequences than simply ingesting pork.

3.5 JOHN CALVIN AT GENEVA

3.5.1 Background

Calvin (1509-1564) was born near Paris. He is considered "the most important of the second-generation Reformers" (Childs 2013:119). Like many students of the time, he was exposed to Christian humanists, such as Erasmus and Luther. As a humanist lawyer, he had a conversion experience in 1527, but even that is debatable, for Calvin did not write much about his formative years (McKee 2009:54). Other scholars assert that he *practically* became a Protestant in 1533 (Cuthbertson 1912:21). His training as a lawyer no doubt helped him to process his theological persuasions into organised and scrupulous writings (Greene 1923:320; Allegretti 1991:1-2), which in turn aided Calvin in promoting and advancing his theologies even centuries later.

In 1534, he moved from Paris to Basel to avoid religious persecution and completed his *Institutes of the Christian religion* (Calvin 1536) two years later, at an astonishingly young age of 25. This celebrated treatise later became the foundational teachings for Knox and Jonathan Edwards, as well as the Pilgrims and the Puritans. Today, it is "the most widely disseminated systematic presentation of classical Protestantism" (Childs 2013:120; Wallace 1909:35).

3.5.2 John Calvin to Geneva

When discussing Calvin in Geneva, we will focus on his relationship with this city, as well as its magistrate. Farel, a leading Protestant preacher in Geneva at the time, invited Calvin to come to the city to become a teacher of theology in 1536 (Tulchin 2014:836; Eire 2016:297). However, Calvin's tough stance and austere rule of law ultimately garnered for him the ire of the City Council and the populace. They eventually celebrated his departure by going "about the streets and taverns, mocking the preachers" who had supported him (Foster 1908:416).

Recalling the events three months before Calvin's arrival in Geveva, in May 1536, the situation in the city was such that "Catholicism had largely been defeated, altars desecrated, and images broken. The Catholic Mass had been outlawed, priests had been imprisoned, and citizens were fined for not attending Protestant sermons" (Foster 1903:124). More importantly, the entire city had taken a corporate oath to live by the Scriptures. According to Butler (2013:123-124), Calvin arrived to inaugurate his vision of theocracy, one that Zwingli had in Zürich. Together with Farel, Calvin presented to the City Council, his *Articles on the organization of the church and its worship at Geneva* (Calvin and Reid [1537] 2000:48-55). With it, those who were *lax in moral* or failed to subscribe in public the Confession of Faith, were to be excommunicated, as well as barred from partaking in the Lord's Supper (Riggs 1995:35). Unfortunately, their reform in Geneva lasted only about two years.

The Genevan magistrate had only just wrestled the authority from the Catholic clergy and was prepared to embrace the Zwinglian model that the city of Bern had adopted to

great success, namely, the power to discipline both morally and socially. Such power was finally in the hands of the city magistrate. It has been recalled that at the close of the 13th century, Geneva was under the control of a bishop, who was the *de facto* Lord of the city under the emperor, with the title of *dominus.* The House of Savoy under various bishops held this position from 1290 to 1525 (Greene 1923:310-311). Calvin's arrival and his insistence on reform based on the power of the *new* clergy to apply discipline on the citizenry appeared to have too much power. Having just broken free from their Savoy bishops, the Genevan citizens were not ready to relinquish their newfound authority to these young, reformed preachers, no matter how talented they were. These contradicting paradigms caused the eventual banishment of Calvin and his associates (McKee 2009:56).

Another important political factor that hastened Calvin's departure in 1538 came from the city of Bern. As the influential mentoring city to Geneva, Bern wanted to apply a certain standardisation of religious services, such as the Eucharist. Calvin did not wish to go along, and as a result, both Calvin and Farel were finally expelled from Geneva (Gordon 2002:159-160). Calvin may have learned a costly geopolitical lesson, as he helplessly accepted the banishment carried out by the Genevan magistrate.

It is important to note that by the beginning of the 16th century, cities like Zürich, Bern, and Basel had transitioned themselves from medieval feudalism into city-states, in order to enjoy the "fullest possible autonomy" (Deutsch and Weilenmann 1965:396). The governance of these cities, depending on their economic activities, took two forms: One with trade guild representatives and the other being a preference towards the aristocratic old families (Greene 1923:308). A typical city government could consist of one burgomaster, a smaller Council consisting of a few dozen leading citizens, and a large Council that had one to 200 representatives of various guilds (Greene 1923:307-308). Since Bern had assisted Geneva in eliminating the threat of the Savoy, as well as sponsoring the reformed preacher, Farel to administer in Geneva (Naphy 1996:46; Blakeley 2006:43-44), it is not surprising to find that Geneva wished to model its governance phi-

losophy after the Swiss cantons rather than another authoritative clergy, such as Calvin. However, less than three years later, Geneva would change its mind.

During the ensuing three years of exile in Strasbourg, the industrious Calvin worked closely with the French-speaking refugees, learned from Bucer on working with the civil authority, studied theology, and even found a wife (Eire 2016:298). In 1541, he was invited back to Geneva by its City Council because the people realised that he had what it took to be their leader (Edwards 2017:171). It was during this time that Calvin developed a more potent set of rules, *The ecclesiastical ordinances* (Calvin and Taylor [1541] 1953), to organise the church under his interpretation of the Bible. This time, the reformed clergy would have the authority, along with a consistory envisioned and led by Calvin himself, to oversee the affairs of the church, which were of course pretty much the entire citizenry of Geneva (Edwards 2017:171).

3.5.3 City on a Hill and Geopolitics

The population of Geneva with the nearby villages has been estimated to be about 12,000 in early 1530 (Valeri 1997:127), or between 12,000 and 13,000 (Monter 1979:404), or as many as 15,000 (Mansbach 2005:110). Compared to the reported number of "35,000 for Zürich and 80,000 for Bern" (Deutsch and Weilenmann 1965:406), Geneva was quite small. Furthermore, as a small republic, "squeezed between the Swiss cantons, the Duchy of Savoy, and the Kingdom of France" (Parker 2007:54), Geneva was no doubt vulnerable. Therefore, it was understandable for Geneva to have relied on Bern for inspiration and even protection. It was also within this same time frame, that the progress of the Reformation found itself in the midst of geopolitical turmoil. Clement VII first allied with Francis I, the King of France and Henry VII of England in the League of Cognac in 1526 (Cesa 2017:134). Then after the alliance enraged Charles V, Clement escaped his imprisonment and was later forced to ally with his former jailer, Charles V, in 1530 (Williams 2004:74). Additionally, unable to obtain from Clement VII a needed annulment from his marriage, King Henry VIII subsequently split with the Catholic Church by 1534 (Zimmermann 1967:551). At about the same time, Francis I, King of France allied first with Pope Clement VIII in 1533, then with the Otto-

man Empire Suleiman the Magnificent in 1536 (Graybill 2015:10). More importantly, Francis I withdrew his protection of the Huguenots after the Affair of the Placards in 1534 (Knecht 1981:29).

It was under such a duplicitous and vacillating political backdrop that Calvin was invited to Geneva. Although he was to be met with a similar betrayal in Geneva three years later, Calvin was determined to build a glorious church on a strong spiritual foundation in Geneva, one that would be a beacon of light, a city on a hill, in tumultuous Europe. This sentiment was echoed at the 400th anniversary of Calvin's birth by the Alliance of Reformed Churches, that Calvin was "destined in the providence of God to save the Christian world from its downward course into paganism, and restore it to its vision of God's sovereignty and man's duty" (Sell 2013:147). Wootton adds that "so long as the love of homeland and of liberty is not extinguished among us, the memory of this great man will never cease to be held sacred" (Wootton 1996:483). Indeed, with the passage of time, one can count on the fact that the confessional loyalty and the adulation of its founder would never be find frivolous or underrated.

In order to build a city on a hill in Geneva, Calvin planned to utilise spiritual education to unify the city into a visible kingdom of God. Believing a well-ordered state is not only a gift of God, but his will to bring about a strong society for the glory of his kingdom (Schreiner 1995:84), Calvin determined to utilise spiritual discipline to affect the political authority that would, in turn, facilitate the spiritual training of the citizenry. This mutually reinforcing formula would generate a strong self-perpetual cycle to achieve his goal. It seems as if the promise of *all nations will stream to it* in Isaiah 2:2 was not lost on Calvin, as Geneva saw thousands of Protestant refugees from Europe and England pouring in over the next few decades (Valeri 1997:127).

Calvin's Genevan vision of a city on a hill undoubtedly required tools to accomplish, not the least of which was the existing governing apparatus. Some scholars like Foster (1908; McNeill 1964; Parker 2007) have described the Genevan government, the *Seig-*

neurie, that existed in the early 16th century, which exerted authority over the populace, as consisting of the following:

1. The General Council, or *Conseil General*.
2. The Council of Two Hundred, or *Deux Cents*.
3. The Council of Sixty, or *Soixante*.
4. The Council of Twenty-five, or Senate, or the Small Council (*Petit Conseil*).

It was the Small Council that claimed the most significance, for it contained the four current syndics (or the chief magistrate), and four previous syndics, as well as the treasurer, who were all elected by the General Council. With the additional 16 councillors elected by the Council of Two Hundred, this Small Council fulfilled the 25-member quota with its mandate of nominating the four syndics, as well as the Council of Two Hundred. According to the law of 1526, which limited the selection of the Small Council to be citizens born in Geneva, the membership of this exclusive group tended to be self-perpetuating year after year. This hybrid system of democracy-aristocracy coincided, as well as confirmed Calvin's preference for *optimates* (*best men*) for the government (Foster 1908:402; McNeill 1964:84; Parker 2007:55-56).

3.5.4 Consistory

In addition to the magisterial branch of the government, upon his triumphant return to Geneva, Calvin also established a Consistory in 1541. It is observed that the Consistory was made up of up to 12 lay elders and six pastors (Foster 1908:423). In the recent decades, arguing for its vital role in Calvin's Geneva, scholars have started to invest more resources to the study of the Consistory (Monter 1976; Kingdon 1990), with a renewed focus on the records taken by the scribe, or the secretary who faithfully recorded the proceedings at these Consistory meetings. Their findings include the following:

1. It was a committee of the municipal government.
2. Its members were re-elected every February when the entire city government was elected.
3. Its presiding officer was always one of the four syndics.

4. The makeup of its members was to represent the neighbourhood and the four Councils, with some of the lay elders who were re-elected year after year.
5. At their meetings, the lay elders sat on one side and the pastors on the other.
6. Calvin himself attended the Consistory sessions faithfully until he died, and was the spokesperson for it.
7. The lay elders drew from the merchant or the upper-class citizenry of the city, but the pastors were mostly foreigners who were hired by the city because there was no university in the city of Geneva (Kingdon 1990:162-166).

It is noteworthy that Calvin was not only the founder of such an important group but faithfully and actively participated in it throughout his entire career in Geneva.

The role of the Consistory as an ecclesiastical disciplinary agent has been emphasised, which is helpful in the understanding of Calvin's dealing with the city of Geneva (Manetsch 2006:277). It is asserted that before Calvin arrived at Geneva for the first time in 1536, the city had less than 13,000 residents, with only 1,000 to 1,500 of them capable of voting in the General Council. It was "nominally Protestant" and "far from being a Puritan state" (Foster 1908:401). Geneva's low moral standards prompted other scholars to write that "[p]rostitutes flocked to Geneva…drunkenness, gambling, and debauchery of other sorts were considerable social problems" (Kingdon 1990:167).

The task of the Consistory was to apply ecclesiastical discipline and recommend excommunications to the Small Council. Another powerful tool of the Consistory to wield direct influence over the citizenry was the authority to deny the delinquents' participation in the Eucharist. Scholars have been divided with the methodology employed by the Consistory, while some considered the discipline too harsh or over-stepping the boundary of propriety. Anything from not attending church, dancing, or card-playing could land one in front of the Consistory (Watt 2002:439-440). There was even one record of a stipulation regarding the duties of wives in the bedroom (Witte 2006:581). Nevertheless, after scholars' statistical analysis, it is concluded that by the time Calvin died, the city of Geneva had become "an extraordinarily pious and straitlaced city" (Monter 1979:418)

under his efforts together with the Consistory. Even Knox, a decade or so later, complimented Geneva as "*the maist perfyt schoole of Chryst that ever was in the erth since the dayis of the Apostillis*" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:240; Felch 1995a:53; Walsham 2012:914).

Although Geneva achieved the proud vision that Calvin had cast in less than a couple of decades, it was not without struggle or irony. Scholars have asserted that for Calvin, the mark of the true church is in the preaching of the word of God and the administering of the two scriptural sacraments. There was no requirement for a church and its members to be perfectly disciplined righteous souls. Calvin even used the term "aerii daemones" (*airy spirits*) to accuse those who expect *perfection in holiness* as a qualification for church membership as being "perverse and absurd" (McNeill 1988:46). In all likelihood, Calvin had in mind the *perverse and absurd* Anabaptists who frequently enforced church discipline upon their members. Nevertheless, the irony is not lost on any informed observer, as Calvin applied his harsh discipline to Genevan church members through the Consistory, of which he stayed on as the President for his entire tenure.

Although the focus of this study is on Calvin's economic, political, and theological struggles *vis-à-vis* the degree to which these issues affected this Reformer's theological tendencies, it is interesting to note that others have to defend Calvin from charges by scholars like Eric Voegelin, a professor of political sciences with keen interests in Christianity's influence in the politics (Douglass 1976:26), who labelled Calvin a "quintessential charismatic megalomaniac" (Stevenson 2004:439). Other scholars have compiled the colourful words that Calvin had used in describing his opponents, like "riffraff, idiots, dogs, asses, pigs, and stinking beasts [and] apes" (Durant 1957:477-478), among other undesirable animals. Whether or not it was the writing styles of the polemics in the 16th century (for Luther certainly was not able to escape the similar allegations), the fact remains that Calvin's loyal confessional supporters outnumber his critics by a wide margin, even to this very day.

3.5.5 The Ameaux Affair and the Baptismal Name Incidents

Calvin's great reform, upon returning to Geneva in 1541, saw the establishment of the Consistory which applied strict discipline to the residents in Geneva. Five years later, such a measure was put to the test. The series of conflicts in early 1546 started with Pierre Ameaux, a maker of playing cards, who complained about Calvin's ban of card-playing and thus losing his livelihood. Then, a large and influential Favre clan was rebuked by the Consistory for terrible marital issues that included fornication. Finally, another prominent family member was arrested for dancing at a wedding (Naphy 1994:94-97). Apparently, some of the Genevans' intolerance to the strict discipline applied by Calvin, who was French and deemed a *foreigner*, had reached a boiling point.

According to Naphy (1995:88; Gordon 2009:203), the "excessive reliance on Calvin for [his] interpretation of internal events in Geneva" has missed one crucial festering conflict that underlined the rift between Calvin and some of the ruling elites of Geneva. The records in Geneva also showed that more than a dozen conflicts arose from baptismal names, from 1546 to 1554. Calvin and his associates believed that some of the names had the connotation of saints' worship and superstition. As such, other biblical names were more appropriate to be given at baptisms (McKee 2009:58). The first recorded incident was on 26 August 1546 when a barber by the name of Ami Chappuis, wanted to name his son Claude. Upon baptism, the presiding minister changed his name to Abraham, without any prior consultation. Naturally, the father was enraged and took the child, as well as protested against the arrogance of the ministers (Naphy 1995:89). With the increase of such baptismal naming feuds, a few prominent ruling elites, who served or were serving in the Small Council, became hostile towards Calvin and his ministers. The situation worsened with the increase of the French Huguenot refugees arriving in Geneva (Naphy 1995:93).

However, it is important to note that the Small Council had 25 members in a given year. The names of Calvin's enemies mentioned in the records since 1546, who were or had been on the Small Council, or at least were considered members of a prominent Genevan family, amounted to be only a handful: Amy Perrin, Martin du Molard, Jean Bandi-

ere, Gaspard Favre (Perrin's brother-in-law), the Sept brothers (Naphy 1995:88-91), Berthelier (Naphy 1994:145), and Vandel (Bainton 1960:150). This study concludes that although there were enemies that opposed Calvin, the evidence shows that they were not as formidable as some of Calvin's supporters claim, but amounted to a nuisance at best, for they could only protest against minor issues such as baptism names for their babies. Furthermore, they were all forthwith defeated (i.e., jailed, excommunicated, banished, or executed), whenever they transpired against Calvin and his Company of Pastors (Naphy 1994:152). Moreover, it is agreed that Calvin's enemies, the *Libertines*, realised that they had no chance of banishing Calvin again, but only to "stir up trouble and insult the ministers" (Parker 2007:110). Monter (2012:75) uses the term, "guerrilla warfare" to describe their struggles against Calvin. Such descriptions can only demonstrate Calvin's enemies' minority and inferior status in the minds of the wider populace of Geneva.

Scholars like Wandel (1997:566) and Balserak (2012:948) also disagree with the assertion that Calvin was less influential than earlier assumed. There was no doubt that after 1546, aside from a handful of distracting and sporadic annoying oppositions, Calvin consolidated his unchallengeable authority through both apparatuses in the Company of Pastors and the Consistory. The Council, besides the occasional verbal reprimands, acquiesced or sided with Calvin for most, if not all the issues in Geneva. Therefore, the declaration that these opponents were powerful and that "Calvin's situation in 1552 was far from secure" (Woo 2015:237) can hardly be sustained.

3.5.6 Zürich Consensus (Consensus Tigurinus) of 1549

In 1549, Calvin and Bullinger reached a compromise on the Eucharist position that eventually became the reformed position. The Zwinglian Bullinger allowed more reality to the grace of the sacrament, while Calvin omitted his reference to the Supper presenting, as well as representing Christ's body (McKee 2009:58). On the surface, one may see evidence of Calvin's capacity to compromise on some aspects of theology for the sake of unity in the reformed camp. However, could this change of theological position also be a product of political considerations? The few years leading up to 1549 saw the

determined Charles V unleashing a new persecution on continental Protestantism. As a result, many Protestant leaders moved to England (Wartluft 2004:431). The year 1549 also saw the English Reformation under Cranmer attain its height, as *The book of common prayer* (Cummings 2011) became the standard book of English worship (Kerr 1951:201-202). At the same time, the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League rallied together to firmly establish its influential struggle against Charles V (Whaley 2012:329). In addition, the Catholic Counter-Reformation gathered momentum, as Ignatius of Loyola started to build Jesuit colleges across Europe (Ribhegge 2000:178; Sánchez, Plazaola, Winks, Pfeiffer, Moszka, Corsi, Criveller, Suderman, Fabre, and Alfaro 2005:98). Calvin was far too astute a politician and statesman to stand on the sideline. With all the political development on the religious landscape, he must have been excited to consider the possibility of a unification of the non-Lutheran Reformation, or at least to find ways for the smaller Swiss city-states to stay relevant in the bigger European affairs, especially since the alliance between Calvin and Edward Seymour was becoming precarious due to the latter's political challenges (Demers 1999:347). Seymour was the first Duke of Somerset, regent to the young Edward VI, and also the brother of Jane Seymour, who was Henry VIII's third wife.

Calvin had been building a relationship with Edward, the Lord Protector of England, from 1547 until his fall in 1549. Moreover, through Bucer, who had gone to England to avoid the persecution from Charles V, Calvin also tried to form a relationship with Cranmer, but the latter did not reciprocate (Gordon 2009:253-258). The Zürich Consensus of 1549 could not have come at a better time for Calvin to reassert himself on the European stage. A compromise thus reached could unify the Reformation as a movement, three years after the death of Luther. It could also elevate Calvin's status as one of the main torch-bearers of the Reformation, if not its pre-eminent leader, after the passing of Luther.

Recalling the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 between Luther and Zwingli, this study presents the likely geopolitical factors that brought about the collapse of the Colloquy regarding the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Their singular difference proved to be too

wide of a gulf to traverse. “Mutual recriminations and conflicts” are said to have marked the period afterwards (Bunting 1966:45), until in 1536, when Bucer, Luther’s successor, attempted in his *First Helvetic confession* (Cochrane 1966) to bridge the divide, but was unsuccessful. The same year saw Calvin publishing the first edition of his *Institutes*. Just more than 10 years later, Calvin’s rising status as the preacher-statesman of Geneva propelled his influence beyond continental Europe, while Lutheranism and Catholicism consolidated their geopolitical power base (Pauck 1946:17). Could it be the right time for the Swiss cities to finally join forces and carve out their collective identity through the reconciliation of their Eucharistic differences?

The Lutheran position on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist saw no change or compromise in the preceding decade, while Calvin and Bullinger, Zwingli’s successor, had built up a friendship of mutual admiration (Burns 1955:90). It was natural for the two leaders of Geneva and Zürich to present a united front for solidarity or even a distinct identity, in the hope of uniting even the stout Lutherans. At first, Bullinger was consistent with Zwingli in claiming the elements of the Eucharist as mere symbols. However, Calvin insisted that more than symbolic, it *confers* the body and blood of Christ (Van den Brink 2011:310).

In the end, it is claimed that Calvin compromised his wording to “accommodate the even more strongly spiritualizing definition of the Lord’s Supper acceptable in Zürich” (Arand *et al*. 2012b:232). Bunting reports that Calvin went to Zürich five times in the years leading up to 1549, while Bullinger preferred to communicate through letters. Nevertheless, at the final visit on 20 May 1549, the two leaders reached their consensus in just two hours (Bunting 1966:46-47). Calvin’s persistent visits to Zürich may very well demonstrate not only his pragmatic political acumen, but also his own desire for unification. Could the willingness to compromise his theological position be motivated by certain political gain? Beza, Calvin’s eventual successor, commented in *The life of John Calvin* (Beza 1564), “This confession knit Bullinger and Calvin and the churches of Zürich and Geneva in the closest ties” (Beza 1564:17; McLelland 1971:46). McNeill further posited

that Calvin's theological compromise, although unsuccessful in its purpose, had in mind to win over Bern and its "extreme Zwinglian position" (McNeill 1928:425).

The Zürich Consensus of 1549 proved to be successful enough to almost win over the Lutherans. Bucer, the ever consistent ecumenist, had given his endorsement of the Consensus, only to be foiled by the objections of Lutheran theologians like Westphal (Bunting 1966:47-48). There can be no doubt that the political necessities of the time required Calvin to yield his theological dogma, even just slightly, in order to accommodate the other Swiss cities, in achieving a greater political end.

3.5.7 Usury

It is said that the Pentateuch contains at least three passages that "explicitly forbid the charging of interest" (Glaeser and Scheinkman 1998:1) and as such, although the restriction on the taking of interest was prevalent in the 16th century, the practice was still controversial as far as economic regulations were concerned. Since the 5th century, the practice of usury, defined as any interest added to the principal loan, had been prohibited by the church. Also, while the modern usage of the term "interest" is synonymous with usury, up until 1624, it had "no significant usage in English law" (Bernstein 1965:846). It is important to note that Bullinger, the faithful protégé of Zwingli, argued for a form of a reasonable profit as a *credit instrument*, while Calvin was the first Reformer to break from such tradition to allow for broad allowance and application (Nelson 1969:73; Baker 1974:57-58). This break of a theological interpretation from a long-surviving church tradition of one millennium could only be justified by a change in the economic conditions and commercial innovations of Calvin's Geneva. Nevertheless, it is prudent to enquire the degree of deviation from the other Reformers on the topic of usury, in order to ascertain Calvin's theological tendency. A closer examination of Calvin's position on usury is warranted.

The 16th century saw the explorations overseas and the extended trading and commercial activities associated with it. New industries, funding, and investments for future explorations and commerce guaranteed the creation of a system for monetary liquidity and

loans. Geneva, being a small city, certainly required trading merchants to bring in the necessary consumer goods. In addition, unlike Wittenberg, Geneva was a commercial city that wat situated on a crossroad of trade routes with Switzerland in the north, Italy in the south, and France in the west (Durant 1957:467-468; Graafland 2010:234). All these factors inevitably led to Geneva's dependency on trade and commerce running smoothly and efficiently. With the development of commerce, it is asserted that the state and its subjects would reap the fruits of power and riches (Valls, Spencer, Radcliffe, Whelan, and Vanderschraaf 2018:177). Certainly, as intelligent as Calvin was, he must have intuitively understood this underlying principle of commerce and prosperity in light of his vision for Geneva.

Luther's world was more agrarian, with mining, which provided little incentive to reinterpret millennium-old church teachings on usury, except to emphasise personal righteousness in fair and just commercial activities (Rossner 2015:82-83). Zwingli, citing the exploitations on the poor by the elites through usury, was only willing to allow interest that was proportional to the harvest (Birnbaum 1959:41-42). These developments did not stray far from the traditional church teachings. Psalm 15:1 (NIV) asks, "Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain?" The succinct reply from Psalm 15:5 (NIV) states, whoever "lends money to the poor without interest." Deuteronomy 23:19 (NIV) also stipulates, "Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest." Other Scriptures like Exodus 22:24, Leviticus 25:35-37, Ezekiel 18:13, and Proverbs 28:8 explicitly condemn the charging of interest. Therefore, it is no surprise that both Judaism and Islam have banned the practice even to this day (Lewison 1999:327; Mews and Abraham 2007:2-3).

The divine directive seems clear against charging usury or interest, but then, a possible *loophole* emerges in Deuteronomy 23:20 (NIV), following the verse cited above, "You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a fellow Israelite, so that the Lord your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess." To add to the confusion, in the Parable of the Talents in the New Testament, it is hinted that even God desires to get some interest back, when the rhetorical question was

asked, "Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?"[8] (Bernstein 1965:847).

With the increase of commercialisation in Geneva, McGrath comments on Calvin's *De Usuris* (Calvin [1545] 1991:142) that "Calvin's willingness to allow a veritable rate of interest shows the awareness of the pressure upon capital in a more or less free market" (McGrath 1990:231), and that concerns of an adequate capital injection were on the Reformer's mind. Parsons and Tawney observe: "[T]he ethical teaching of Protestantism, particularly of Calvinism, was the chief factor in enabling the spirit of capitalism to develop and gain full sway in modern society" (Rowse 1931:133). However, upon scrutiny, Calvin's ambivalence towards the issue of usury shows that "he refuses to avail himself of clear cut verbal or categorical distinctions" (George 1957:459). At the same time, a record shows that between 1564 and 1569, after Calvin's death, the Genevan Consistory applied no less than 32 excommunications for the offense of usury (Monter 1976:479-480).

Evidently, under Calvin's watchful eyes, usury was neither widely accepted nor condoned. In fact, another record shows that Calvin proposed and legalised a five percent limit for the interest rate in 1543 (Sauer 1997:176; Valeri 1997:129). These data suggest that Calvin understood the importance of the role of interest in the economy but was cautious about its utilisation. The difference between abusive usury to exploit the poor and reasonable interest from a prosperous commercial transaction was emphasised. Calvin's regulation on usury coincided with the views of Bullinger and even Melanchthon, albeit "with some hesitation" (Wilson 1925:60). In his dealing with the biblical texts regarding usury, Calvin was not a literalist. For example, he interpreted Acts 7:16 as Luke utilising traditions[9] over the explicit writings of Moses (Foster 1908:425-426). Such pragmatism was not lost on Durant when he refers to Calvin,

[8] This passage is found in both Matthew 25:27 and Luke 19:23.

[9] Referring to the bodies of the patriarchs being brought back to Shechem, such narrative is not found in the writings ascribed to Moses.

> He adjusted himself to the situation, allowed interest charges of 10 percent, and recommended state loans to finance the introduction or expansion of private industry, as in the manufacture of clothing or the production of silk. Commercial centres like Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London took readily to the first modern religion that accepted the modern economy…Calvin could no longer have kept his leadership had he obstructed the commercial development of a city whose commerce was its life (Durant 1957:475).

If Durant is correct, Calvin was not only a shrewd and adaptable economist, but also functioned as a chief executive in setting the city's interest rate.

Calvin's ambivalent acceptance of usury has been exaggerated and used for both sides of the debate on capitalism. He saw the need for liquidity in a market economy, but he also chastised those who abused and exploited the poor. Although permitted and regulated, Geneva's usury system found Calvin's theological position without a radical departure from the Magisterial Reformers, but followed the same trajectory as many of them. His compassion for the poor, acumen for the economic necessity, and adaptability with a dogmatic usury interpretation augmented his place in history.

3.5.8 Political Enemies

While the teaching and the regulation of usury allowed Calvin to be effective and welcomed, his political struggles with a certain element in the City Council, namely the *Libertines*, were a source of constant vexation. This study found that similar struggles to various degrees between Calvin and his opponents continued on and off until 1552. Calvin was banished in 1536 because there were people who did not take well to his emphasis on socio-spiritual discipline, as well as his intention to augment ecclesiastical control. However, these same elite (the *caesaropapists*) of the city could not maintain an orderly state or church and were eventually discredited, allowing the pro-Calvin camp to gain an upper hand. It is reported that in 1540, "eight leaders were either executed or forced to flee for their lives" (Foster 1908:418-420), resulting in the pro-Calvin

camp to persuade his return in 1541. As far as the oligarchies were concerned, they had enjoyed privileges and freedom, perhaps for many generations. Calvin's *Ecclesiastical ordinances* (Calvin and Taylor [1541] 1953) and the *Consistoire* (Calvin and Racaut [1545] 2003) not only considered everyone equal in the eyes of God, but also curtailed their unrestricted impulses. Nevertheless, it was only a matter of time before they pursued another *coup d'état*. It would also be to no avail, for resistance was futile against a formidable foe such as Calvin. The struggle and the demise of the *Libertines* will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.5.9 Doctrinal Differences and Religious Intolerance

3.5.9.1 Sebastian Castellio (ca. 1515-1563)

Born in 1515, six years before Calvin, Sebastian Castellio mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew at the University of Lyons and was later credited with translating stories of the Old and New Testament into Latin and French, in a relatable form of dialogue that was vastly popular for centuries and "equaled only by that of Erasmus's *Colloquies*" (Zweig 1936:74-78). In 1540, after becoming a French religious refugee, Castellio went to Strassburg, where Calvin took him under his wing during the latter's exile in the same city. Then two years later, in 1542, Castellio moved to Geneva after an invitation from Calvin, who also arranged a teaching post for him. Unfortunately, Castellio came to disagree with Calvin on two biblical interpretations, one being Jesus' *descent into hell*, and the other being the nature of the Song of Songs, which Castellio took as a literal love poem and not an allegory of Christ and the church, as Calvin taught (Curley 2003:50-51; Parker 2007:85; Middleton 2020:272). Eventually, Calvin ridiculed and treated Castellio contemptuously and finally ostracised him in 1545. The dejected Castellio moved on to Basel (Gordon 2009:156-157). Voltaire was later reputed to have commented on the tyranny of Calvin, that Castellio was an accomplished scholar, and that it was Calvin's jealousy that drove out Castellio (Zweig 1936:89).

From Basel, Castellio continued his polemics against Calvin's doctrine of predestination. The animosity reached a peak after the execution of Servetus in 1553. Castellio argued for religious tolerance and advocated that in the same way, Francis I should not perse-

cute the French Protestants because of their accused heresy. This line of reasoning gave Castellio much support from the French refugees in Geneva, but gave Calvin enough consternation that he simply strong-armed both Geneva's and Basel's magistrates to stand with him and thwart Castellio's attack. Again, not surprisingly, the Basel authorities removed the notes attacking predestination from Castellio's second edition of his Latin translation of the Bible (Gordon 2009:230). It is said that Castellio spent the next 10 years in poverty, as one scholar laments, "[T]o resist Calvin was, in the mind of the latter, to resist the Holy Ghost" (Jones 1914:91-92).

3.5.9.2 Jerome Bolsec (unknown - ca. 1585)

Jerome Bolsec, a doctor of theology and a physician, was a French refugee who arrived at Geneva to avoid religious persecution, but was later banished because he rejected Calvin's doctrine of predestination (Gordon 2009:205). In 1551, Bolsec appealed to the foreknowledge of God and challenged the doctrine of predestination. Calvin accused him of Pelagianism and asked the Council to deal with him. It is interesting to note that the Council members that judged Bolsec were themselves "even more ignorant of the doctrine" (Parker 2007:114; Van Veen 2015:330). Having defaulted to Calvin's inclination, the Council found Bolsec guilty. Bullinger, the successor to Zwingli in Zürich, wrote to Calvin on 1 December 1551 (Baum, Cunitz, and Reuss 1863-1900:215; cf. Venema 1986:441) to admonish him and dissuade him from his strong stance on predestination: "Now believe me, many are offended by your statements on predestination in your *Institutes*…[and many have drawn] the same conclusions as Bolsec" (Durant 1957:477; Venema 1986:441). Arguing further on behalf of Bolsec, Bullinger pointed out that neither Zwingli nor the apostles would subscribe to Calvin's narrow interpretation (Gordon 2009:206-207). After the intercession from Calvin's long-time friend, Jacques de Falais, as well as other reformed cities, Bolsec was fortunate enough to receive a mere banishment. However, after his banishment to Bern, Bolsec continued to criticise Calvin, and eventually, the Bern ministers pronounced Calvin and his doctrine of predestination heretical (Van Veen 2015:331) and burned his books in 1554 (Gordon 2009:211). Years later, after Bolsec reverted back to Catholicism, he increased his calumny against Calvin (Marshall 2010:855). No doubt, in a few short years, Calvin and his associates

would not repeat the same mistake of allowing such a thorn in the flesh to escape their grasp. One Michael Servetus would be met with a much harsher fate in Geneva for disagreeing with Calvin.

3.5.9.3 Michael Servetus (ca. 1511-1553)

The execution of Michael Servetus is still a point of debate to this very day. Scholars have defended Calvin along the line of reasoning as follows: 1) Servetus had already been condemned by the Catholics; 2) the killing of heretics was customary in the 16th century; 3) other cities gave their blessings; 4) Calvin requested that Servetus should not be burned, but was ignored; 5) Calvin had many strong and powerful enemies in the Council; and 6) Calvin really had no influence in Geneva at that stage because he was only granted citizenship in 1559 (Hughes 1964).

While most scholars will agree that 1555 was the year when Calvin's enemies were purged (Parker 2007:126; Van Veen 2015:328), it can be argued that the evidence for this conjecture was "indirect" (Monter 1976:468). Indeed, the overwhelming evidence showed the unique and prestigious status assigned to Calvin in Geneva after his return in 1541. First, it was the repeated persuasion from the Geneva Council that convinced Calvin to return after being exiled in 1538. Second, in 1544, after Calvin complained to the Syndics about Castellio, whom Calvin himself had invited to come to Geneva to teach in the first place but had changed his mind, Castellio had to be removed (Parker 2007:86). Third, in 1545, while all ministers in Geneva had to serve the patients from the plagues in the hospital, Calvin alone was exempted because he was deemed too important (Greene 1923:362; Gordon 2009:157). In that same year, in a private letter to a friend that was published years later by Theodore Beza, Calvin confided that, "if we permit it in the least degree, many immediately will take unbridled license under this cover" (Lüthy 1970:75), in reference to his view on charging interests for a loan. Such confession and caution fully demonstrated Calvin's own awareness of the authority of his opinions and words in Geneva.

Furthermore, in 1546, despite public protests in Geneva, Calvin expulsed another minister by the name of De la Mare, because the latter disagreed on the doctrine of predestination. It is therefore asserted that, by this time, the Company of Pastors have become experienced and unified behind Calvin (Naphy 1994:59-79). Again, in 1547, a former monk, Jaques Gruet, accused Calvin as a French agent but was summarily executed a month later, again, despite a popular protest against the sentence (Naphy 1994:103). Ultimately, as irrefutable evidence of Calvin's supreme influence, on 9 November 1552, the Geneva Council, by a vote, elevated Calvin's *Institutes* to become "the holy doctrine of God" (Foster 1908:393). With an equal and sacred status with the holy Scripture, Calvin's writing and personhood had attained a level unparalleled in Geneva. It is no wonder that Trolliet, a Genevan who dared to attack Calvin and his predestination doctrine, was then put on trial that very year (Naphy 1995:95).

In light of the above, while the average French refugee coveted a Genevan citizenship, Calvin did not see any need for it, until 1558 when he was *awarded* one. In short, Calvin's lack of a Genevan citizenship, or rather being in no need of one, only served as a reminder of how special Calvin's status was in Geneva after his return in 1541. As such, the argument of Calvin's lack of a Genevan citizenship that would prove that he was powerless in the affairs of the city, is simply not convincing. On the contrary, instead of proving his meagre influence as a non-citizen, the fact only shows how exclusive his status was at the time in the small city-state of Geneva. In addition to Calvin's exclusive status, he founded the Consistory in 1541 and attended its weekly meetings religiously, as well as personally shaping its agenda until his death in 1564 (Watt and Witte 2006:326). The Consistory dealt with 50 to 200 offenses each year, ranging from commercial misbehaviours to *illegal* singings. It probed and exposed the private lives of all Genevans (Valeri 1997:128-129). This organisation was as intrusive as it was powerful, and Calvin sat as its premier leader for two decades, dishing out discipline for infractions such as criticising him and his ministers. While the courteous critics might use phrases such as the "great but stubborn and severe Reformer" (Valkhoff 1960:111), or "the powerful and venerated Reformer" (Valkhoff 1960:115) to refer to Calvin, others have coined the term "Protestant Rome" (Mansbach 2005:111-112) to describe Calvin's

Geneva, not the least making the implication that the new “pope” was Calvin himself. Other critics have been more straightforward in using the term “dictatorship” (Zweig 1936:4), or simply designating Calvin as “the Pope of Geneva” (Schrembs 1934:5). Even Philip Melanchthon, a friendly contemporary of Calvin, as well as the premier leader of Lutheranism after Luther’s death, referred to him as Zeno, the Stoic philosopher who was said to have people thrown into prison for disagreeing with him (Bretschneider and Bindseil 1834-1852:930; Pitkin 2004:345-346). Calvin’s “iron determination to root out diversity of opinions” (Elton 1963:230) has also been blamed for Servetus’ death. In the final analysis, excusing Calvin, “one of the giants of the Reformation” (Curley 2003:50), for his role in the execution of Servetus because of the former’s lack of will or influence in the city, simply cannot be sustained.

Regarding the support of the Swiss cities whose inputs were sought on the execution of Servetus, while strong support was given to punish this heretic, there was definitively *no* mentioning of execution, except that restraint was cautioned (Emerton 1909:159; Zweig 1936:126-127; Bainton 1960:202-206). It was common in the 16th-century Europe, “that if heretics [did] not give up their beliefs, the Church should seek the help of the State to severely persecute them” (Krindatch 2006:269). Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that the Swiss cities were uniquely progressive and proud of their stance in religious tolerance among the European states. In fact, until 1553, the year that saw the execution of Servetus, the harshest punishment for heretics within these tolerant Swiss cantons was banishment (Willis 1877:456; Zweig 1936:126-127). While most of the European powerful national states around the Swiss cantons retained their control by persecuting the heretical minorities, it seems as if the small Swiss city-states stood alone and tall, as a beacon of religious tolerance. As such, it was evident that Geneva, under the leadership of Calvin, proceeded with the capital punishment and reaped the appropriate protests accordingly.

Additional primary source material reveals that Calvin already wanted to put Servetus to death six or seven years earlier. Calvin’s letter to Farel about Servetus, dated 13 February 1546 stated rather ominously, “[F]or if he shall come, I shall never permit him to

depart alive, provided my authority be of any avail" (Calvin and Bonnet [1564] 1980:82). According to Cottret (2000:217), the letter was written in 1547, where Calvin stated, "[F]or if he came, as far as my authority goes, I would not let him leave alive" (Calvin 1863, Vol. 12:283). With this determination, an opportunity came knocking on Calvin's door in August 1553, when Servetus arrived in Geneva.

After attending Calvin's sermon, Servetus was summarily arrested on 17 August. Scholars agree that it was Calvin who instigated Servetus' arrest (Bainton 1932:80; Parker 2007:117). Calvin triumphantly wrote to Farel a few days later, "But after he had been recognized, I thought that he should be detained. My friend Nicolas summoned him on a capital charge…I hope that sentence of death will at least be passed upon him, but I desire that the severity of the punishment may be mitigated" (Calvin and Bonnet [1564] 1980:158-159). It seems as if Calvin wanted Servetus dead, but in a humane way. Farel was Calvin's confidant, and the transparency of the latter's "unreserved and uninhibited" inclination (Gordon 2009:104) was all but clear in these two letters.

Regarding Calvin's stated wish to mitigate Servetus' punishment, this study did not find any primary source corroborating Calvin's words or any attempt in altering the mode of Servetus' execution (Calvin and Bonnet 2007:436). At any rate, Servetus was executed by burning on 27 October 1553 for the crime of being a heretic. The subsequent uproar from other cities forced Calvin to publish a treatise, *Defensio orthodoxae fidei* (Calvin and Kleinstuber [1554] 2009), to defend the execution of Servetus (Guggisberg 1977:42; De Waardt 2011:385). The fact that there was an uproar and that Calvin had to defend the execution, fully demonstrates that despite claims to the contrary, religious intolerant killings were not widely accepted as a routine protocol or custom, especially in the reformed Swiss cantons. It is pointed out that since the 1520s, Lutheran Europe questioned the justification of the execution of other religious groups. Additionally, the Schmalkaldic League banned the passing of any law against sectarians in 1531, believing that the sectarians should be punished for their offenses, not their faith. In fact, even the Catholic governments of nearby Passau and Speyer had stopped executing heretics as from 1535, choosing imprisonment or banishment instead (Clasen 1972:384-386).

At the same time, across the English channel, Edward Seymour, the Protector of the Realm and Governor of King Edward VI, had repealed all heresy statutes instituted by Henry VIII, as well as championed the freedom of the press (King 1976:1). However, in a letter dated 22 October 1548, Calvin wrote to Seymour and urged the latter to instead deal with the heretics decisively, arguing that they "deserve to be coerced by the revenging sword" (Bainton 1956:138; Calvin 1548:229). If Calvin was in favour of any religious tolerance before, by 1548, it had all vanished.

It is also clear that although the law could stipulate the penalty of death for a heretic, the local governments still had plenty of flexibility in their dealing with such problematic issues. Such was the case that Geneva felt the need to write to the various cities for advice regarding the final judgement of Servetus, and in the end, no endorsement of the death penalty was availed (Schaff 1998:458).

It is interesting to note that this study came to a similar conclusion, albeit independently and less inimical, as Rives' *Did Calvin murder Servetus?* (Rives 2008), which concludes unequivocally that Calvin sought out Servetus and planned the murder methodically and then denied any personal involvement. The scope of this study is not a judgement on the character of the Reformers, but to show how the context of their political environments and struggles influenced their theological tendencies.

With this unfortunate event in history, whether it was political expediency or a personal vendetta (or perhaps both), the execution of Servetus, no doubt, witnessed Calvin's design, without exonerating him in any way, as many supporters throughout history have attempted so. It has also been pointed out that in Calvin's *Institutes* before 1536, he argued for religious tolerance (Calvin and Battles [1536] 1986:62; Curley 2003:53). Therefore, this about-turn has not gone unnoticed by modern scholars, as they defend Castellio and many others, who were the vocal Protestant critics of Calvin in the 16th century (Middleton 2020:283).

Although some scholars inscribe this unfortunate event as the “tragic blot in the career of Calvin” (Cuthbertson 1912:63), it is understandable for today’s supporters to gloss over Calvin’s part in the death of Servetus, or even to disregard the evidence of primary sources. Serious scholars have concluded that Calvin “was so much respected by the Magistracy and People of Geneva, that he was as absolute a Master there, as the pope was at Rome” (Sill 1993:310), and that the execution of Servetus was the product of his overzealous heart. It is interesting to note that Bernard Cottret, a French historian, in his *Calvin: A biography*, although referencing without citation a letter dated February 1553 of Guillaume de Trie, a friend of Calvin, wrote to his Catholic cousin living in Lyon, Antoine Arneys, insisting that Calvin feared “a popish plot aimed at destabilizing his position in Geneva” (Cottret 2000:221).

Nevertheless, it is concluded that the conjecture by Holl and Doum that Servetus had been in Geneva plotting “with the *Libertines* for the overthrow of the Genevan theocracy” (Bainton 1936:141-142) has been convincingly refuted. Even William Cunningham, a staunch Calvinist admits, “There can be no doubt that Calvin beforehand, at the time, and after the event, explicitly approved and defended the putting him to death, and assumed the responsibility of the transaction” (Cunningham 1862:316-317). Likewise, Voltaire, quoting from a letter in Calvin’s own handwriting, dated 13 September 1561, addressed the high chamberlain to the King of Navarre, Marquis de Poet, “Honour, glory, and riches shall be the reward of your pains: but above all, do not fail to rid the country of those zealous scoundrels who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard” (Richards 1818:101; Robinson 1984:348; Voltaire and Smollett 1901:89). Conclusively, this tragic episode serves to highlight the extent of influence that Geneva politics had on Calvin’s theological dispositions.

As early as 1532, Calvin’s very first publication, *Commentary on Seneca’s de Clementia* (Calvin, Battles, and Hugo [1532] 1969, Ch. 3.3:54), seems to support Dreyer’s assertion that for Calvin, “clemency is the greatest and most heroic virtue, a sign of true humanity” (Dreyer 2018:page 5 of 8). One should note that at age 23, Calvin had not suf-

fered through the political struggles that he was destined to endure later in Geneva, specifically from 1538 to 1553. As cited earlier, in Calvin's *Institutes* written in 1536 (again, before his tenure in Geneva), Calvin argued for clemency and humanity in dealing with those who have *lapsed to an extreme*, and further pleaded to "commit them to the judgment of the Lord…not ceasing to pray to God for them" (Calvin 1536:1024). It is noted that such theological leaning was no different than Luther's, who portended, "If an authority thus really tries to force men to adhere to certain beliefs, it will involve both lies and trickery" (Luther and Brooks 1983:56). It is hardly a surprise that, given the protracted political struggles he suffered in Geneva during the following couple of decades, Calvin eventually felt the need to adopt a stricter theological stance, even an authoritarian and intolerant one.

When Christ pronounced that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, political power, not unlike wealth, could also easily change a person, even one's own theological positions. A person could very well wonder, not *if* Calvin had read Niccolò Machiavelli's writings such as *The prince* (1513-1514), which is considered by some as the "diabolical guide to political statecraft" (Barnett 2006:2), but *how much* Calvin was influenced by him. Machiavelli was a diplomat and a philosopher in the early 16th century, who wrote extensively on geopolitical advice to the ruling class. One scholar equates Machiavelli's writings as instructions for "the maintenance of rulership at all cost, the utility of unethical and manipulative behaviour, and the centrality of power as an end in and of itself" (Dietz 1986:777). Machiavelli's political thoughts would have been quite popular during Calvin's impressionable years, as the geopolitical forces unfolded in Europe. Therefore, it is entirely possible that, for Calvin, the end may have to justify the means, for his motives were without doubt for the *Gloriam Deo*.

3.5.9.4 Antonio Caracciolo, Bishop of Troyes

Antonio Caracciolo became the bishop of Troyes in 1551. He was to be the first French Catholic bishop in France to try and bring his entire diocese to the reformed faith (James 2004:xxii). The process was not without its share of controversy. Caracciolo had shown signs of evangelicalism but proceeded to go to Rome in 1555, to salute the new

pope, Paul IV, and to stay there for two years. In 1557, he made his way back by visiting Calvin in Geneva and promised to hold to the reformed teachings (Galpern 1976:121). However, according to a prominent Protestant preacher of Troyes, Calvin "reprimanded him sharply for…recanting, and for…still…chanting the mass" (Naphy 1996:72).

A few years later, in 1561, Caracciolo asked Calvin through an intermediary, Theodore Beza, to endorse his Catholic-turned-Reformer episcopacy in Troyes. Although Caracciolo espoused Calvinism, he refused to give up his episcopal title and prestige. Even the Protestant ministers in Troyes accused Caracciolo of "immoral life, inconstancy, and continued singing of the Mass" (Galpern 1976:165-166; Baumgartner 1980:52). With the possibility of multiple high-ranking Catholic clergies to convert to Calvinism and the chance for Protestantism to gain the upper hand in France, this could be an opportunity that Calvin did not want to pass. Overlooking Caracciolo's oscillating tendencies as well as flexibility in his religious convictions and identities, Calvin welcomed the former into the reformed fold. It is suggested that "political circumstances were responsible for a change" in Calvin's decision (Nugent 1979:476; Burns 1994:812-818).

This change of paradigm was significant, especially in light of Calvin's hatred towards *Nicodemism*. As far back as 1545, Calvin was confronted with situations that he would call Nicodemism, in which a Protestant would live and worship like a Catholic, in order to avoid persecution in territories that were hostile to Protestantism (Eire 1979:45). The term "Nicodemism" was an allusion to the Pharisee, Nicodemus, who secretly visited Jesus at night in John 3:1-10 (Schutte 1975:641; Harkins 2014:900). Scholars have agreed that Calvin detested such religious dissimulation and hypocrisy for decades, with "unrelenting literary assault" (Shepardson 2003:38; Woo 2015:222). Yet, when it came to political advantage, certain theological convictions could be cast aside and forgotten. In fact, Calvin's position on church government was indeed an evolving one. In Book IV of his *Institutes*, Calvin devoted more than half of its discourse to the ecclesiastical polity (Calvin and Battles [1536] 1986:841-1,240; Burns 1994:815-816). Indeed, his fascination with political events and intrigues have been well-documented throughout his ten-

ure in Geneva. According to McNeill (1964:72), his surviving letters have shown plenty of attempts to influence political outcomes. It is no surprise that towards the end of his career, after numerous political manoeuvring, Calvin the theologian had completed his transformation into Calvin the political strategist.

3.6 CONCLUSION

It has been poignantly summarised: “Luther was a monk. On his world’s agenda was the question: How can I become just before God? Zwingli is a schoolmaster, a pastor, and a humanist patriot. On his agenda was the question: How can God’s will be done in society and church?” (Price 2002:29). It is precisely Zwingli’s undying patriotism that urged him to oppose the mercenary system, and it has been posited that Zwingli died as a result of this unpopular political stance (Varickayil 1980:26; Raath and De Freitas 2005:19). It was the same loyalty to his city-state to preserve its function and order through the preservation of pedobaptism, despite agreeing with its lack of scriptural support earlier on. In the same vein, although Zwingli criticised the practice of tithing as having no scriptural support, he still argued for its continued practice (Raath and De Freitas 2005:3; Whaley 2012:195). At the same time, this study has demonstrated that Zwingli did pick and choose non-scriptural practices according to the political obligation of the time. It seems clear that political expediency and loyalty to the state moderated Zwingli’s theological positions not infrequently. Unfortunately for Zwingli, some of his convictions have cost him his life.

It is interesting to note that compared to Luther who lived 63 years and Calvin who lived 55 years, Zwingli had only 47 years on earth, with a scanty 12 years in his ministry. Despite those limited years at the helm, Zwingli led the citizens of Zürich, from the merchants to the magistrate, to an acceptance of evangelical teachings, and they, in turn, rewarded him with an unparalleled influence in the city (Winkler 1987:218). As such, Zwingli and the Zürich authority can be stated to have presented a perfect embodiment of symbiosis. As the ministers in the city helped the magistrate through the preaching of the word of God, the magistrate helped the ministers by enforcing the word being preached.

Finally, without a doubt, Calvin, through the forging of the city-state Geneva into a spiritually disciplined kingdom of God on earth, acquired for himself a legacy in the history of Christianity. His talents for systematic thinking and oratory persuasion were excelled by his fearless tenacity, a personality trait that allowed him to tower above and dominate those who engaged with him. As such, his followers in Geneva have been called "petty tyrants and universal busy bodies, denying the individual much of his (sic.) privacy, pleasure, and individualism" (VanderMolen 1969:459). It is not surprising, therefore, to find his critics ranging from a mild comment of Geneva "being the 'fighting city' of Calvin with the use of 'ferocious' discipline" (Lüthy 1970:56), to going as far as indicting Calvinism as the forerunner of Islamic radicalism (Mansbach 2005:104).

Mansbach's curious indictment identifies three interesting parallel characteristics: 1) The Genevan Consistory's moral policing (Spierling 2012:93) resembles the Islamic religion police. In fact, between 1542 and 1552, more than 100 cases of illicit singing were brought before the Consistory, including a mother singing to her child, and two young girls singing while playing in the street (Latour 2015:1); 2) the French refugees who later brought Calvinism to most parts of Europe and America, bring to mind the foreign jihadists who trained and fought in Afghanistan; and 3) shaping a *true and pure* Geneva into a theocracy with extreme austerity (Parker 2007:123) has a semblance of ISIS establishing a Caliphate. Although such a comparison might generate an awkward nod from Mansbach's readers, what is ascertained in this study is that where Luther delineated two kingdoms, Calvin combined them; where Luther *relied* on the political force of his loyal princes, Calvin *became* the political force of his loyal Geneva.

CHAPTER 4
THE ANABAPTISTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having examined the Magisterial Reformers in length in the preceding chapter, this chapter explores the multi-faceted group that is called the Anabaptists. While the Magisterial Reformers were conspicuously working with their magistrates to advance their reforms, they were required to adjust their theological position to accommodate the prevailing political sways. On the other hand, the Anabaptists, by and large, were determined to free themselves from the theological encumberment of the state. Schaff succinctly states, "The [magisterial] Reformers aimed to reform the old Church by the Bible; the Radicals attempted to build a new Church from the Bible" (Schaff 1998:49). It is this radical sectarian paradigm that earned them the ignominy and persecution for centuries. This chapter explores the Anabaptism, not as a monolith, but as a less-than-perfect designation full of diverse theologians and associated convictions.

The research conducted before this century by both secular and confessional scholars, conclude that the Anabaptism originated from "different roots in different locales" (Snyder 1981:276), and as such, the concept "polygenesis" was coined. Moreover, concurring with Goertz, caution has been raised against the temptation to "speak of the movements as if they were one phenomenon" (Kaufman 1988:531), and stress that their apparent similarities do not necessarily point to a common theological root.

Nevertheless, current scholars continue to dissent as to who the first Anabaptist was. There are currently at least two camps with one holding that the first Anabaptist came about in Saxony when Müntzer opposed Luther, and the other holding that Zwingli's student, Grebel, started the Anabaptist community in Switzerland. The first camp is represented by the Lutheran scholars, Heinrich Bohmer and Karl Holl; the second camp is led by the American Mennonite scholar, Harold Bender (Williams and Mergal 1957:73; Seiling 2014:41). In addition, the Swiss reformed pastor and theologian, Locher, concurring with his teacher, Blanke, asserts that the first Anabaptist *community* came from

Zwingli's preaching that influenced Grebel, placing Locher and Blanke in the second camp (Locher 1965:19). In another summary by a Mennonite professor, the question, "What had Thomas Müntzer to do with Anabaptism…what had Anabaptism to do with Müntzer?" was rhetorically raised (Friedmann 1958:76). Is there a possibility for confessional bias within their research conclusions? Is it a coincidence that the Lutheran scholars argue for Luther's influence, whereas the Swiss theologians argue for Zwingli's influence on the founding of Anabaptism? Alternatively, is it possible that *polygenesis* hints at the independent and the inevitable trajectory of the same conclusion we find in the anti-pedobaptism camps? Albrecht Ritschl, a 19th-century German theologian, goes so far as to attribute the spiritual Franciscans as the forerunners of Anabaptism (Williams and Mergal 1957:27). It seems as if the debate will go on as long as there are confessional divisions among scholars within Christendom.

Scholarly debate indeed continues, as an argument for "polygenesis" established multiple possibilities for individuals responsible for the rise of the Anabaptism (Stayer *et al*. 1975:2). Then, building on that theory, a *post-polygenetic* approach identified Sattler as the founder (Snyder 1981:276). Finally, as the turn of the millennium brought on more primary source material and, focussing on finding "an integrated or interconnected movement emerging from the Swiss Reformation" (Seiling 2014:42), Grebel and Hübmaier were identified together as key theological leaders of the early Anabaptism.

However, such fervour in the recent research into Anabaptism has also raised the call for a re-examination of the very term "Anabaptism" or its often associated radicalism, and even challenges the concept of Reformation, by pointing out that the "Reformation [was] in its very nature 'radical'" in the 16th century (Hamilton 2011:302). Regardless how one assigns the radical designation, scientific progress is indeed built on the questioning of the previous assumptions. History no doubt has seen its share of re-examinations and revisions.

The fact that the printing press allowed more and more literate adults to read the Bible on their own, combined with all types of theologians promoting their brand of the Refor-

mation (Bailey 1990:176), made it inevitable that various groups, with their independent understanding and interpretation, often without any political affiliation, eventually rejected the pedobaptists' practice of the previous 13 centuries, while at the same time, embraced and espoused even more eccentric theologies.

4.2 THE ZWICKAU PROPHETS AND ANTI-PEDOBAPTISM

As soon as Luther's objection to the doctrine of indulgences came to the fore in 1517, myriads of Catholic teachings became fair game for criticism. Doctrines and practices such as clerical celibacy, Mass, tithing, the Eucharist, and so on, were widely debated, re-interpreted, and even denounced. It should not be a surprise that the doctrine of pedobaptism was rejected by some in 1523 (Bender 1938:167).

The Zwickau prophets went to Wittenberg during the fall of 1521. Although only one of them, a former Wittenberg student by the name of Stübner, espoused anti-pedobaptism teachings, it was significant enough for Melanchthon to inquire Luther in a letter, while admitting even that Augustine had a hard time refuting those against pedobaptism (Graybill 2015:267-270). One analysis shows that the Zwickau prophets were influenced by Müntzer, but more importantly, the reason for their teaching against pedobaptism was their total disregard for baptism in general. The lead *prophet* by the name of Nicholas Storch, a weaver by trade, claimed that God spoke to them by "private revelations" (Tranvik 2016:277). Both Müntzer and Storch believed that sacraments in the Catholic church were distractions or simply outward ceremonies, even going as far as calling baptism a "dog bath" (Tranvik 2016:277). Therefore, although Müntzer has been traditionally identified as an Anabaptist (Randell 1998:77), it is not a surprise that no record has been found of him having ever taken a believer's baptism himself (Friedmann 1940:341), prompting Friedmann to conclude that Müntzer was not at all interested in the act itself. It is interesting to note that another scholar even states that Müntzer "wrote the first Protestant liturgy for the baptism of children" (Bender 1938:158). No doubt, the classification of Müntzer as representative of the Anabaptists should be re-evaluated.

Even as late as 1524, Grebel was uncertain about Müntzer's position on the baptism of believers. In the former's letter addressed to the latter that year (Grebel 1991), aside from recognising Müntzer's rejection of pedobaptism, it was painfully apparent that Grebel was mistaken to think that Müntzer was a like-minded pacifist (Williams and Mergal 1957:80). Müntzer's disdain for baptism in general and his non-pacifist stance allowed other scholars and Mennonite historians to readily reject classifying him as an Anabaptist (Bender 1938:158; Zuck 1957:215). It would seem logical, given that Müntzer and the Zwickau prophets were so anti-establishment that sought to reject all forms of the outward vestige of the old guard, that baptism in any form would hold no value in their teachings.

It is important to note that rejecting pedobaptism does not automatically mean a support for adult rebaptism. In the case of the Zwickau prophets, their rejection of pedobaptism did not make them a forerunner of Anabaptism any more than rejecting Brussel sprouts making one a meat-lover. In fact, it is stated that "adult baptism was not practiced in Saxony, although arguments against infant baptism had been raised" (Friesen 1970:27). Nevertheless, following Luther, many scholars continue with the same assumption and connect Anabaptism to Müntzer or the Zwickau prophets (Kittelson and Wiersma 2016:200).

4.3 CONRAD GREBEL (ca. 1498-1526) AND THE SWISS BRETHREN

Grebel was born into a prominent and wealthy Zürich family with strong political influences in 1498. His schooling took him to Basel, Vienna, and Paris, where he was trained in humanism. Returning to Zürich in 1521, Grebel studied Greek and Hebrew under Zwingli and experienced a conversion in the spring of 1522, not long after his marriage on 6 February that year. It was not until the fall of 1523, that this devoted Zwinglian disciple finally revealed his disagreement with the Zürich reform (Williams 1992:182-184). The rift actually started a year earlier at the end of 1522, over the interpretations of the Lord's Supper. Grebel and his associates asked for both the bread and the wine to be used in celebrating the Eucharist (Walton 1967:145). Zwingli, however, was not willing to change the Mass over concerns of alienating the City Council, as well

as other conservative elements of the city. This resulted in Grebel writing in his letter to his confidant and also brother-in-law, Vadian, in October of 1523 to "express his disgust with Zwingli" (Estep 1996:37), frustratingly stating: "[T]he Word was overthrown, set back, and bound by its most learned heralds" (Harder and Grebel 1985:276).

Doctrinal issues are usually more complicated than it seems. In 1522, the Reformation in the city of Zürich was far from complete. As late as August 1522, Bishop Hugo was calling for the Swiss Confederacy to repress the reform movement in the city. With conservative factions still favouring the *status quo*, the magistrate had to walk a fine line, all the while providing its support for the budding Reformation. Walton states, "In order to keep control of the situation and still proceed with reform, the Council had to be careful. Its policy tried to appease both sides: It checked any manifestation of radicalism in favor of the reform movement" (Walton 1967:132). This cautious position adopted by both Zwingli and the magistrate was not welcomed by Grebel and his associates. Eventually, disagreement with issues such as images, tithing, church membership, and pedobaptism further split the Reformation in Zürich. It boiled down to the disappointment that the Radical Reformers felt, especially when Zwingli had earlier declared that the word of God, not the Zürich Council, should decide on the issue of the Mass and the use of images. The result of that disputation had shown Zwingli reneging on the promise and defaulted to the Council in a slower-paced Reformation to avoid disturbances. The official fracture of these two Reformation groups occurred in January 1525, after the Second Disputation on pedobaptism (Stephens 1994:128; Estep 1996:12-16).

For two consecutive Tuesdays in January 1525, Grebel, Mantz, Reublin, and Blaurock debated with Zwingli and Bullinger, in perhaps the world's first baptismal disputation. Williams argues that Zwingli, being a pedobaptist, more "out of convention than principle," could not win over the crowd against the impassioned Anabaptists (Williams 1992:215), and more importantly, that the Council had "already made up its mind" (Williams 1992:216). The result of the disputation was a decree that anyone who failed to have their infants baptised within eight days after birth, would be expelled from the city. The irony is that at one time, Zwingli, as well as "Oecolampadius, Jud, Grossman,

and others had expressed doubt concerning the validity of infant baptism" (Estep 1996:20-21). Zwingli also expressed his own doubt about pedobaptism in his earlier days: "Nothing grieves me more than that at the present I have to baptize children, for I know it ought not to be done...However one must practice infant baptism so as not to offend our fellow men (sic.)" (Muralt and Schmid 1952:184; Verduin and Littell 2001:198-199). In a further analysis, it is posited that Zwingli's about-turn was to avoid the division of society on the account of believers' baptism, which he was convinced that the sacralists, as well as the magistrate, would not have allowed. As such, Zwingli, who used to preach against pedobaptism as well as other *extra-biblical* practices of the Catholic church, later omitted even to mention pedobaptism, stating, "[I]t is better not to preach it until the world is ready to take it" (Muralt and Schmid 1952:184; Verduin and Littell 2001:199).

Hübmaier challenged Zwingli's about-turn in pedobaptism, "You used to hold to the same ideas, wrote and preached them from the pulpit openly; many hundreds have heard it from your mouth. But now all who say this of you are called liars" (Westin and Bergsten 1962:186; Verduin and Littell 2001:200). Not willing to be stopped by the Council in their effort to restore the primitive church and her teachings, as well as their desire to be freed from the corruption of the man-made traditions, Grebel and his associates baptised, or (re)baptised, one another soon afterwards. Although 30 January and 7 February have been proposed as the dates of their *re*-baptisms, 25 January 1525 had been more widely accepted as the birth of the Swiss Anabaptism (Williams and Mergal 1957:44).

As early as July 1523, Grebel was the first to hear about the teaching against pedobaptism in St. Gall. Yet, his second child, born one month later, was still baptised (Bender 1950:125). It is reasonable to deduce that, at that time, Grebel was not against pedobaptism. However, on 5 September 1524, Grebel, in his letter to Müntzer, was calling pedobaptism a "senseless, blasphemous abomination, contrary to all Scripture" (Baylor 1991:44). What were the factors that led to Grebel's drastic change in turning away from pedobaptism in just one year after his second child's baptism? Could the birth of his

second child have forced him to examine the Scriptures more intently, which led him to a newfound conviction?

4.4 DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SWISS BRETHREN

As mentioned earlier, Grebel and his associates started to deviate from the reformed trajectory set up by Zwingli and the magistrate regarding the Lord's Supper in 1522. By June 1523, there were widespread protests against tithing, as the Radical Reformers could not find any binding Scripture in support of it. Issues of pedobaptism came to a head in 1524, culminating in two Disputations in January of 2015. At each step, the growing discontent with the pace of the Reformation had only increased. Zwingli gave testimony in a hearing in front of the Council concerning the activities of these radical young Reformers in April 1525. In an analysis, the Radical Reformers aimed to establish a separate group and church, made up of those *true* to the gospel, who would be "free of any obligation to pay tithes and interest" (Walton 1967:148). Regardless of how accurate these accusations may be, it is clear that these non-mainstream non-Magisterial Reformers desired a community of believers that was quite the opposite of the synergistic or symbiotic, theocratic organisation that Zwingli had patiently built in Zürich, or Calvin was to build in Geneva a decade later.

Instead of the Magisterial Reformers' insistence on relying on political means to ensure the wellbeing of the church, Grebel and company disregarded any role that the political authority has in the church. In the 16th-century Europe, this paradigm was not only radical but also dangerous. Any disdain of authority can only be precarious at best, and life-threatening at worst. It is precisely such disengagement with the political authority that generated distrust among the princes and caused them to crack down on the Anabaptists. Making matters worse, the Peasants' War that broke out later during the fall of 1524, had Thomas Müntzer as a key figure that was also supposed to be an Anabaptist, and that made things much more dangerous for the Swiss Anabaptists.

4.5 THOMAS MÜNTZER (ca. 1489-1525)

One scholar admiringly calls Müntzer "the leading Radical thinker in the entire Reformation period…a striking and effective preacher" (Matheson 1991:187). However, others muse that, if the German socialists and communists had not resurrected and exalted him to be a hero for the proletarians, then he would simply amount to a reject that was abandoned "by the other Reformers, founded no church, and lapsed into oblivion" (Bainton 1982:3). At any rate, somewhere in the middle, Müntzer is evaluated to be "'the Reformer as rebel'…[and] the 'least crackpot' of the apocalyptic Anabaptists" (McSorley 1974:50). Nevertheless, the fact that Müntzer's identification as a true Anabaptist was called into question, cannot be underestimated (Bainton 1982:13). In truth, the findings of this study also concur with Bainton's hesitation in classifying Müntzer as a *bona fide* Anabaptist.

Being a controversial figure in the Reformation, Müntzer was born in December of either 1488 or 1489, in Stolberg, which was in the region of the Harz mountains (Williams 1992:121) – currently between Hanover and Leipzig. Müntzer first studied in Leipzig in 1506, then enrolled at the University of Frankfurt in October 1512. He became a priest in 1514 and attended the Wittenberg University in 1517 and 1518 (Baylor 1986:452). Although it was Luther who recommended Müntzer to the St. Mary's Church in the town of Zwickau in 1520, the former soon realised his mistake, as Müntzer's fiery preaching enticed the mob to burn down the church (Bainton 1982:7). Müntzer's later encounter with the Zwickau prophets made him realise that the poor and the illiterate could be filled with the Spirit, just like the prophets and the apostles. His radical railing against the Mass, indulgences, clericalism, and the like, incited his followers to violence, first in Zwickau, then Prague, and then Allstedt (Bainton 1982:6-7; Williams 1992:123). It seems as if trouble and chaos followed him. However, to be fair, it is important to point out that these social unrests were common at the time. Drummond avers: "From 1476 onwards, the peasants of South Germany plotted and demonstrated time and again" (Drummond 1979:64), and riots, as well as civil disobedience, were well documented throughout the period.

Müntzer's first publication on 18 July 1523, *Open letters to the brothers at Stolberg* (Münzer 1993:61-63), although showing radical ideas, nevertheless cautioned against a violent rebellion or armed struggle. Others even identify and date Müntzer's "transition from reform to revolution" (Drummond 1979:69) to August 1524. However, in disagreement with such a hypothesis, this study counts six times from Müntzer's own writing, the theme of the *elect* against the *damned*, as well as belligerent name-calling of his opponents of "foolish, scrotum-like doctors of theology" (Baylor 1991:7), "the little straw doctors of theology" (Baylor 1991:8), and even "diarrhea-makers" (Baylor 1991:9) within the pages of Müntzer's unpublished manifesto, *The Prague protest* (Baylor 1991:1-10), which was written as early as November 1521. With phrases like "the elect must clash with the damned" (Baylor 1991:7), and three climatic pronouncements in the final section: "In our time God wants to separate the wheat from the chaff," "God himself has appointed me for his harvest," and "shortly after this, Christ will give to his elect the kingdom of this world for all eternity" (Baylor 1991:10), it can only be supposed that, as early as 1521, Müntzer had the grand delusion that he was the chosen one to lead the *elect* in the ultimate and triumphant struggle against the *damned*.

Although the use of force for such a struggle is not explicit in the manifesto, words like *clash* and *fight* can only lead us to conclude that an armed struggle is definitely legitimised in Müntzer's mind. In fact, by 1524, in his *Sermon to the princes*, the word "sword" was used 19 times (Baylor 1991:11-32). Agricola, another Reformer at that time, even referred to Müntzer, as early as February 1521, as someone breathing forth "nothing but slaughter and blood" (Brooks 1991:296). It is further surmised that Müntzer's rebellious spirit came partly from his years spent with Luther, whose powerful influence and allying with the princes caused the former to have a strong sense of jealousy and rage (Eire 2016:199). It is interesting to note that, as Müntzer reacted against his mentor (Luther), so did Grebel react against Zwingli. It is also important to point out that these reactions had no relation to one another, drawing the conclusion that Müntzer's reform was totally independent of the one carried out by Grebel and the Swiss Brethren. As such, equating both movements as one is simply unjustifiable.

Müntzer had, no doubt, been influenced by Luther and other humanists who preceded them both. In his analysis, Müntzer had a problem with depression, and like Luther, he also found solace in the study of the German mystics like Tauler (Bainton 1982:5). It is possible to surmise that for Luther, his preoccupation was the anxiety of a precarious standing of the soul before a vengeful God, while for Müntzer, it was the need for suffering in order to prove a genuine faith before a just God. These internal torments may have propelled Luther to find comfort in *sola fide*, but drove Müntzer towards revolutionary martyrdom. If this speculation has any merit, the actions of both these Wittenberg Reformers, as well as their final destinies, could certainly be better apprehended.

According to his investigation (cf. Kuenning 1987:308), Luther also believed that Judgement Day was at hand, as his *Lectures on Genesis* (Pelikan 1958) showed that he believed human history was divided into six parts, and the last part was about to end in his lifetime. However, his theology was more concerned with faith and justification than social commitment (Kuenning 1987:307). Therefore, by contrasting Luther's theology being born in a classroom and Müntzer's theology being forged among the poor and the exploited peasants, Kuenning suspects that Luther's siding with the princes caused Müntzer to conclude that Luther "perverted the true understanding of the Gospel, and cast his lot with the godless" (Kuenning 1987:319).

It is not a far-fetched conjecture to state that the opposing theological positions between Luther and Müntzer came about through their political affiliations. On one side, Luther had the patronage of the German princes, who were the ruling authorities that the peasants were rebelling against, and on the other side, there was Müntzer who first-hand saw the exploitation of the peasants by the political elites. These two Reformers each championed a constituent, although they entrenched themselves on the opposite sides of the political spectrum. It is no wonder that the appearance of class struggles in the 16th-century Germany was used by the East German communist propaganda in the 1950s, where Müntzer was heralded as a national hero and martyr (Walinski-Kiehl 2006:31).

Luther's *Two kingdom* paradigm was formed under the comfortable protection of the princes, and to him, this position made sense and provided the needed order to sustain his Reformation. There was no reason or need for Luther to espouse revolutionary theologies. In fact, it would have been counter-intuitive and even counter-productive for his theology. However, the lack of a political affiliation by Müntzer, or rather, his self-identified political affiliation with the exploited class, logically led him to assert his own version of a new political force, to right the wrongs, and to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

Müntzer's inflammatory use of the theme, "the fear of God" (Drummond 1979:71), was able to rally the lower class to his vision, even against death at the hands of the authorities. It is further argued that the political authorities were regarded by Müntzer as "being thieves and oppressors of the poor" (Crofts 1972:22), after Müntzer first attempted to align with the princes to bring forth social justice. It was the failed attempt at the first alliance that prompted Müntzer to turn against the princes (Crofts 1972:24). With the lack of any political power, in order to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth, the next best thing Müntzer could presumably do was to build his own power base on the strength of his adherents, who were the exploited peasants that identified with him. Could their respective political affiliations ultimately dictate the clash between these two Reformers' theological stances? Could the intellectual *Two kingdom* schema, produced under the protection of the political princes be actually a symbiotic product to further, not only Luther's Reformation, but also the agenda of the political princes? Was Müntzer's political power, based on the peasant class, synthesised by his chiliastic inclination and forged by his hatred towards the magisterial exploitation, not simply another example of symbiosis?

Once again, this study is compelled to conclude that, for better or worse, the Reformers' theological tendencies were very much affected by their respective political contexts and affiliations. When a Reformer had a strong political backing, his theology tended to be pro-authority, but when a Reformer had (almost) no ties to a strong political authority, his theology tended to be detached, or even against the civil authorities. In Müntzer's

case, things did not go well for him. On 15 May 1525, in the battle of Frankenhausen, where as many as “ten thousand peasants were massacred by the princely forces” (Kuenning 1987:315), Müntzer was captured. Less than two weeks later, he was summarily beheaded. Apparently, in the 16th-century Europe, not all religiopolitical symbioses were beneficial to both parties, or strong enough to survive.

4.6 ANDREAS KARLSTADT (ca. 1486-1541)

Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt published about 90 treatises that were “printed in about 213 editions” (Leroux 2003:106), making him the second most prolific author of the Reformation behind Luther. However, even with Karlstadt’s voluminous publications, Lutheran scholar have ridiculed him by calling him an “ugly duckling who remained an ugly duckling” (Rupp 1959:309), or “little more than a Don Quixote tramping across the Reformation landscape” (Hillerbrand 1966:380). Nevertheless, both Rupp and Hillerbrand do give Karlstadt the credit for contributing to the rise of the Radical Reformation, albeit with no real narrative to impress his readers.

Rupp records that Karlstadt was born around 1477, which is nine years earlier than most scholars agree upon, and that Karlstadt attended the University of Wittenberg in 1505 (Rupp 1959:308). With his father being the mayor of the town of Karlstadt in 1481, he may well have grown up in an affluent household. As a gifted individual, Karlstadt obtained his first doctorate from the University of Wittenberg in 1510, its chancellorship in 1511, and even personally awarded Luther his doctorate in 1512, although this has been disputed by Sider (1971:169). However, a decade or so later, in 1523, Karlstadt renounced his three doctorates in order to identify himself with the peasants, calling himself “Brother Andrew” (Lindberg 1977:320). With their different political associations, it is not hard to imagine these two men of immense talent, Luther and Karlstadt, would soon come to a collision.

According to Lindberg, these two colleagues parted their ways with “mutual hostility exploded in public” (Lindberg 1977:324), soon after Luther’s return from the Wartburg Castle in March 1522, ironically 10 years after the latter received his University of Wit-

tenberg doctorate degree from the hands of the former. The situation was already chaotic in Wittenberg in 1521 – a year before. The townspeople were by now stirred up to implement various reforms. Karlstadt led young men to shatter images of saints and attempted to dissolve the university on the ground that Christ and the apostles never had any formal education. These radical actions resulted in people quitting universities to become tradesmen, as well as encouraging other mayhem on the streets. Disregarding any restraint from the Wittenberg City Council, in December 1521, Karlstadt held a Christmas Service where he not only preached in German and wore street clothes, but conducted a *self-serve* Eucharist with both bread and wine (Leroux 2003:113). The next day, Karlstadt invited Melanchthon and other professors to witness his own engagement to a 15-year-old daughter of a wealthy family. As if the pandemonium created by that act was not enough, the very next day, Müntzer came to town with three Zwickau prophets in tow and stirred up more trouble for Wittenberg and its Lutheran leaders with spirit-filled apocalyptic proclamations (Rupp 1959:314-316; Graybill 2015:260-261).

Karlstadt's impatience with the pace of the reform drove him to take increasing radical steps. The consequence was the alienation of the Saxon Elector, who as mentioned earlier, was favourable towards reform as long as it did not cause too much upheaval. Luther had originally endorsed the ecclesiastical change, led by his mentor and friend, Karlstadt, but had to side with Elector Frederick I by January 1522, after hearing about the mayhem while in the Wartburg Castle (Hillerbrand 1966:379).

For the following two years, Karlstadt and Müntzer visited each other, "while their wives gossiped about family matters" (Rupp 1959:320), and the two men further entrenched their respective radical positions in response to Luther's gradual reform. Finally, in 1524, when Luther was asked by the Saxon Elector to speak in Thuringia to calm down the radical peasant activities, an opportunity arose for him to meet up with both Karlstadt and Müntzer. Their meeting at the Black Bear Tavern in 1524 did not go well, with Luther finally recommending to the Elector to banish Karlstadt (Rupp 1959:321; Chibi 2015:68).

During the exile, Karlstadt visited Zürich and began to influence both Zwingli and Grebel in the summer of 1523. The influence that Karlstadt had on Grebel may have been exaggerated (Hicks 1995:1004). It is recalled that Grebel's second child was baptised in August of that year, but it was not until January of 1525 that Grebel rebaptised his associates. It is possible that, upon Grebel's second child's baptism, an awakening prompted him to search for the scriptural base for such a practice. By September 1524, in the same letter to Müntzer that this study has cited earlier, Grebel was convinced that it was "contrary to all Scripture" (Williams and Mergal 1957:81).

After the Peasants' War ended in failure in the fall of 1525, many of Karlstadt's Radical Reformer friends were killed. It was Luther who took pity on him and kept him safe for a few years. In 1530, he went to Frisia, Basel, and then Zürich, where Zwingli kindly received him. In 1534, he went to Basel to teach and died during a plague in 1541 (Rupp 1959:323-325).

With all the animosity between Karlstadt and Luther, there was one common ground that they shared. In July 1524, one year after Karlstadt was ousted from Wittenberg and settled in Orlamünde, he received a letter from Müntzer, who was the leader of the revolutionary peasants in Allstedt, asking him for an alliance in the rebellion (Rupp 1959:320). As often as Karlstadt is mentioned together with Müntzer (Grieser 2007:270), it is interesting to note that the former flatly rejected the latter's overture. In Karlstadt's reply dated July 1524, *Letter from the community of Orlamünde to the people of Allstedt*, he states clearly, "[W]e cannot help you with armed resistance," and then advises, "If you want to be armed against your enemies, that they should rather put on the 'armor of faith'" (Baylor 1991:33-34).[10] There can be no doubt about Karlstadt's non-resistant pacifism during the early Anabaptism.

A few months later, in November 1524, Karlstadt printed a treatise, *Whether one should proceed slowly, and avoid offending the weak in matters that concern God's will* (Baylor 1991:49-73). It was to refute Luther's call to moderate the pace of reform. Without call-

[10] Here Baylor translated the text from Laube, Schneider, and Looss (1983:443-445).

ing any name, Karlstadt accused Luther of blasphemy, “who have more regard for the princes of the highly learned or for a great assembly, such as an ecclesiastical council, then for God’s word” (Baylor 1991:51). It is possible that Karlstadt also included Zwingli in his rebuke, recalling Zwingli’s deferment to the Zürich City Council with the pedobaptism dilemma. Earlier that year, Karlstadt had abolished pedobaptism at Orlamünde where he preached (Eire 2016:256). It would seem that, although he rejected pedobaptism, adult baptism was still not a priority on his list, as the doctrine was never mentioned following his leading role in the Wittenberg reform in iconoclasm and the Eucharist, as early as 1521.

As histrionic as he appeared to be, this study has found it surprising that Karlstadt did not mention Jesus cleaning the temple as a justification for his own urgency in removing the despised “mass, images, the idol’s flesh” (Baylor 1991:72) until the very end of his polemic, and only in a couple of sentences. Perhaps it should have been front and centre to show his zeal for the Lord and persuade people to his reform. At any rate, the Peasants’ War had just begun to pick up its frenzy by then, and Karlstadt’s trenchant polemics would have easily fallen to the Magisterial Reformers’ deaf ears.

In 1523, Karlstadt had traded in his university robe for peasant clothes and given up his doctorates. He clearly identified with the commoners while maintaining an anti-establishment orientation. It must have been vexing for him to see most of Wittenberg following Luther’s slower pace of ecclesiastical reform. Here lies the problem: While Karlstadt led the people’s ecclesiastical revolution, he rejected their political rebellion. This politically aloof position left Karlstadt in no real position. In contrast to the Magisterial Reformers who aligned with the princes, or Müntzer who aligned with the peasants, Karlstadt had neither a political affiliation nor enjoyed any political patronage. In addition, his brash impulses, noble or not, alienated princes and theologians alike. It is recorded that after Zwingli died in the battle of Kappel in 1531, his new successors, Myconius and Bullinger wrote to each other about Karlstadt, echoing Luther’s own words to Melanchthon 10 years earlier, “[W]ish I had known: I would rather have cut off my hand than let that devil in here” (Rupp 1959:325).

Karlstadt did not have any political affiliation. In fact, he rejected all possible associations and insisted on siding with the peasant class. As a result, although he lived a rather long life relative to his peers of the Anabaptist stock, his influence remained minimal. Although his theology may have bolstered other Anabaptist groups of the time, he was but a thin thread in the tapestry of Anabaptism, and even thinner in the fabric of the Reformation.

4.7 BALTHASAR HÜBMAIER (ca. 1480-1528)

Despite recent scholarship amending the largely undeserving association of Anabaptism and radical fanaticism (Davis 1991:777), or objecting to the many Reformation radicals being "thrown into the same Anabaptist pot" (Gross 1996:86), most of the Anabaptist Reformers remained out of favour. A reason for their obscurity could be that most of them did not live long enough to produce ample writings for later scholars, which unfortunately brings to mind the adage, "history is written by the victors" (Bair, Błaszczyk, Ely, Henry, Kanovei, Katz, Katz, Kutateladze, Mcgaffey, and Schaps 2013:886). Indeed, one has to live long enough to tell *their story* for posterity.

Hübmaier is yet another one of these ill-fated and short-lived Anabaptists. He was burned at the stake in Vienna on the order of Ferdinand I (Friedmann 1967:406; MacGregor 2011:321). He was famous for having uttered, "Salt me well, brothers, salt me well" (Estep 1996:103; Leonard 2017:141) to his Catholic executioners, as he burned.

Hübmaier was born in a small town near Augsburg in 1480. He earned his doctorate in theology under Eck at the University of Ingolstadt in 1512, and became a preacher in Regensburg, and was then called to Waldshut. By 1522, after devoting himself to the study of Scripture, he became convinced that the Catholic Church had departed from the Christian faith. As one of the many German Anabaptist theologians that started to dot the landscape of the early Reformation, he visited Erasmus at Basel and Zwingli at Zürich to discuss his newfound convictions (Johnson 1929:51) and was baptised in 1525 (Schaff 1998:52). Scholars have considered him a "transitional figure between

radical and magisterial reform" for his insistence on a believer's baptism and high esteem for secular authority (Mueller 1963:268; MacGregor 2012:223). Interestingly, his acceptance of the sword allowed Hübmaier to be viewed as "marginal to Anabaptism" (Lowry 2013:283). At the same time, he was considered to be "the most articulate of the first-generation Anabaptist theologians" (McGrath 1993:715) and "literary defender of the Anabaptist Movement" (Mueller 1963:268).

In less than a decade, Hübmaier went from a devout Catholic priest in Regensburg to founding a large Anabaptist congregation in Nikolsburg and arguing for a rightful place of the sword. This particular stance has set him apart from other pacifist Anabaptists, as well as the extreme chiliastic ones. His insistence on adult baptism, which was often interpreted as seditious, not only broke his alliance with the Zwinglians, but also caused him to run afoul with the Austrian authority (Reith 1981:122).

This study looks at the political associations which Hübmaier had, if any, as well as the influence it might have had on his theological dispositions. As previously discussed, Grebel and the Swiss Brethren baptised themselves in January 1525, and their movement started to spread to other German villages. Hübmaier was baptised in April 1525 in Waldshut, which is only 60 kilometres north of Zürich. After his baptism, Hübmaier baptised 300 others (Benedetto and Duke 2008:321). Unfortunately, this time frame coincided with the outbreak of the Peasants' War. As mentioned earlier, the War started in the fall of 1524, and by the first half of 1525, the fervour had engulfed the area around Waldshut. In fact, numerous volunteers joined the peasant troop "on 14 April 1525 – just two days before Hübmaier's rebaptism" (Snyder 1981:283). The timing has led other scholars to presuppose Hübmaier's revolutionary tendencies in defying secular rulers and being directly involved in sedition (Stayer 1978b:183), or "trying to marshal peasant resistance" (Kolb 2018:293). However, on the contrary, this study has found no proof of Hübmaier ever being personally involved in the Peasants' War, neither corroborating with the troops nor inciting violence. In fact, Hübmaier even defended his innocence in the dedication to the Chancellor of the Margravate of Moravia in his *On the sword*, written in 1527 (Baylor 1991:181-209). In it, Hübmaier compares himself to Jesus, whose

enemies mistakenly “denounced him as a rebel and charged him with inciting the people” (Baylor 1991:181-182). Thus, in his own writings, he refuted being associated with sedition. This study is yet to find any primary source indicting Hübmaier as directly involved in the uprising. The importance of using the primary sources whenever possible, rather than relying on other scholars’ interpretations, cannot be emphasised enough.

By the fall of 1525, the Peasants’ War had ended, while Hübmaier made his way to Nikolsburg the following year, where he found success in rebaptising two Lords, Barons Leonard and Hans von Lichtenstein, as well as convincing the existing Lutheran church’s ministers to become Anabaptists (MacGregor 2011:336). Together, these influential men helped Hübmaier’s Anabaptist reform effort to rebaptise between 6,000 and 12,000 consented adults, between July 1526 and July 1527 (MacGregor 2006:247). Baron Leonard von Lichtenstein owned a vast region of Moravia, which was part of the kingdom of Bohemia. Unfortunately, when the childless King Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia died in the Battle of Mohacs, fighting Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in August 1526, all his land and titles were acquired by the Habsburg dynasty (Atherstone and Benson 2015:94-95). As a result, the Lords of Von Lichtenstein could no longer protect Hübmaier from the reach of the Catholic Habsburg dynasty. Soon afterwards, Ferdinand I imprisoned Hübmaier and his wife (in the summer of 1527) and executed them in March 1528 (MacGregor 2011:322). One can only wonder why Hübmaier did not follow in Luther’s footsteps and let the Lords arrange for a safe haven elsewhere. Would Hübmaier’s reform at Nikolsburg have rivalled those of Zwingli’s in Zürich, or even Calvin’s in Geneva, if the Lords of Von Lichtenstein were more powerful? The strength of the Reformers’ political affiliation seemingly not only influenced their theological tendencies, but their very own lives as well.

The short duration of the friendship between Hübmaier and the Lords of Von Lichtenstein did not seem to allow for their symbiotic relationship to blossom, where each relies on and benefits from the strength of the other. If Hübmaier was seditious or anti-magisterial in any way, it was not evident. On the contrary, it seems as if he attempted to set up something similar to what Zwingli had in Zürich. While Hübmaier was in

Waldshut, before 1525, he frequently visited Zwingli for theological discourse (Marius 2000:423). He likely learned from Zwingli how a pro-Reformation magistrate could help his cause, especially when both Reformers started out in a city without their own influence or control (Pipkin 1970:147). Finding a Reformed-minded magistrate to partner up would have been a marvellous opportunity for Hübmaier. Therefore, between their likely discussions and the tragic result of the Peasants' War, it is not hard to imagine that he solidified, if he did not already have, his pro-magisterial position.

In addition, historical records indicate that Hübmaier also elicited the Waldshut City Council's support for his reformed programme from 1523 to 1525 (MacGregor 2011:331-332), before the Habsburg Catholic force retook the city at the conclusion of the Peasants' War. The records show that, instead of pedobaptism, the children enrolled in the city's census through infant *dedication*. This unconventional ceremony allowed the church-state population registry to function without interruptions. In fact, one can argue that Hübmaier was even one step ahead of Zwingli, in such innovation of the Reformation. It is an important reminder that anything that hinders or fundamentally muddles the magisterial function in birth, marriage, tax, and other bureaucratic logistics, could be construed as sedition. In fact, the authorities in the Swiss cities revealed their parish records, beginning in 1525, and "provided legal documentation of marriages and births, i.e. baptisms, in the state church, with the exclusion of the seditious Anabaptists" (Snyder 1997:399).

The concern of the magistrate was always to control the populace through the mechanism of the census, which was the task of the state church at the sponsored event of pedobaptisms, weddings, funerals, etc. The rejection and dismantling of such state church infrastructure, as seemingly every Anabaptist was embracing by refusing to baptise infants, could jeopardise the whole millennium-old "church-state amalgam" (MacGregor 2011:321). Hübmaier's clever idea of infant dedication had side-stepped the conundrum, allowing the state to function properly without interruption.

Another ingenious innovation that Hübmaier introduced in Nikolsburg to preserve the existing clerical-magisterial system was the Anabaptist idea of the ban. However, instead of a total rejection of the miscreant as depicted in the Anabaptists' *Schleitheim confession*, Hübmaier simply withheld the Eucharist for those members deemed unrepentant, but allowed them to participate in the worship services. He devised an elaborate liturgy for the Sunday evening Eucharist, which was held separate from the Sunday morning worship (MacGregor 2011:332; MacGregor 2012:238-239), thereby, preserving the necessary socio-religious cohesion for a functional government. In brief, Hübmaier went to extreme lengths to preserve the *status quo* for the magistrate, without compromising his own theological convictions.

Regarding the charge of sedition, from his interpretation of Romans 13, one would have to agree that Hübmaier could not have been seditious. He wrote in a treatise, *On the sword* in 1527, "Obedience and subjection are called for whether it be believing or unbelieving. The reason is that there is no government except from God" (Hübmaier 1991:205; Westin and Bergsten 1962:455; Klaassen 1981:271). In addition, unlike other pacifist Anabaptists, he also encourages Christians to take up the sword, not for rebellion against the government, but rather to be part of it. In the same work cited above, Hübmaier brilliantly illustrates his point, "Now you may understand why Christ says to Peter: put your sword in the sheath. He does not say: get rid of it. Christ chastises him for using it and not because it was hanging at his side" (Hübmaier 1991:187; Westin and Bergsten 1962:436; Klaassen 1981:272). Hübmaier's logic seems to be that if Peter could carry a sword without offending Jesus, so could any follower of Christ. In his mind, Christians can, and should be a part of the government to keep peace and order from the evil-doers. Since the government is a servant of God, such a task, he reasoned, was not a disobedience but in fact a service to God.

Therefore, the assertion that Hübmaier had revolutionary tendencies, cannot be supported. Recent scholars have also exonerated him (Williams 1992:343-344; MacGregor 2011:339). Nevertheless, Hübmaier's proximity to and timing of the Peasants' War made him an easy target to blame, not only in the 16th century but even today. In fact,

this study will argue that, just like Hübmaier, the entire spectrum of Anabaptism is maligned in history, justified or not because of the shocking tragedies of the Peasants' War and the Münster Rebellion, both instigated by pseudo-Anabaptists, within a mere decade apart. Additional evidence offered by modern scholars points to a variance of pacifism in Anabaptism, as represented by Hübmaier, who while being mistreated by Zwingli (MacGregor 2011:336), willingly embraced both his and his wife's executions, still insisting on the Augustinian religious tolerance in believing that the heretics should only be punished on Judgement Day (Middleton 2020:271).

When the Hübmaiers were imprisoned in Vienna's Kreuzenstein Castle during the fall of 1527, Catholic Bishop Farbi tried to dissuade them from their errors. It is said that Hübmaier may have compromised on a few minor doctrinal positions, but he refused to recant his position against pedobaptism and transubstantiation, both of which were, unfortunately, non-negotiables in Catholicism (Friedmann 1967:408; Seiling 2008:668; MacGregor 2011:338). After Hübmaier was burned at the stake on 10 March 1528, his wife, Elizabeth was summarily executed by drowning. One hostile observer commented that, despite the torture he received, Hübmaier "was fixed like an immovable rock in his heresy" (MacGregor 2011:322).

Although Hübmaier leveraged a temporary symbiotic relationship with the two Lords of Nikolsburg to establish a free church within their sphere of influence and is said to be the bridge between the radical and the Magisterial Reformation (MacGregor 2006:247), this study finds no record of his theological positions influenced by his provisional and fleeting political affiliations. His pragmatic innovations that sidestepped the spikey issues of pedobaptism and membership were testimonies to Hübmaier's intention to work with the political authority without compromising his theological convictions. Furthermore, despite the attempts by the Mennonite scholars like Bender to marginalise Hübmaier in their effort to align normative Anabaptism with pacifism (Seiling 2014:43), Hübmaier stood apart in the shifting landscape of the 16th-century Reformation, skilfully avoiding the extremes of the political spectrums.

4.8 PILGRAM MARPECK (ca. 1495-1556)

Hailed as “one of the most prolific and sophisticated of the sixteenth-century Anabaptist writers” (Kolb 2018:293), Marpeck came from a prominent family and was both an engineer and a City Council member of Rattenberg, Austria. Unlike many other well-known Anabaptist figures, Marpeck was the only one who ever was part of a civil government, and yet remained a key leader among a large number of Anabaptist communities in Moravia and South Germany for a span of two or three decades (Seiling 2014:23). He was also allowed to live a full life and leave behind plenty of theological writings (Wenger 1940:36). This study is interested in Marpeck’s possible political associations that may or may not have influenced his theological positions.

Marpeck became a Lutheran in 1521. The Rattenberg city records show that he was a member of the Lower Council in February 1523 and the Upper Council in June 1525, including his appointment to be the mine magistrate by Ferdinand I in April of the same year. This position of the Tyrol region was only one of five in the empire and was responsible to adjudicate between the competing interests of princes and other powerful parties for the mining profits, as well as welfare programmes for the miners (Wenger 1940:25-26). Life was good for Marpeck, and his leadership talents allowed him to make good money from these positions, especially being a magistrate (Boyd 1992:12).

Things took a dark turn in October 1527. Ferdinand I issued a decree to persecute the Anabaptists for heresy, but more so for their “disobedience to the government and the seduction of the common man” (Klaassen and Klassen 2008:122). As a magistrate, Marpeck was ordered by the Innsbruck administration to apprehend and punish any Anabaptists.

Since 1525, Marpeck had begun his conversion with Anabaptism, and as such, he found himself in a horrific predicament. Should he preserve his good life as a magistrate in the powerful Catholic empire, or should he renounce everything and stay true to his convictions? This led to Marpeck’s resignation in January 1528, on the grounds that persecuting the Anabaptists was not part of the job description of his mining magistracy,

especially after seeing an Anabaptist, by the name of Schiemer, beheaded and his body burned “two hundred yards from Marpeck’s residence” (Boyd 1992:23). He was soon afterwards dismissed, and his property confiscated.

Marpeck then went to Moravia where he was rebaptised. He spent a few months with the Anabaptist groups, before moving to Strasbourg, which had a reputation of religious tolerance and was attracting many Anabaptist refugees like him. As annoying as the Anabaptists were to the tolerant city, “Strasbourg never executed even an Anabaptist on a charge of heresy” (Wenger 1940:26). Through his connection with the Moravian Anabaptists, coupled with his leadership talents, Marpeck soon found himself pastoring the Anabaptist communities in and around Strasbourg. In addition, because of his extensive travelling during the bigger part of 1528, he soon availed himself of an opportunity to be employed by the Strasbourg City Council as a municipal engineer, supplying the city with firewood from the surrounding countryside. This job seemed perfect for an itinerant preacher, and his popularity and reputation grew.

The ambivalent Strasbourg City Council finally had to expel Marpeck in early 1532 (Kreider 1955:108), but not before he utilised those few years in the city to debate with Bucer and to write a great number of theological treatises to cement his influence and place in the early Anabaptism. It is of little surprise that Anabaptism saw its “most vigorous stage of development in Strasbourg” (Kreider 1955:106) during those years. It is further estimated that by 1556, the year Marpeck died in Augsburg, Strasbourg had about 100 Anabaptist congregations in the city (Kreider 1955:112). Consequently, Marpeck’s legacy in South German Anabaptism simply cannot be ignored.

After Marpeck’s expulsion from Strasbourg in 1532, he travelled as an Anabaptist leader and worked as an engineer all around Moravia and the southern Germany area for about a dozen years or so, while successfully avoiding persecution. Then, in 1544, he reappeared in Augsburg, another religious tolerant city, again working for the Augsburg City Council, managing firewood and waterworks. Besides issuing reprimands and empty threats against Marpeck’s involvement in Anabaptist activities, the Augsburg City

Council pretty much adopted a leniency to allow him to live peacefully until his natural death on 7 November 1556 (Wenger 1940:32-33).

For anyone to give up a magistrate position with plenty of comforts could not be easy in 1527, especially when the zealous Catholic Archduke Ferdinand (Ferdinand I) was escalating the persecution of all Anabaptists, culminating in the death penalty from the decision at the Diet of Speyer in April 1529. Just a year before, in March 1528, Hübmaier was burned at the stake in Vienna by the fire-breathing Archduke. It is possible that when Marpeck left Tyrol for Moravia in early 1528, he had learned about Hübmaier from the Moravian Anabaptist communities. Some suggest Marpeck's writings were influenced by either Hübmaier (Estep 1996:120) or Hans Hut (Stayer 2011:147), with the latter camp even claiming having won over Marpeck to Anabaptism in 1527 or 1528. However, there is no record of any personal relationships between Marpeck and either of them. That is not to say their writings did not influence Marpeck, but so would many other theological treatises readily available around South Germany during that period.

The detailed account below of his life is to highlight his unique contribution to the Anabaptist historiography. Besides his engineering work with the City Councils of Rattenberg, Strasbourg, and Augsburg, it is not known if Marpeck had any close relationships with the political elites of these cities. He was driven out of the first two cities and barely tolerated in the third. Yet, he was able to execute his leadership roles in the Anabaptist communities with which he came into contact. In order to achieve this, Marpeck could not have been antagonistic toward the magistrates. In his *Explanation of the testament* (Marbeck, Klassen, and Klaassen 1978:556-565), Marpeck was able to deduce insights from 1 Corinthians 2:6 and apply it to his interpretation of the secular authority. He argues that God uses the wisdom of the rulers of this age, with the "external sword in vindictiveness, mercilessness, hate of sin, physical vengeance" (Marbeck *et al*. 1978:558; Klaassen 1981:262) to kill evildoers and pass his judgements. At the same time, because Christ's wisdom is merciful, Christians cannot be compatible in the design of such an office or execute its function. Therefore, Christians cannot be in the government. One can find his position understandable when, in *Defense* (Loserth 1929), he writes, "I

fear that they will have another experience like that of the peasants' revolt" (Loserth 1929:303-304; Klaassen 1981:263).

There can be no doubt that the tragic failure of both the Peasants' War and the Münster Rebellion deeply scarred Marpeck and prompted him to admonish the Anabaptists to avoid the sword at all costs. Furthermore, by the time he settled in Augsburg around 1544, the charismatic Anabaptists' early leaders and inspiring figures in various groups were mostly dead or turned introspective in spiritualism (Darlage 2010:754). It is not surprising, contrary to Hübmaier, and even more so to the chiliastic Anabaptists, that Marpeck believed the sword is reserved only for the secular authority to keep the peace, as God intended and ordained it.

In 1545, a few years after Marpeck moved to Augsburg, the magistrate of Augsburg began preparing for a war with Charles V. This action was the result of Augsburg joining the Reformed-minded Schmalkaldic League nine years earlier. The anti-Catholic sentiment of the city distracted the city officials enough to allow Anabaptism to flourish with Marpeck as the clear leader (Boyd 1992:128-138). Despite the pro-Reformation disposition of the city, this study does not find any record of Marpeck ever using his position in the city government to affect political or ecclesiastical changes in Augsburg.

It is interesting to note that Marpeck did form a friendship with an Austrian noblewoman by the name of Helena von Freyberg, who endured persecutions and was not able to offer significant assistance to Marpeck in any way, shape, or form (Wiesner-Hanks 1999:1172; Seiling 2014:36). Von Freyberg had married a Bavarian nobleman by the name of Onophrius von Freyberg. By 1527, she moved over to Anabaptism. Her involvement in the new faith caused her to flee from arrest until her family and friends helped her to obtain a rare pardon by Ferdinand, on the condition of recantation, which she did in 1534. She then moved to Augsburg the following year and was later proved to help settle the Marpecks, when the latter moved to Augsburg in 1542 (Klaassen and Klassen 2008:248-252). Von Freyberg's political connection was merely enough to save her own skin and provided meagre support for her fellow Anabaptists.

It is safe to conclude that although Marpeck had opportunities in various cities to move up the sociopolitical ranks through his technocratic background, he did not show any interest or effort in forming any symbiotic political association or alliance. Through his writings, he steered away from secular authorities as much as he could. Klaassen and Klassen (2008:335-336) further postulate that Marpeck, after witnessing the civil authorities' treatment of the likes of Hutter and Hübmaier, opted for silence when fellow Anabaptists were persecuted in the Habsburg Netherlands and Tirol. Marpeck's pragmatism, presumably from his training as an engineer, likely ensured his longevity in serving his Anabaptist communities throughout those troubling years.

4.9 MICHAEL SATTLER (ca. 1490-1527)

Born around 1490 in the Breisgau region in southern Germany, which is about 80 kilometres north of Zürich, Sattler had become a Benedictine prior in St. Peter's monastery of the Black Forest near Freiburg, and later, in the 1520s, became an Anabaptist near Zürich (Snyder 1981:277). The loosely linked *Bundschuh* peasants uprising around Freiburg had been sporadically active since the beginning of the 16th century, some years before the Peasants' War took over Sattler's St. Peter's monastery on 12 May 1525. Therefore, it is suggested that Sattler had plenty of close and personal experiences with the bloodshed that came from such armed conflicts (Snyder 1985:421).

Sattler soon found himself in Strasbourg in 1526, engaging the likes of Wolfgang Capito and Martin Bucer, who were both keen supporters of the Lutheran persuasion. He joined other Anabaptist leaders in challenging Capito and Bucer by pointing out that the Reformed Church in Strasbourg, which was predominantly influenced by these two Lutheran theologians, suffered severe moral and spiritual laxity and could not "visibly differentiate saints from sinners" (Riggs 1995:36). Although they eventually agreed to disagree, and Sattler bided his farewell, the Lutheran Reformers were so impressed by Sattler, that they have later referred to him as "a dear friend of God" and a "martyr of Christ" (Davis 1982:50).

In two short years, Sattler went from a prior of a Benedictine monastery in 1525 to the author of the *Schleitheim confession* that defined the Anabaptism as of 1527. Then, like a firework that burned bright for one brief shining moment, he was executed a mere three months later on 20 May 1527.

4.10 THE SCHLEITHEIM CONFESSION (1527)

By early 1527, Grebel and a few other key leaders of the Swiss Anabaptists had been captured or put to death (Estep 1996:46-47). Various groups, including some of the peasant troops, were being baptised (Williams 1992:290). According to their analysis and summary (Roth and Stayer 2007:89-90; Klaassen 1987:99), a unified and cohesive course to Anabaptism was bound to occur, and it did so with a document of the *Schleitheim confession,* which consisted of seven articles drafted by Sattler (1527). With the Anabaptists' convictions spelled out clearly for all to see, it is concluded that "[c]alling for adult baptism and a wholly voluntary church meant nothing short of the total undoing of Christian society" (Eire 2016:261). It is no wonder that the Anabaptists were regarded as revolutionaries, bent on dismantling the sociopolitical structure of their time. As such, they were suspected and hunted down with extreme prejudice. The seven articles that appeared in February of 1527 are summarised below, and it is interesting to note the rejection of Christian violence:

- Article 1: Baptism is not for infants but for adults who truly believe.
- Article 2: The ban will discipline all who after being baptised fall back into sins. Two private warnings will be given and the third time will be the official banishment.
- Article 3: The Lord's Supper is taken in both kinds, by only the Christians, and they are strictly for memorial purposes without any physical presence of Christ involved.
- Article 4: There should be a separation from evil, which includes all worldly establishments like drinking houses, as well as both Catholic and Protestant churches or services, and so on.
- Article 5: Pastors should be people of good character who would be paid by the church. Should they sin, they would also be disciplined.

- Article 6: Swords are ordained and only used by the magistrates. Christians are not to use swords and not to serve as a magistrate.
- Article 7: Christians must not swear oaths but can testify (Sattler 1527).

The response to the publication of the *Schleitheim confession* was harsh. In a letter to Vadian, Zwingli wrote, "Whoever will be baptised hereafter will be submerged permanently" (Blanke 1961:542; Harder 1980:52). The church-state separation advocated by the Anabaptists was no doubt an idea that threatened the symbiotic church-state amalgam.

4.11 ANABAPTISTS AND THEIR POLITICAL CONTEXT

This study evaluates the theological tendencies of the Reformers by their political associations. With regard to the types of Anabaptists, they have been categorised into *Evangelicals* (pacifistic), *Revolutionaries*, and *Spiritualists* with the caveat that "any given individual believer might go through more than one phase" (Williams 1992:15). If there was one theme, and certainly there were more than one, that rings true for all three the subgroups, it would be the desire to be separated and made pure in the eyes of God. If the seven articles of the *Schleitheim confession* did represent the Anabaptists' convictions, it was evident that Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 showed the rejection of both the Catholic and the Reformed ecclesiastical authorities. Also, since the sacraments and church membership had to do with population registration, tax (or tithe) collection, and other social programmes of the magistrate, Articles 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 showed the disdain of, and disengagement with the political authorities. In fact, one analysis notes the *apocalyptic* characteristic in the recurring word, "abomination" within the document and postulates a "call for radical separation so as not to become victims of God's wrath together with Babylon" (Klaassen 1987:101).

It leaves no doubt that the Anabaptists were determined to reject both the "prevailing structure of ecclesiastical and the secular power" (Baylor 1991:xxii). Indeed, such anxiety awaiting the final judgement of God and a subsequent pursuit to purify the community, as a bride awaiting her groom, appears to be the common paradigm subscribed by most,

if not all, of the Anabaptist groups. Along with the yearning for separation and purity, the next logical step would be the willingness to pay the price of suffering. Strong supporting words for this frame of mind are found again in the previously cited letter of Grebel in 1524 to Thomas Müntzer (Grebel 1991), “they must be baptized in anguish and affliction, tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death” (Williams and Mergal 1957:80). Nevertheless, it is speculated that such hot-blooded impulses had been checked and dampened by the time of the peasants’ complete defeat in the hands of their political authorities (Roth and Stayer 2007:90-91).

Could the year 1525, after the Peasants’ War, be the starting point for non-resistant Anabaptism, or as Williams refers to it as an *evangelical (pacifistic)* type? The evidence seems to suggest otherwise. This study proposes two reasons to the contrary: One reason is that before the onset of the Peasants’ War, Grebel in his *Letter to Thomas Müntzer* (Grebel 1991), had already declared no “worldly sword or war” (Grebel 1991:45; Williams and Mergal 1957:80). The other reason is that in less than 10 years, another revolt, the Münster Rebellion, took place under the banner of Anabaptism (even if scholarly classification placed the blame on the *Revolutionary* type, the public consciousness does not differentiate the fine line between these typologies). In other words, pacifism was a central tenet at the beginning of Anabaptism. Therefore, the assertion that the result of the Peasants’ War affected the theological trajectories of the Anabaptists, which was understandable, cannot be fully substantiated. Furthermore, blaming Anabaptism as a cause for both the Peasants’ War and the Münster Rebellion, is incautious at best, and irresponsible at worst, especially without addressing the various conflicting factions within the conglomeration of Anabaptism.

4.12 MÜNSTER REBELLION (FEBRUARY 1534 TO JUNE 1535)

The desire to be purified in the anticipation of the end-time eschatology did not diminish with the closing of the Peasants’ War in 1525. Although it lasted less than a year, the psychological impact of the revolt was more than significant, the least of which was the confirmation that a religion-based movement could potentially mobilise a large population to achieve a political goal.

Münster, whose name came from the Latin term for a monastery, was more religious than many other cities with its size, boasting with six magnificent cathedrals and churches, plus plenty of convents and monasteries. It was not a small city by any means, as it contained a population of about 10,000 people (Arthur 1999:63). The city's chief and popular theologian, Bernard Rothmann, studied in the evangelical universities of Wittenberg and Strassburg before returning to Münster in July 1531. With the help of other evangelical preachers, Rothmann took on the established Catholic ecclesiastical authority. In the August 1533 disputation, Rothmann proved successful in arguing for the believer's baptism and eventually affected the convergence of various prophetic communities in the Netherlands, as well as revolutionary Anabaptists like the Melchiorite leader, John Beukels of Leiden and John Matthijs.

With their imprisoned mentor, Melchior Hofmann as an inspiration, thousands were re-baptised, while more came in from the countryside to practise sharing all things in common (for the preceding harvest was poor), as well as to usher in the impending Judgement Day, which has been calculated to take place at the next Pentecost in the city of Münster. The resulting fervent enthusiasm culminated in the landslide election victory in February of 1534, where the entire city government "was made up of elected Melchiorite officials" (Williams 1992:556-563; Eire 2016:270-271).

It is neither the purpose of this study to retell the tragic historical event, nor to analyse the communist social experimentation that transpired within. Suffice it to say, the city was soon ruled by these Melchior Anabaptists, and after supervised communism, odious murders, and polygamy, the city was taken by the armed forces from both camps of the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans in June 1535, with all inhabitants being slaughtered. Three of their top leaders were executed by burning, and their bodies hung in three iron cages, which remained on top of St. Lambert's Church to this day (Williams 1992:568-582; Jensen 2018:65).

Although historians have regarded this ill-fated episode with a "hostile or dismissive attitude" (Suderman 2017:120), there can be no doubt that the disastrous ending to this

tragic event was tied to the inaccurate interpretation of the chiliastic view within this strain of Anabaptism.

4.13 MELCHIOR HOFMANN (ca. 1495-1543)

To understand the Münster Rebellion, it is important to understand Hofmann and his teachings. Hofmann was born in the mid-1490s and was teaching Lutheran doctrines in Livonia (today's Latvia and Estonia), while being a furrier by trade before. Before the influence of this *apostle of Livonia*, Lutheranism provided the only Reformed teaching in the area. It is also said that Hofmann had a special appeal to the Estonian peasants, for he taught them to disobey their feudal lords (Laantee 1953:272-276). In 1525, Hofmann travelled to Wittenberg to gain the approval of Luther and was successful in obtaining the desired endorsement from the eminent Magisterial Reformer (Noll 1973:48-49). However, Hofmann's liberal and creative hermeneutics of the Old Testament and imageries of the Apocrypha, as well as his eschatological conclusions, eventually caused Luther to reject him without reservation (Noll 1973:53).

Hofmann arrived in Denmark in the spring of 1527, after the Imperial Diet of Speyer in 1526, when religious toleration was given to each regional government to decide. As such, Frederick, the king of Denmark, was keen to take advantage of such respite by increasing the number of evangelical preachers in his domain. Hofmann soon was granted permission to preach in Holstein (between today's Denmark and Germany), but in the next few years, his anticlerical position, Zwinglian Eucharistic views, and radical eschatological teachings forced the local Lutheran leaders to brand him as a *schwärmer* – a fanatic (Bailey 1990:185-190). Being unwelcome in Denmark's Lutheran territory, the apocalyptic Hofmann arrived in Emden (today's northern Germany, bordering the Netherlands) in July 1530, and proceeded to rebaptise 300 adults. In his subsequent *Ordinance of God* (Williams and Mergal 1957:184-203), the believer's baptism became programmatic in his ministry. In addition, Hofmann also recorded and synthesised prophetic visions from the likes of Leonard and Ursula Jost,[11] and proclaimed that

[11] They were a married couple who were mystical spiritualists that engaged in apocalyptic prophesies in Strasbourg around the time of Hofmann.

Strasbourg would become the New Jerusalem and the centre for the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1, but more importantly, Hofmann would be Elijah (Zuck 1957:218). All this would be preceded by a bloody siege of the elect city and won through the *persevering saints*, rallying "under their chosen, righteous pastors" (Williams 1992:391-392).

Melchior Hofmann had such an impact on the Dutch Anabaptism that its followers were called Melchiorites. Hofmann's radical eschatology was so successful because Amsterdam had a high religious tolerance at the time (Waite 1987:258). More importantly, because of adverse economic and social conditions, Hofmann's adherents, who were mostly made up of urban artisans, were of the same social class as the furrier himself. The espoused apocalyptic hope resonated with this group of people who were becoming marginalised. According to Stayer, it was the makeup of this group, consisting of artisans and not militarists, that doomed the eventual rebellions by the Melchiorites, both in Amsterdam and later in Münster, which was identified as the new location of the *New Jerusalem* by Hofmann's followers after Strasbourg (Stayer 1978b:194).

It was the militant Melchiorite prophets, by the name of John Matthijs and John Beukels of Leiden that roused, rebaptised, and recruited followers all over the Netherlands to go to Münster, in order to defend their New Jerusalem. In March 1534, "authorities stopped twenty-seven ships, filled with three thousand armed Melchiorites, men, women, and children" (Williams 1992:542). With Amsterdam being their *New Zion*, and Münster their *New Jerusalem* (Williams 1992:544), the apocalyptic Melchiorites in both cities eventually were decimated within a year or so.

Hofmann's radical eschatology can be traced back to Luther. Being a lay missionary, he was preaching for Lutheran reform in Livonia, before 1525. He was therefore influenced by Luther, and also by John Tauler, who was Luther's mystical predecessor, and whose *Theologia Deutsch* was edited by Luther himself in 1516, after having found solace within the framework of *mystical union* that allowed his own anxious and insecure soul to find "a simultaneous experience of mystical anguish and ecstasy" (Packull 1982:79-80).

Kolb concurs that Hofmann found indispensable inspirations from such “mystical work” as Luther’s letters started revealing chiliastic views soon after (Kolb 2018:294).

The world as the people knew it in the early 16th century, was in a constant state of upheaval. Luther had started the Reformation in 1517, and soon after, towns and cities started to embrace the Reformation in various degrees. The dire socio-economic conditions as experienced by the peasants, led to the hope of change, ignited by the theological tenets of Reformers like Luther and Zwingli, that according to Marius, argued for “Christian equality and Christian unity against oppression” (Marius 2000:422). It is no surprise that the Peasants’ War started in 1524, as the radical millenarian accepted that it was the time of the *Parousia* when the Armageddon of the book of Revelation would occur. Such end-time eschatology was readily embraced by the poor and uneducated peasant class who looked for hope for a way out of their socio-economic predicament. The imageries of a great war between the good (the oppressed poor and righteous prophets) and the bad (the oppressive rich and false prophets), taken from the books of Daniel and Revelation, were indeed not only enticing, but also inspiring for the simple majority. At the same time, the evangelical preachers who espoused such radical apocalyptic messages were much more gifted and convincing than the hypocritical clerics, whose oratory skills were rusting away in their ritualistic and institutionalised confines. The message of these prophets, like Hofmann, was the spark that ignited the powder keg of revolution.

4.14 MENNO SIMONS (ca. 1496-1561)

Although Simons wrote in abundance, he mentioned “very little about himself” (Krahn 1961:473). What is known is that he was born in 1496 to a dairy farmer named Simon, in a village in West Frisia (today’s Netherlands). Before his ordination into priesthood in 1524, he had learned some Latin and Greek. It is said that Simons confessed having always doubted the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation, even as a priest (Horsch 1916:19). Like many Catholic priests of the time, after being persuaded by the Lutheran teachings of the Reformation, Simons continued being a priest, and “to postpone the introduction of new religious forms until the civil authorities would permit such a change”

(Horsch 1916:20). One cannot be faulted to assume that Simons' passive reform posture had something to do with the violent and tragic Peasants' War around the same time.

In 1531, when a tailor who was baptised a second time as an adult was executed not far from where Simons' house was, he later reflected in *Reply to Gellius Faber* (Simons 1956:623-782) in 1554 that "it sounded very strange to me to hear of a second baptism" (Simons 1956:668; cf. Hillerbrand 1962:388). From his earlier suspicion with the Eucharist to the question of pedobaptism, Simons was no doubt experiencing a faith transition. Yet, he held to Nicodemism, as many were at that time bidding for the right moment to reveal their evangelicalism. Finally, it was the Münster Rebellion that moved Simons completely away from the old religion.

It is stated that from Simons' hometown, the explosions of the cannon's bombardment against the Münster Rebellion would have been clearly heard and that his own brother, as well as some of his parishioners, were among the besieged (Stayer 1978a:55). Then, on 30 January 1536, he renounced Nicodemism and his state church. Soon afterwards, he was baptised and ordained that same year (Horsch 1916:31-32).

Simons' ordination coincided with the conclusion of the Münster Rebellion. Whereas the leadership of the Dutch Anabaptism has been charismatic and free-spirited, if not erratic, and even detrimental, Simons and other leaders provided a much-needed structure and stability to the surviving flock, as offices of the congregations were established. As such, Simons is often accredited to have *institutionalised* the movement (Dyck 1974:39-40). It is not surprising to find that their followers were soon called *Mennists*, around Holland and North Germany, where (Menno) Simons exerted his influence. Due to the geographical, cultural, and linguistic differences, the North German Mennists held a distinct difference from their southern counterpart. Interestingly, before his death, Simons "excommunicated all South German Anabaptists" (Hillerbrand 1962:387), ensuring a special place for Dutch Anabaptism in the Anabaptist historiography. If Hillerbrand is correct, Anabaptism was not a monolith in the 16th century.

During the subsequent persecutions, the Mennonites migrated to Poland, and eventually to Russia, Canada, and the United States. Their industriousness and agricultural experiences allowed them to flourish in these places. It should be pointed out that at the beginning of the 20th century, despite their religious roots being Dutch, the Russian Mennonites were caught in the geopolitical tensions between Russia and Germany. As a result, many Mennonites migrated to Canada (Urry 1983:245).

It is important to note that most of the early Anabaptist leaders were martyred within a few years of their activities. Simons and Marpeck were the only two significant exceptions of pastoral leaders who survived for a good length of time, although they are not considered among the founders of the movement (Wenger 1940:24; Hillerbrand 1962:388). Regardless of the longevity of these historical Anabaptist leaders, one debate today centres around their affinity to pacifism. Although the Mennonite scholars insisted on an unnegotiable position of pacifism at the expense of neglecting Hübmaier, Stayer, and others, non-resistance was never a "genetic makeup of the early rise of Anabaptism" (Seiling 2014:28), but an *evolution* as a reaction against the failure of the Peasants' War, as testified by the *ex post facto Schleitheim confession* in 1527. This position is backed up by the assertion that Simons' doctrine was shaped by his reactions against the Münster Rebellion, as well as his search for a hermeneutic foundation other than those of the "chiliastic revolutionaries" (Sannikov 2018:96).

However, the suggestion that in the Peasants' War it was Müntzer's failure that forced the Anabaptists to largely reject his theology of revolution cannot be sustained, as this study has demonstrated that Grebel was already arguing for pacifism as early as 1524. This debate once again confirms that the study of Anabaptism cannot be approached from a one-size-fits-all paradigm.

4.15 THE PERSECUTION OF THE ANABAPTISTS

One of the tragedies which was observed in the study of the Reformation is the persecution of the Anabaptists by both the Catholic authorities and the venerable Magisterial Reformers (Clasen 1963:150). It is estimated that "10,000 Europeans were martyred on

the charge of Anabaptism by Catholic and Protestant authorities alike, with around 800 executed between 1527 and I533" (MacGregor 2011:321).

It is important to point out that one of the most salient documents of the Reformation, the famous *Augsburg confession*, unknown to most people, contains the phrases, "Damnant Anabaptistas" and "Und werden verdammt die Wiedertaufer" (*damned are the Anabaptists*) five times in articles 5, 9, 12, 16, and 17 (Cahill 1995:188; Thompson 2005:4-13). As a matter of fact, in 1980, the Mennonites even turned down the invitation to the 450th-anniversary celebration of the ecumenical document (Cahill 1995:188; Arand *et al*. 2012:99). Scholars have attempted to tacitly explain away such strong language (Lohrmann 2016:72), or postulate that the language was "out of political expedience" (Cahill 1995:197), designed to gain a favourable acceptance from Charles V. One can be forgiven for doubting the strength of this argument in that, according to Kolb's analysis, the Habsburgs dynasty's main fears included "Calvinists, Anabaptists, and Schwenkfelder" (Kolb 1980:56-57). As such, singling out the Anabaptists in the quintessential ecumenical document to condemnation, while leaving out the others, simply reflected the degree of loathing that the Lutherans had towards the Anabaptists. In fact, Luther frequently resorted to harsh name-calling and verbal abuse to this group of outcasts.

When describing the Anabaptists, for example, in his *Temporal authority: To what extent it should be obeyed,* Luther employed the descriptive phrase, "the wicked…raving and ranting" (Luther 1962:91), while equating them with the Turks who "teach that Christ is not God" in his *Exposition of the eighty-second Psalm* (Luther 1530:234). In addition, it has been pointed out that the Lutheran theologians argued for the execution of heretics that Luther also personally endorsed in 1530 (Rowan 1979:531). With such attitudes and actions, it is no surprise that the Anabaptists suffered tremendous persecution in the ensuing decades, at the hands of both the Catholic authorities and the Magisterial Reformers.

4.16 CONCLUSION

A survey of many short-lived Anabaptist leaders or theologians has revealed that "Anabaptism was by no means a homogenous entity but consisted largely of more or less autonomous congregations" (Hillerbrand 1962:387). Except for a few leaders like Hübmaier and Marpeck, most of the Anabaptists shied away from any political engagement with their magistrates, preferring a free church. Yet, the more they pulled away from the magistrates, the more suspicious they became in the eyes of their political authorities. It seems that such aloof posture allowed them to remain independent, but at the same time, deprived them of not only protection but also a better platform through which they could propagate their messages.

Given their propensity to disengage from the magistracy, it is unfortunate that the diversity of Anabaptism allowed it to be the convenient scapegoat for revolution or sedition, even if violence was espoused by only a small strain of the Anabaptist composition. The chiliastic and ferocious disposition was adopted by Müntzer and Hofmann, and together with their followers, they were appropriately blamed for the tragic Peasant's War and the Münster Rebellion. Yet, the details are often lost in history, as the mélange of Anabaptism is often condemned today, as it was in the 16th century. This study concludes that while some of the Anabaptist Reformers failed in seeking political affiliation, either through the magistrate or the peasants, the majority of them was simply biblical *Restorationists*, intended on patterning themselves after the primitive or pre-Constantinian church.

Similar sentiments have been expressed as early as 1935 when Lovejoy of the John Hopkins University first coined the term "primitivism" (Friedmann 1955:136). As noble as their desire to restore the primitive New Testament church, the short lifespan of their Reformers, and their anti-clerical or anti-magistracy messages relegated Anabaptism as a whole to the addendum of the Reformation historiography.

CHAPTER 5
ENGLISH REFORMATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters, various Reformers of the European continent, both the magisterial and the non-magisterial camps have been discussed. This chapter explores the Reformation across the English Channel and examine the Reformers who spearheaded the English Reformation under the ever-watchful eyes of Henry VIII. Whereas the continental Magisterial Reformers found themselves accommodating to their political circumstances, the English Reformers had to bend both knees to Henry's political pressure.

If continental Europe's Reformation was complicated and convoluted, the English Reformation was no less so. The traditional view is that King Henry VIII started to break away from the state church, independently from the continental Reformation. By the time of Queen Elizabeth, the English Reformation was well on its way into history. However, such a traditional and generalised view is challenged for its *confessionalisation* and disregard for the influence of the greater European Reformation (Marshall 2009:570). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, a generalised historical backdrop is important in the investigation of the English Reformers and their political affiliations.

In 1509, King Henry VIII married his brother Arthur's widowed wife, Catherine of Aragon, for the express purpose of procuring an heir for the throne. After 18 years of marriage and a daughter, Mary I of England, King Henry VIII asked Clement VII in 1527 for an annulment of the marriage. As mentioned before, Clement VII was effectively imprisoned by Emperor Charles V, who was a nephew of Catherine of Aragon. Therefore, the delayed rejection of Henry's request for annulment in 1531 led to the latter's eventual declaration to be the Supreme Head of the Church of England, marking an irrevocable break from the Catholic Church (Guy 1982:495). The irony is not lost on many, as only 10 years earlier, Pope Leo X had conferred the title of *Defensor fidei* (*defender of faith* i.e., the Catholic faith) upon King Henry VIII, when he penned the *Defence of the seven sacraments against Martin Luther* (Henry VIII 1687) in 1521. This happened one year

before Henry met Anne Boleyn, who was most likely a teenager at the time (Hjärpe 2015:302; Eire 2016:318).

Having received the title of Supreme Head of the Church of England in 1531, King Henry VIII procured the help of Cranmer, who was later to be appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury, to annul his marriage with Catherine of Aragon and pave the way for his marriage with Anne Boleyn in 1533. The *First act of supremacy* (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011) a year later (1534) was to formally confirm the King's status as the Supreme Head of the nation and the church in England (Kinney, Swain, Hill, and Long 2000:132; Bernard 1998:329). Clement VII proceeded to excommunicate Henry on 11 July 1533 (Kirby 2008:3), and in 1538, his successor, Pope Paul III "placed England under interdict and attempted to dethrone Henry VIII" (Riverso 2016:300).

This was the beginning of the end of England's break with the Catholic Church. With centuries of Catholicism, the new Church of England, under the leadership of King Henry VIII, set out to find the *middle way* between Catholicism and Protestantism (specifically Lutheranism in the beginning), with Cromwell at the helm (Elton 1951:180; MacCulloch 2005:80). In the first two decades of the Protestant movement, due to Zwingli's untimely death, Lutheranism was the only major magisterial option made available through Luther's laborious and ubiquitous writings. Since Henry had previously written to oppose Luther on the issues of the sacraments and won the approval of the pope, a wholesale following of Lutheranism after breaking away from Catholicism did not seem to be an option for Henry. Whether it was his pride that got in the way, or Henry being a learned man of the Scriptures who disagreed with Luther, he eventually went his own way to establish the Church of England.

At this stage, the Church of England under Henry still retained plenty of Catholic practices, but had also gradually taken on Reformed ones. Both Cromwell and Cranmer, who favoured Protestantism, made an effort to push for greater reforms. They succeeded to a point, before being reined in by Henry (Dickens 1991:200-201). Henry's *Act of six articles* in 1539 (Crowther 2018) was a stern rebuke for the reforming movement in

England, as clerical celibacy, the real presence of the Eucharist, private Masses, and confession were reaffirmed, with capital punishment for anyone rejecting it (Elton 1951:173; Eire 2016:327-328).

Fortunately for the Protestants, King Henry VIII passed away in 1547. The young King Edward VI, who was the first English king raised as a Protestant, proceeded to steer the Church of England towards Protestantism. With the help of Cranmer, who no longer was held in check by Henry, the *Act of six articles* was repealed, and the English Reformation shifted into high gear under the young Edward (Westfall 2001:287). At the same time, reformed professors like Bucer were hired to lecture at Oxford and Cambridge. All services had to adhere to the first *Book of common prayer* (Cummings 2011) by 1549, and the faithful devoted themselves to iconoclasm once again.

Just as everything was going the reformed way, young King Edward VI died, and with no male heir to the throne, the 37-year-old Queen Mary I became the first female ruler of England in 1553. Mary was raised by her mother, Catherine of Aragon, who was a devout Catholic (Eire 2016:323). It was of no surprise that Mary quickly reverted the direction of Reformation back to Catholicism. The saying of *hell hath no fury like a woman scorned*, aptly described the short five years of Mary's reign. After martyring 300 Protestants in a short while, including Cranmer, Mary I earned the nickname of *Bloody Mary* in the history books before she died (Eire 2016:333).

In 1558, Queen Elizabeth took the throne and immediately started to revert Mary's religious policies. A new *Act of supremacy* once again severed Rome's control of the Church of England, and the third *Act of uniformity* eradicated all hope for holding on to the old Catholic rituals and practices with the strict adherence to the 1552 *Book of common prayers* (Booth 2014:331). It would be overly optimistic to assume that the Protestants have gained an easy victory in England with Elizabeth. However, Catholicism in continental Europe, and its influence across the English Channel, could not be underestimated. The Nicodemites, or the church papists, kept their heads low and continued their Catholic practices clandestinely, until 1570, when Pope Pius V officially ex-

communicated Queen Elizabeth. With the stipulation that any English subjects remaining loyal to her would also be excommunicated, the religious struggle and intolerance were pushed to a new height. Before Elizabeth died in 1603, nearly 200 Catholics were executed (Eire 2016:347-353). A possible reason for Queen Elizabeth not to acquire the name of Bloody Elizabeth, was that, unlike Mary, her Reformation was triumphant at the end. Indeed, whether one agrees with the maxim or not, this case brings to mind rather well that history is written by the victors.

This study aims to investigate the relationships between the theologians and their political associates and to examine how such associations might have influenced the former's doctrinal or theological tendencies.

Although King Henry VIII single-handedly initiated the break from Catholicism in the early 16th century and was well-versed in the Scriptures, he was not a Protestant Reformer. Instead, Henry frequently and purposefully obstructed the reforms that Cromwell and Cranmer were pushing for. For instance, even when the English Bible, translated by Miles Coverdale was made available for each church in England, Henry ensured that restrictions would be in place, limiting the layperson to read it (Eire 2016:327). It is not hard to conclude that his motivation for breaking away from the Catholic Church was mostly, if not absolutely for political control and self-serving reasons.

It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the famous precursor to the 16th-century Reformation, John Wycliffe, and his political ally, by the name of John Gaunt, who was the Duke of Lancaster and the third son of King Edward III. Although unsuccessful in their attempts to reform or reject the overreaching papal state, Wycliffe and Gaunt did join forces, albeit briefly, in the mid-1370s (Wycliffe 1853:2; Delasanta 1991:207). Wycliffe died a natural cause in 1384, and his followers were later called *Lollards*, whose contribution to the English Reformation is still being debated (Powell 1990:138; Eire 2016:320). This study will therefore only focus on three prominent Reformers who contributed greatly to the non-continental European Reformation: Cromwell and Cranmer for the English Reformation, and Knox for the Scottish Reformation.

5.2 THOMAS CROMWELL (ca. 1485-1540)

The truth may not be far from the popular play, *The true chronicle historie of the whole life and death of Thomas Lord Cromwell* (Streit 2009), authored by one *WS*, likely a pseudepigraphy, claiming to be William Shakespeare, that held Cromwell for being "a blacksmith's son who rose to political power during the reign of Henry VIII" (Champion 1989:221; Dickens 1991:143). The play also disclosed that Thomas Wosley, Cromwell's beloved mentor, was from a similar humble status, being a butcher's son.

Little is known of Cromwell's formative years, except that he later joined the French army and dabbled in trade in Amsterdam, where he picked up different languages. His political career started out under Cardinal Wolsey in 1524 (MacCulloch 2018:54). He served under Wolsey until the latter died of natural causes before his own scheduled execution in 1540. Cromwell was said to be "the pupil who excelled his master" (Rex 1992:612), and soon was appointed to the King's Privy Council.

Cromwell had been appointed to various diplomatic positions and had the chance to travel to continental Europe to first-hand see the result of the Lutheran Reformation. With King Henry VIII's blessing, the first half of 1530 started out with Cromwell energetically at the helm of the English Reformation (Rockett 2008:1075). His strategy was twofold: Preaching and printing. In the department of preaching, Cromwell enjoyed the help of his fellow Reformer, Cranmer, who often participated in the selection of capable preachers as well as the overseeing of sermons.

Licenses for preaching were instituted to ensure the papal authority was denounced. Cromwell would provide training for these preachers, as well as promote the loyal and capable ones. He was fully aware that in order to disseminate that – Henry was the new Supreme Head of the Church of England, not the pope – Cromwell needed to use the pulpit to educate the populace. His effort and success earned him the appointment of Vicegerent in Spirituals, which was a unique title with the power superseding even the archbishops (Block 1977:44; Logan 1988:658). He was in fact appointed to act on behalf of the King in all "ecclesiastical affairs" (Lucas 1960:553).

Although the programme was successful, it was not without challenges and opposition. The Bishop of London, John Stokeley, was also a humanist theologian that acquiesced to Henry's *Act of supremacy* and his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. At the same time, Stokeley resented and resisted Cromwell's insistence in destroying the papal power. It is said that Stokeley was not ready to "perpetuate Lutheran 'heresies' for the sake of political convenience" (Chibi 1999:78). Not only were the conservative clergies resisted, but even a Reformed preacher by the name of Richard Qulaenus, who preached justification by faith, was beaten up by the parishioners swiftly afterwards (Block 1977:43). The conservative force would continue to push back against the Reformation effort in the second half of the 1530s.

Besides preaching, printing was the other major effort by Cromwell to drive forward the English Reformation. He thought that if "the pulpit had been the chief moderator of public opinion," books, tracts, and pamphlets would be the sparks for the fervour of the reformed minds (Chibi 1999:77). Cromwell relied on Thomas Starkey, chief minister to Henry VIII, to spearhead the Pre-Elizabethan English Reformation through the printed media. Starkey's *Exhortation to the people instructing them to unity and obedience* (Starkey 1536) was written in 1535 and published by the King's printer in 1536. Before the publication, Starkey was an important ally to Cromwell in their Reformation effort (Zeeveld 1943:178).

In addition, William Marshall, a publisher, assisted Cromwell to translate the writings of Bucer, Joachim von Watt,[12] and especially Luther, from German to English. Marshall was responsible for the first published book containing the Scriptures in English that came from various Lutheran writings. Since the possession of these books would be a grave offense, it is further asserted that Cromwell played a decisive role in offering protection, if Marshall were ever arrested (Underwood 2004:519). Apparently, Cromwell had to navigate between his effort to reform and Henry's loathing for Luther and his writings.

[12] He was also known as Joachim Vadian, who was a Swiss humanist, philosopher, and a Reformer. In 1519, he married Martha Grebel, whose brother, Conrad Grebel, would later become a key figure in the Anabaptist movement.

Despite the anti-clerical sermons and the publications, the conservative pushback gained momentum during the second half of the 1530s, beginning with the Pilgrim of Grace of 1536, which was a popular uprising in Northern England. Although the scholars debate the exact cause of the revolt (cf. Adams 1997:248), it was certainly connected to the *Dissolution of monasteries* (Hibbert 1910) which, while lining the pocket of the king, caused many to be impoverished. From 1536 to 1540, with the help of Cromwell, King Henry VIII dissolved hundreds of monasteries and appropriated them for his own financial gain (Hoyle 1995:275).

One of the legislations stipulated that all monasteries with an income of fewer than 200 pounds per year would have their goods forfeited to the king. So, those who made a living through their affiliations with the monks or the monasteries, found themselves without a livelihood (Lucas 1960:553). By October 1536, the Pilgrim of Grace uprising started from Yorkshire, had spread to other parts of Northern England. King Henry personally wrote to dissuade the rebels, and Cromwell launched his own campaign once again through pamphlets and sermons, written by his humanist clients who published anonymously as “concerned common citizens” (Liedl 1994:587). By the end of the year, the rebellion dwindled, but not before traumatising a troubled and thrice-married king.

By June 1539, King Henry VIII had dialled back his earlier reform with the launch of the *Act of six articles*, allowing the conservatives in his kingdom to score a needed victory and respite. In dealing with some of the more contested ecclesiastical issues, the *Acts of six articles* essentially reaffirmed several Catholic practices: Communion in one kind, clerical celibacy, private Masses, vows of chastity, and real presence without using the term “transubstantiation.” Auricular confession was also endorsed but not as a necessity. Fundamentally, this reversal found a middle way for Henry to keep the peace in his realm, but unfortunately also signalled that the tide had turned against the Reformed preachers (Block 1977:47; Hickerson 2007:777).

Lettmaier argues that Lutheranism has redefined marriage as something *external* and a *worldly matter* which should be regulated by “the temporal prince, his officials, and his

courts" (Lettmaier 2017:473). No doubt, such a view was supported and embraced by Anne Boleyn, Cranmer, and Cromwell, in their effort at the onset of the 1530s to speed up Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, as well as to dismantle the ecclesiastical monopoly, that was the Catholic Church. During the same period, the Reformation landscape was dominated by Lutheranism, the least of the reason being Luther's own ubiquitous polemical writings against the pope.

However, more importantly, Calvinism had not arrived on the scene, and Zwingli had just died. There can be no doubt that Lutheranism was subscribed by the Reformed-minded leaders in Tudor England. One important clue was that there were already students and *dons* who later became the English Reformation's prominent figures, meeting at the White Horse Tavern in Cambridge during the 1520s, to discuss the German innovations of continental Europe (Lucas 1960:553-554; Wilson-Kastner 1983:411). Although it has been argued that Cromwell was just a layman in Wosley's ecclesiastical world, and showed no Lutheran sympathies, credit was nevertheless given for his gift in the logistics and organisation that ensured the printing of both the Tyndale and Coverdale English Bibles and their national distribution (Dickens 1991:134).

It is also interesting to note that, according to one interpretation (Elton 1951:164) from a document called the *Account by Ludwig von Baumbach of his journey to England* (Merriman 1902:277-280), Cromwell hinted that he was leaning Lutheran. One indeed would have a hard time pinning Cromwell down for anything else, as besides the Henrician reform, Lutheranism was no doubt the prevalent confessional option of the time. However, as the 1530s came to a close, it has been observed that people were rejecting the real presence of the Eucharist, and the iconoclasts were attacking the images. Brigden posits that "[t]he Lollard legacy of sacramentarianism probably did much to incline England towards the Swiss Reformation rather than the German" (Brigden 1981:260). Therefore, regardless of Cromwell's confessional leaning at that time, it is likely that Wycliffe and the Lollards, who rejected the real presence in the Eucharist, preferred the Zwinglian Reformation over Lutheranism. Nevertheless, religious loyalty was certainly as fluid as it was diverse in the early stages of the English Reformation.

Whether or not Cromwell was a *bona fide* Lutheran, he could also have searched for a middle way in his newfound Protestantism. At any rate, his reform was abruptly halted with Henry's about-turn in returning to conservatism with the *Act of six articles* in 1539 (Slavin 1977:334). The main point of contention for Cromwell was the real presence required by the *Act*, which gave his opposition the power to put in prison those sacramentarian preachers that Cromwell had installed. Adam Damplip preached against the real presence of Christ at the sacrament and was imprisoned; Cromwell defended him. Then, Cromwell threw Lord Lisle, a conservative deputy who attacked Damplip, into prison (Carlton 1973:126). Unfortunately for Cromwell, such associations with the sacramentarians and seemingly abuse of power, around the year 1540, were exploited by his opposition to prepare a case to bring Cromwell down (Everett 2015:131).

On the afternoon of 10 June 1540, Cromwell was arrested in the Council Chamber of the Westminster Hall and was immediately taken to the Tower of London as a prisoner. Although his reform made him many enemies, scholars today agree that it was his failed arranged marriage between Henry and Anne of Cleves earlier that year that sealed his fate (Carlton 1973:121; Bernard 2007:554). While the details of the affair could be riveting, it is beyond the sphere of this study. It is, however, noteworthy to point out that a month before Cromwell's execution, he repeatedly reaffirmed his old Catholic faith. Despite many debates, "more reliable witnesses confirm that Cromwell's confession was genuine" (Carlton 1973:117).

It is important to remember that for a Protestant Reformer to recant his "heresy" or to retract his own confession was not uncommon in the 16th century, but it would be consistent with Cromwell's character. While Cromwell enriched Henry's personal purse through a series of legislations between 1534 and 1540 (Harriss 1978:727), he also became "one of the biggest landowners…(through) large monastic and other royal grants" (Robertson 1990:317). A sampling of the descriptive statements associated with Cromwell in scholarly reviews today shows him to be a "statesman with sound political instincts" (Robertson 1989:816), or being an "astute politician ever ready to turn events to his advantage" (Logan 1988:667). One can hardly blame Cromwell for being an oppor-

tunist when Henry VIII was killing off many of his loyal lieutenants, even Anne Boleyn, whom Henry had courted for many years. Cromwell's symbiotic relationship with Henry produced for both of them plenty of land and wealth, but such partnership was hardly founded on theological grounds.

5.3 THOMAS CRANMER (ca. 1489-1556)

If Cromwell is considered an English Reformer of the political theatre, then Cranmer could be considered a fellow Reformer in the theological sphere. Nevertheless, they both were beholden to the whims of the eccentric and erratic Henry VIII, and as such, neither of them produced many theological polemics (Bromiley 1990:467). It is logical to assume that both, despite their theological tendencies, were politically obedient. Therefore, writing anything contradictory to Henry's wishes was not only unwise but life-threatening. This type of relationship, upon further investigation, cannot be considered as symbiotic, but merely as one-way. Conclusively, these Reformers' theological positions were in fact subjected to the political stance of the king (Bernard 2007:507).

Not much was known of Cranmer at a young age, except that his older brother, John Cranmer, inherited the family estate, leaving Thomas destined to a clerical career, as was the common practice of the time (Wallis and Webb 2011:37). He later pursued a humanist education at the Jesus College in Cambridge until he received his Doctor of Divinity degree in 1526. Although some may assert that Cranmer remained a papalist until he went to work for Henry at the beginning of the 1530s (MacCulloch 1994:10), such argument may not be as unconvincing. As mentioned earlier, Cambridge was a hotbed for Lutheran ideas in the 1520s, and with his humanist training, it is not difficult to expect Cranmer readily having been influenced by Lutheranism in his late twenties or early thirties. More importantly, although he was prepared to become a priest, he was nevertheless married around 1515 to a woman named Joan, who later died in childbirth (Dickens 1991:192). One cannot be blamed for assessing Cranmer as a humanist who did not follow any theological dogma, even as a young priest-in-training.

Cranmer was instrumental in the affairs of Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. As has already been stated above, Henry sought an annulment from his marriage with Catherine as far back as 1527, but without success. Cranmer provided Henry's dilemma with a creative solution, which was to seek the opinions of the theologians in continental Europe, in the hope of garnering enough support to legitimise the divorce (Foxe 2009:184-188). As such, Cranmer's loyalty to papal authority in the latter half of the 1520s cannot be supported. From 1530 to 1531, Cranmer became part of Henry's delegation to Charles V and had the opportunity to travel through Europe and observe first-hand the Protestant (Lutheran) reform of Nuremberg. During that time, he also married the niece of Andreas Osiander, who was a Lutheran scholar. Again, there can be little doubt that Lutheranism had a great impact on the humanist Cranmer and affected his theological tendencies (Wilson-Kastner 1983:412; Brooks 1962:370).

Something should be said about Cranmer's relationship with Anne Boleyn, who had also turned Protestant during this time. According to Ives (1994:398), John Skip (Anne's personal chaplain) compared her to the Old Testament Esther, who was put in place by God to help further the cause of the Reformation from inside the king's household. Cranmer likely considered the annulment and subsequent marriage of Henry to Anne Boleyn an important step to further the English Reformation. In fact, Cranmer offered a canonical argument that the prohibition of marrying one's own brother's wife as stated in Leviticus 20:21, which seemed to have bothered Henry the most, "was not dependent on the consummation of the first marriage" (Bernard 1993:10). Having assisted Henry in his annulment of the marriage with Catherine of Aragon, Cranmer was appointed by Henry to the position of the Archbishop of Canterbury. By this time, Henry was ready to marry Anne Boleyn with the blessing of his newly minted Archbishop (MacCulloch 1996:96).

One may wonder what Cranmer's viewpoint was on divorce and remarriage. On the day of Anne Boleyn's execution in May 1536, "the ever-obliging Cranmer provided the king with a special license permitting the new marriage" to Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour (Walker 2002:11). Ever the docile and obedient servant to Henry, Cranmer only had

pragmatism as a recourse. Yet, in a letter from Cranmer to Osiander, dated 17 December 1540 (Cranmer and Duffield 1964:306-311), only four years after Henry's third marriage, Cranmer disclosed confidentially his objection to the rumoured endorsement of Melanchthon and Bucer on Philip Hesse's bigamous marriage in 1540, as well as derided such patronage as "absurd morals and opinions" (Cranmer and Duffield 1964:311; Wilson-Kastner 1983:413). In addition, in 1547, Cranmer was appointed to review the request by William Parr, marquess of Northampton, to remarry, on the account of his prior divorce in 1542 from his adulterous wife. Cranmer ruled against the request of remarriage, citing that canon law granted no such right (Carlson 1990:442-443). One can only imagine Cranmer's internal struggle as he officiated Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves and then quickly annulled it a few months later, making it the third time Cranmer was required "to play a leading part in divorcing Henry from his Queen" (Ridley 1962:204). It is likely that, with the passing of Henry VIII in January 1547, Cranmer could finally act on his own theological convictions without second-guessing any possible political retribution. On the topic of marriage and divorce, Cranmer could disregard his own opinion, or even convictions, for political expediency. The question is whether this was his *modus operandi* regarding other theological tenets.

Having been empowered by Henry to divest from papal powers in the first half of the 1530s, Cranmer and Cromwell worked well as partners in advancing the English Reformation. Cranmer was more than eager to revoke the licenses of those preachers who were unwilling to oppose the papal authorities or wage war against the conservative hierarchy. However, by the end of 1535, London's religious landscape was in turmoil with the conservative faction ready to push back (Block 1977:41; Brigden 1981:258). In the following year, significant events took place that may have changed Henry and altered the trajectory of the English Reformation. It has been recounted that 1536 started with the death of Catherine of Aragon, who was married to Henry for 17 years before the marriage was annulled. In that same month, Queen Anne Boleyn suffered a miscarriage during her second trimester with a boy, who would have been the heir that Henry desperately wanted. Henry Fritzroy, a publicly acknowledged son born to Henry's mistress, Bessie Blount, also died the same year of illness at age 17 (Whitley

and Kramer 2010:830). Earlier in this fateful year, Henry himself sustained serious injuries from falling off his horse while jousting. While some speculate the injury was brain damage, most agree that it was a significant lifelong debilitating injury that may or may not have altered his personality for the worse (Ives 2004:190).

The beheading of the former love of Henry's life, Anne Boleyn, as well as the Pilgrimage of Grace revolt later that same year may also have contributed to perhaps the worst year of Henry's life (Whitley and Kramer 2010:830-844). The unfortunate series of events in 1536 were experienced in a short year by Henry, who was already superstitiously convinced that he was heirless and cursed because of marrying his brother's wife (Eire 2016:323). These lamentable incidents certainly could have induced guilt or doubt in Henry's mind regarding the direction of the Reformation.

Fact is that the tide did indeed turn against Cromwell and Cranmer shortly after 1536. The *Ten articles* of 1536 that were Lutheran leaning soon gave way to the *Six articles* in 1539, reaffirming the old Catholic practices (Bernard 1998:339). Similarly, *The institution of a Christian man* (Roberts 2011), or commonly called The *Bishop's book* of 1537 was leaning Lutheran, but by 1543, *The necessary doctrine and erudition of a Christian man* (Lloyd, Lacey, and Henry VIII 1932), or *The King's book* upheld the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and rejected Luther's *sola fide* (Dickens 1991:207-208; Marston 1956:82). In short, *The Bishop's book* was superseded by *The King's book*, with Henry VIII's backtracking. With such a drastic about-turn of the English Reformation in the decade following 1536, some Reformed preachers were sacrificed. Damplip and John Lambert were such unfortunate souls.

The trial of Lambert for his sacramentarian teachings was in November 1538. King Henry personally presided at the trial to defend "his Catholic orthodoxy" (Haigh 1993:136-137) and signalled the subsequent reversal of the Henrician Reformation. The records of the trials seem to reveal Cranmer's own soul-searching regarding his theological position on the Eucharist (Pruett 1976:439), and also admitted to having maintained "the papist doctrine" prior to condemning Lambert in 1538 (Selwyn 1964:76). The following

year may have confirmed Cranmer's transformation with regards to his view on transubstantiation.

Damplip started preaching against transubstantiation in Calais in 1538 and was sent to Cranmer for investigation by Lord Lisle the following year. Cranmer "held an orthodox view on transubstantiation and the real presence" up to this point (Pruett 1976:439), but became convinced by Damplip's opinions. The sympathetic Cranmer also helped Damplip escape into a safe hiding until his eventual capture and execution in 1543 (Cate 1986:97; Slavin 1977:326). It is further deduced from a letter that Cranmer wrote to Cromwell concerning Damplip, that "the archbishop had already in 1538 abandoned in belief in Transubstantiation" (Dickens 1991:209; Pruett 1976:442). Although this study does not find the explicit reference offered by Dickens, Cranmer's ambivalent and even fluctuating position on the Eucharist is well-attested and "must be cited with a good deal of caution" (Richardson 1965:425). In any case, Henry ordered Lambert to be burned at the stake for denouncing transubstantiation, but at the same time, the event also started a change in Cranmer's theological stance on the Eucharist (Dugmore 1958:182; Pruett 1976:443).

By the time the Parliament ratified the *Act of the six articles* in July 1539, denying transubstantiation was already recognised as a capital offense. Before this, a *quasi-Lutheran* definition of the real presence of Christ was admissible under words like *substantially present* in the *Ten articles*. This reversal now posed a problem for Cranmer, who had already been persuaded against transubstantiation. The evangelical Bishop Latimer of Worcester and Bishop Shaxton of Salisbury have already both resigned in protest against the *Act of the six articles*, while Cranmer applied Nicodemism quietly and ever more cautiously (Hickerson 2007:777-778). This strategy served him well, as he witnessed from a safe distance his Reformation partner, Cromwell, being executed almost exactly a year later.

The *Act of the six articles* was repealed in 1547, after the death of King Henry. Unlike his father's traditional loyalty to the old religion, the new King Edward VII was brought

up with Protestantism and started “a more full-blooded protestant reformation” (Bernard 2007:602). Under such regime change, Cranmer found the latitude to express his theological inclinations. In December 1548, during a debate in the House of the Lords, Cranmer “left no doubt that he had denied the corporal presence” (Pruett 1976:448). In his *Defence of the true and Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ* of 1550, he referred to the real presence as a “figurative speech” (Cranmer and Duffield 1964:208-209; Pruett 1976:451). Additionally, in his *Answer* of 1551, Cranmer admitted his “error of the real presence” (Cox and Cranmer 1946:246; Pruett 1976:448), alluding to the catechism he wrote during Henry’s reign. The ease with which Reformers’ theological positions have yielded to political pressure cannot be any clearer here.

As Henry quickly and abruptly reversed his reform in the latter half of the 1530s, so did Cranmer reverse his Nicodemism under the new Protestant king. One indeed should heed to the wind of political changes to ensure survival. Under Edward, the Protestant reform in England reached a new height, further solidifying the break with Catholicism, aided by Cranmer’s completion of the *Cathechismus* and *The book of common prayer* (Stark 2008:520; Beer 1991:239). In 1549, without masking his evangelical self, Cranmer threw Edmund Bonner into prison for preaching “Christ’s real presence in the sacrament” (Kirby 2008:11). Unfortunately for Cranmer, as well as the Protestants in England, Edward VI died in 1553, after a short reign of only about six and a half years. The wind of political changes once again roared, this time to the detriment of Cranmer.

The Tudor dynasty’s many intrigues made its way into many films and TV shows. Suffice it to say, Queen Mary’s ascension to the crown was not as easy as her predecessor’s. Once in power, Mary reverted the Protestant Reformation back into the old Catholicism, a religion that her mother brought her up with. With a vengeance, she later executed close to 300 Reformed leaders, earning her the title, Bloody Mary. Not surprisingly, Cranmer was one of the many put on trial and sentenced to death in November 1553 and was repeatedly interrogated in prison until his execution in 1556.

Given the changes that Cranmer made regarding his position on the Eucharist, it is no wonder that in one of his trials in 1555, he was accused of "holding three contrary doctrines of the Sacrament of the Altar – the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Zwinglian" (Selwyn 1964:76). There can be no doubt that Cranmer's Eucharistic beliefs were controversial and inconsistent, with frequent ambiguous uses of the term "substance" in his writings (Cate 1986:109; Richardson 1965:426-427). While it is possible that Cranmer's view of the sacrament evolved as he examined the different possibilities, it is also suspicious that the timing of these changes coincided with different political circumstances as alluded to earlier. Finally, right before his execution, Cranmer attempted to write down his recantation "so favorably and dextrously for himself, that he might evade both the Danger from the State, and the Danger of his Conscience too" (Roddy 2016:70). Ridley has another view: "Cranmer died an unrepentant heretic. Perhaps if he had lived for another hour, he would have recanted again" (Ridley 1962:409).

Cranmer was one of the central figures in the English Reformation. His fate was dictated by the precarious political tides of the period. Being called a theologian of a "second rank" (Richardson 1965:421), or simply "not a great theologian" (Brooks 1962:370), as well as backing Henry's reform laws, even though "they were non-scriptural" (Gunther and Shagan 2007:56), this study is compelled to conclude that Cranmer readily submitted his theological tendencies for political expediency.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Once again, like their continental counterparts, the English Reformers and their theology in the 16th century proved to be predominantly complaisant to the political sway of the time. As such, church and state were inseparable in a symbiotic relationship, with each needing the other to thrive, even to survive. Henry VIII needed the Reformed preachers to justify his desire to separate from the papal jurisdiction, and even to acquire more wives. Both Cromwell and Cranmer needed to avoid being executed by the cruel monarchs whom they served, although they ultimately failed miserably. The English theologians were products, or even puppets, of the political forces that were beyond their control. It is under such constant political threats, not unlike the ordinary person,

that these Reformers revealed themselves to be just blades of grass tossing about in the wind of change.

CHAPTER 6
SCOTTISH REFORMATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

From the politician in Cromwell to the political theologian in Cranmer, the previous chapter has noted the degree of difficulties and dangers of reforming under Henry VIII. The English Reformation was oscillating under the irascible king who intended to break away from the old Church but was often unwilling to part ways with the old traditions. Under such vacillating political climate and Henry's personal crises, both Cromwell and Cranmer met their fate. Knox and the Scottish Reformation certainly fared better. This chapter surveys the life and theological leanings of Knox, as he survived and thrived in the midst of the Scottish Reformation.

Aside from the continental and English Reformation, it is only fitting and proper to investigate Knox, who was pivotal in reforming the Scottish church. His colossal influence in Scotland is compared to Luther's in Germany or Calvin's in France (Eire 2016:358).

A political backdrop is important to shed light on the Scottish Reformation. In 1502, the Scottish King James IV signed the *Treaty of perpetual peace* and married Margaret, who was the daughter of Henry VII and the sister of Henry VIII (Dunlop 1994:139). However, when Henry VIII of England invaded France in 1512, James IV was forced to invade England the following year as a response because of an old Scottish alliance with France. Unfortunately, the Scottish king died at the Battle of Flodden, leaving his infant son, James V, who was also the nephew of Henry VIII, on the Scottish throne. This little James V grew up and strengthened his ties with France and married his second wife, Mary of Guise, or Marie de Guise, who was a French noblewoman and whose father was a military Catholic Duke (Paul 1906:103).

James V invaded England in 1542, but again, like his father, died two weeks after the Battle of Solway Moss, while his wife gave birth to a baby daughter, Mary Stuart. Henry VIII then quickly arranged to have the infant, Mary Stuart, who had just become the new

Mary, Queen of Scots, to marry his 5-year-old Edward in 1543, in the *Treaties of Greenwich*. This seems to be a smart political move by Henry to sever the religiopolitical tie between Scotland and Catholic France. However, the Scottish Catholic faction led by the Cardinal David Beaton, who was the archbishop of St. Andrews, not only nullified the marital contract the following year but also sent Mary to France to be betrothed to the young future King, Francis II (Eire 2016:357-358). It is with this political entanglement between England and France, or religious morass between Anglicanism and Catholicism, that Scotland navigated its way precariously between these alternatives in the first half of the 16th century. At the same time, just like the politico-religious landscape of England in the south, Scotland was also "complicated by the conflicting interests of the Anglophile and the Francophile parties" (González 1987:290).

6.2 JOHN KNOX (ca. 1514-1572)

Until the end of the 19th century, most biographers believed that Knox was born in 1505 (Knox 1905a:49). However, due to a likely misidentification of "another Knox" (Lang, Cowan, and Fleming 1905:1), or because a printer in 1655 misread Archbishop John Spottiswood's handwriting in *History of the Church of Scotland* (Spottiswood 1851) and made Knox live 10 years longer, as such, his birth has been successfully argued for a later date of 1514, or even 1515 (Spottiswood 1851, Vol. 2:180; Wilkinson 1998:83). In addition, not much is known about Knox's early years, except to note that his father, as well as both of his grandfathers fought in the battles against Henry VIII's English armies. The militarism of a warrior tradition seems to run in the Knox's family, even as Knox became a bodyguard for another Reformer and mentor, George Wishart, carrying a "two-handed sword" (Knox 1949:39).

Knox studied at the University of St. Andrews. Interestingly, one of his instructors, John Major, coincidentally also taught the young Calvin in Paris (Lang *et al*. 1905:4). In 1546, Knox took part, presumably with his two-handed sword, in a Protestant revolt at St. Andrews and also became the chaplain in the castle held by the rebels (Rogers 1874:182). However, the French forces quashed the revolt in July 1547. As a result, Knox became a galley slave in the French navy for 18 months and was only released in 1549, which

was of good timing because the Edwardian Reformation was in full swing in England by then. Although the claim that Knox was a royal chaplain to the young King Edward VI is in dispute (Benson 1921:119), Knox certainly enjoyed preaching Protestantism for almost five years before his exile in 1553, when Mary I became the Queen of England. While in exile between 1553 and 1559, Knox first became a minister for the English refugees in Germany and then a pastor to the English exiles in Calvin's Geneva, where he became convinced that Calvinism was the best model, as "a city state that captured his heart and mind totally, as the paradigm of all godly reformations" (MacGregor 1960:17-18; Eire 2016:360).

When Mary I died on 17 November 1558, Knox felt safe to return to Scotland the next year. That year saw the deaths of the Regent Mary of Guise, as well as her son-in-law, the young Francis, who only two years earlier married Mary Stuart. Therefore, with their deaths, "the chief hope of the Papists was demolished" (MacGregor 1960:21). This fortuitous timing once again worked in favour of Knox, as he pushed on with his anti-Catholic campaign of riots and attacks against images, altars, and even monasteries. By 1560, the *Confession of faith professed and believed by the Protestants within the realm of Scotland*, or simply *The confession* (Watkins 2022), was submitted and ratified by the Scottish parliament, and of course, it was considered "thoroughly Calvinist" (Eire 2016:361-362). With this turn of events, Mary Stuart or Mary, Queen of Scots, now widowed and only 18 years old, became the minority papist voice in Knox's Scotland.

6.3 JOHN KNOX AND THE FOUR FEMALE RULERS

Much has been written on the tumultuous relationships between Knox and the four female rulers of his time. The first one was Mary of Guise or Mary (Marie) of Lorraine, who became queen consort upon her marriage to King James V of Scotland in 1538, and later the Regent Queen of Scotland in 1554. The second ruler was Mary I or Mary Tudor, the eldest daughter of Henry VIII, who became Queen of England, after her younger brother Edward died in 1553 (Knox and Healey 1994:371). The third female ruler was Mary Stuart, the young daughter of Mary of Guise, whose death in 1560 allowed the former to become the sole ruler of Scotland at age 18. The last female ruler

was Elizabeth I, who became the Queen of England after Mary Tudor died in 1558. Therefore, in the span of 16 years, Knox had to deal with four gynarchies, each with her own temperament, narratives, and religiopolitical orientations, which taken together, predetermined the outcomes of their conflict with Knox (Arnason 2014:9). As before, this study will seek to explore the dynamics between Knox the Reformer, and his political relationships, in order to ascertain the influence that the latter may have had on Knox's theological positions.

6.3.1 Marie of Guise (ca. 1515-1560)

As mentioned earlier, Knox was freed from imprisonment in early 1549 and started preaching in and around England. His timing could not have been better, as England was enjoying the fruits of the Edwardian Reformation. However, in 1553, when the Catholic Mary I ascended the English throne, Knox fled to France, then Zürich, and eventually to Calvin's Geneva in 1554, at about the same time that Mary of Guise became the Queen Regent. One can imagine the difficulty of the transition from serving under a Reformed-minded monarch, King Edward, to two Catholic gynarchies in Mary of Guise and Mary I, all within a few years. Later, divulging his animosity towards gynarchies, Knox wrote in Book I of his *History of the Reformation in Scotland* (Knox 1905b), regarding the ascension of the Queen Regent, "A crown was put upon her head…as to put a saddle upon the back of an unruly cow" (Knox 1905b:111).

It has been attempted to describe the emotional rollercoaster of hope and disappointment that Knox went through with the first two gynarchies. While in France and cut off from his national "kirk" (*church*), he could only write pamphlets to alleviate the religiopolitical challenges converging on both Scotland and England. His writings, from 1554 onwards, oscillated between a cordial and respectful tone, to some fire and brimstone curses; from calling for a prayer for the gynarchy to directly calling these rulers *bloodthirsty tyrants* and beseeching God to "let death devour them in haste; let the earth swallow them up; and let them go down quickly into hell" (Knox and Healey 1994:373-374; Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 3:328), adding that God would surely put to death this Jezebel and her idolatrous followers by sending a righteous Jehu. Casual observers would

not be faulted to assume that Knox had in mind the *Jehu* was indeed himself. There could be no doubt that Knox saw himself as both the righteous prophet and the revenging military general.

In May 1556, Knox, after the suggestion by the Earl Marischal, wrote the *Letter to the Queen Regent* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:73-84), which was presented by Lord Glencairn to the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, asking for the protection of the Reformed preachers, but was ignored and even ridiculed (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:72; Rogers 1874:166). The letter was in fact a response to a seemingly kind gesture from the Queen Regent. Apparently, due to Knox's Reformed writings and persuasion, the Scottish Protestants were shunning the Mass, forcing the Catholic authority to summon Knox to appear in Edinburgh to face charges of heresy, but Mary of Guise intervened and nullified the order.

The following year, Mary of Guise invited Knox back to Scotland. While Knox was on his way in October 1557, the invitation was abruptly rescinded (Knox and Healey 1994:376). It is not entirely clear why Mary of Guise had flip-flopped, but it is asserted that to maintain the support of her nobility, she merely allowed "a temporary period of unofficial toleration for Protestantism in Scotland" (Knox and Healey 1994:374). Such frustrating about-turn had no doubt vexed Knox greatly. Therefore, it is no surprise that, just a few months later, Knox published his famous, or perhaps infamous, *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* (Knox [1558] 2003). Some have suggested that Knox wrote it in Dieppe, right after he received the news that Mary had cancelled the invitation (Schrock 2006:83). Meanwhile across the sea on the continent, the increased brutal Protestant persecution from the other Mary definitely did not help in taming Knox's fury against these women rulers.

After publishing the *First blast of the trumpet* in the summer of 1558, Mary Tudor died later that year. With the geopolitical climate changing at hand, Knox lied to Mary of Guise when the former secretly plotted an alliance with England in 1559. Knox's secret plot was to join "Arran, son of the next heir to the Scottish crown, the Duke of

Chatelherault, with the Queen of England" (Lang 1905b:122), and effectively dethrone Mary Stuart and rid of the French influence on Scotland. The assertion points to the evidence of Knox's deceit in his own writing when he denied the accusation of colluding with England by stating in Book I of *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, "there is never a sentence of the narrative trew" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:365; Lang 1905b:123). The context of this plot started when Knox returned to Scotland in May 1559, and the Queen Regent summoned him to Stirling to answer charges of sedition. Fearing execution, Knox and his followers went to Perth (in Scotland) to prepare themselves for a possible attack. As Knox preached, riots broke out in the area against the clergy and their churches, when Knox cheeringly states in Book II of his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, "the rascal multitude had laid hands on the thieves, I should say Friars, places and utterly destroyed them" (Knox 1905b:138; Page, Page, and Black 1996:103).

After the Queen Regent's forces moved in, Knox and his followers moved to St. Andrews, where he had preached 12 years earlier before being captured by the French. The sense of *deja vu* must have confirmed Knox in his vision of a revolutionary armed struggle. In fact, Scottish iconoclasm and the associated riots and chaos were tied to Knox's fierce preaching, particularly in 1558-1559, often referencing the Old Testament, specifically 1 Samuel 5:4 (KJV), "[T]he head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:260; Graves 2008:39). For Knox, according to the Old Testament, there was even a protocol on how to destroy the idols.

It seems logical to assume that, by 1559, Mary of Guise wanted to do away with Knox, and that the feeling was mutual. With the ascension of Elizabeth I to the English throne, Knox saw the opportunity to hatch another plan to ensure political support for Protestantism. John Aylmer was the first to approach Knox with this idea of Queen Elizabeth marrying "a godly Scottish potential king" (McLaren 2002:259-261), in either James Stewart or James Hamilton, third Earl of Arran. If this plan were to succeed, Mary of Guise and Mary Stuart would no longer be in the way of the Scottish Reformation. However, such convoluted palace gossips and political intrigues were beyond Knox's reach,

as his efforts in limited options were unsuccessful (Wood 1927:116; McLaren 2002:274). Furthermore, Elizabeth I was not someone who would easily allow herself to be negotiated in a marriage anyway (Eales 2014:39), not even by her trusted advisor, William Cecil, who was supportive of such an English-Scottish alliance (Mathieson 1902:88-89), even after supposedly plodding by Knox, who used John Sinclair as an alias to do the job (McEwen 2021).

Regardless of whether or not Knox used an alias to coerce William Cecil, one of Knox's letters on 19 July 1559, *Lords of the congregation to Sir W. Cecil* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 6:40-43), contains the following cryptic words, "*[D]oubt not but your Wisdom will so prudently and so closlie handell all thingis, that the adversaryes have no advantage by discovering of things to all men befor just ripnes of the action so requyr*" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 6:42; Bain 2019:219-236). If any secret plot was ever deployed to take out Mary of Guise with the help of the English, nothing became of it. Mary of Guise died the following year, at age 45, and the Reformed-minded Scottish Lords of the Congregation seized power "to enshrine their triumph in Protestant legislation" (Goodare 2003:381).

Despite Knox's eventual victory, reading his *History of the Reformation in Scotland* (Knox 1905b) that covers the events from the beginning of 1558 to November 1559, "Knox did not hesitate to asperse Mary of Guise's chastity" (McLaren 2002:274), suggesting that James V was not Mary Stuart's father, which not only would malign the reputation of Mary of Guise, but more importantly, cast doubt on the legitimacy of Mary Stuart's royal lineage. Such cunning disinformation warfare has earned Knox additional criticism: "These venomous assaults on Mary of Guise and her daughter, which run through Book I, III, and IV, are the worst blots on these books as history" (Lee 1966:81-83). However, this study uncovered that both Lee and McLaren used the same reference on page 322 of Book I of Knox's *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, or *History* I (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:322). Curiously enough, the page divulges no such accusation or animosity, and in fact, has nothing to do with Mary of Guise.[13]

[13] Maurice Lee Jr. (1966:83) first referenced Knox's *History of the Reformation in Scotland* (cf. also McLaren 2002:274). It seems as if the reference used by both these sources, i.e., Knox's *History*, Vol. 1, 322, has nothing

Nevertheless, there is another accusation against Knox that seems to have been built on his *History*. Lang states, "Knox took his revenge in his '*History*' by repeating a foolish report that Mary of Guise had designed to poison her late husband, James V" (Lang 1905a:70). This reference and its corresponding accusation from Lang seem to be quite accurate, as Knox writes in his *History* I, in the section entitled *Ane epistle direct fra the holye of Allarit to his bretheren the Gray Freires* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:73-148):

> At first sight of the Cardinall, sche said, "Welcome, my Lord: Is nott the King dead?" What moved hir so to conjecture, diverse men ar of diverse judgementis. Many whisper, that of old his parte was in the pott, and that the suspition thairof caused him to be inhibite the Quenis company (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:92).

One cannot help but wonder how Knox was privy to the secret conversation between Cardinal Beaton and Mary of Guise unless he was biased in his crude attempt to smear the Catholic magistrate with insinuations and gossip. However, a further extrapolation based on Knox's rumoured intimation of Cardinal Beaton and Mary's secret alliance that suggests that Knox "threw doubt on the legitimacy of her daughter, Mary Stuart" (Lang 1905a:71), cannot be proven definitively. It would seem that, as much as Knox wanted to portray Mary of Guise as a disreputable queen, he could only repeat the rumours he may have heard, without actually creating one. Nevertheless, in so much as this study

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to do with Mary of Guise, as is indicated here in full length: "[S]yde, certane godly men, and amonges otheris a young boy, who cryed with a lowd voce, 'This is intollerable, that when God by his Worde hath planelie damned idolatrie, we shall stand and see it used in dispyte.' The preast heirat offended, gave the chyld a great blow; who in anger took up a stone, and casting at the preast, did hytt the tabernacle and brack doune ane ymage; and immediatlie the hole multitude that war about cast stones, and putt handis to the said tabernacle, and to all utheris monumentis of idolatrie; whiche thei dispatched, befoir the tent man in the toune war advertist, (for the moist parte war gone to dennar): Whiche noysed abroad, the hole multitude convened, not of the gentilmen, neyther of thame that war earnest professouris, bot of the raschall multitude, who fynding nothing to do in that Churche, did run without deliberatioun to the Gray and Blak Freris; and nochtwythstanding that thei had within thame verray strong gardis keapt for thare defence, yitt war thare gates incontinent brust upe. The first invasioun was upoun the idolatrie; and thareafter the commoun people began to seak some spoile; and in verray deid the Gray Freiris was a place so weall provided, that oneles honest men had sein the same, we wold have feared to have reported what provisioun thei had. Thare scheittis, blancattis, beddis, and covertouris wer suche, as no Erle in Scotland hath the bettir: thair naiprie was fyne. Thei wer bot awght personis in convent, and yitt had viij punscheonis of salt beaff, (considder the tyme of the yeare, the ellevint day of Maij,) wyne, beare, and aill, besydis stoare."

would like to concur with Lang's assessment, after pointing out Knox's insincere propaganda in his *History*, Lang has since been called "the teller of fairy tales" (Lenman 1973:176) and being "anti-Presbyterian and anti-Scottish" (Wanliss 1905:39), not to mention being unfit "for his task as a historian" (Wanliss 1905:19). Indeed, no one could accuse confessional scholars of being cordial when it comes to the defence of their spiritual heroes. At the same time, neither can one underestimate the extent to which scholars will go to malign their theological opponents.

It seems that similar scholarly debates have not stopped since the Reformation, and they probably will never cease. At the same time, the importance of "the role of history in projecting national unity into the past and forging loyalty to the state" (Anderson 2012:3) has since been duly noted. Regardless of confessional bias or nationalism, scholars today should use caution in dealing with the historiography of controversial Reformers, in order not to fall into the same trap of prejudice that the latter unwittingly embraced. At any rate, the mutual animosity that existed between Knox and Mary of Guise cannot be disputed or underrated.

6.3.2 Mary Tudor (ca. 1516-1558)

Recalling her Catholic upbringing, Mary Tudor, while under her Protestant brother Edward VI, had been sponsoring and attending private Masses in defiance of her younger brother's royal religious authority. One of the reasons for her blatant disregard for Edward's Reformation was because she enjoyed the strong support from her cousin, the emperor, Charles V, who even threatened to declare war and invade England on her behalf (Knox and Healey 1994:371-372). With such a strong backing, Mary was able to exercise her right of devotion for her Catholic faith, until she ascended her throne a few years later.

Therefore, when Mary I became Queen of England in 1553, Knox fled to the continent and eventually spent quite a few years in Geneva. While in exile, Knox must have heard of hundreds of Protestants being burned to death by Mary. It is suggested that the "burning of 284 Protestants" (Cavill 2013:879) may have been unfairly and negatively

attributed to Mary by the popularity of John Foxe's *Book of martyrs* (Foxe 2009) around the same time. Nonetheless, her religious zeal sealed her infamous title of Bloody Mary in the minds of the public. By the winter of 1557, after Knox was humiliated by Mary of Guise when she revoked the invitation, the former sat down to pen *The first blast of the trumpet*, which most scholars believe was directed towards both Maries, with a third possible gynarchy in the person of Catherine de Medici of France (Reid 1988:535).

Knox's *First blast of the trumpet* was published anonymously in 1558 and has been deemed today as "disastrously, embarrassingly, comically ill-timed, notorious as one of the least contextually appropriate publications in history" (Schrock 2006:83). Knox's arguments against a woman's rule in *The first blast of the trumpet* are summarised as that first, gynecocracy is *repugnant to nature*; second, a *contumelie* (insult) *to God*; and finally, the *subversion of good order* (Knox [1558] 2003:26; Jordan 1987:432). Indeed, the tone of Knox's treatise is both combative and derogatory, as the words within the first paragraph show, "how abominable before God is the Empire or Rule of a wicked woman, yea, of a traiteiresse and bastard" (Knox [1558] 2003:72). Just like Mary of Guise, Mary Tudor did not have to endure Knox's wrath for very long, for she died in 1560. Besides the attack from *The first blast of the trumpet*, this study does not find much personal associations between Mary Tudor and Knox, if any at all.

6.3.3 Mary Stuart (ca. 1542-1587)

Of all the female monarchs, Mary Stuart had to suffer the most under the watchful eyes of Knox. As a child in 1548, she was sent to France and married to the Dauphin Francis, future King Francis II, 10 years later (Eire 2016:358). However, Francis II died in 1560, and Mary returned to Scotland in August 1561. It is important to be reminded that the 18-year-old Mary had returned to a Scotland, whose Protestant regime had just overthrown her mother a year or so earlier and legislated Protestant laws to ban Mass, denied papal authority, and enacted a Protestant confession of faith (Goodare 2005:55-56). Needless to say, the young Queen of Scots had plenty of challenges ahead. Notwithstanding, within the first week after her return, Mary insisted on defying the Protestant laws and observed her own Catholic Mass, which unsurprisingly caused a great com-

motion. The zealous teenager even “forbade interference with her worship on pain of death” (Knox and Healey 1994:382). It was as much a battle of the religion, as it was a battle of the will between Knox and the teenage queen.

Mary’s zeal for her Catholic faith may have proved to be an irksome problem for Knox. Their unfortunate exchanges were recorded in Knox’s *History of the Reformation in Scotland*. It has been asserted that The *History* is based on Knox’s own perspective and was problematic in accuracy as well as propagandistic in nature (Scott-Pearson 1950:522; Lee 1966:79). After Knox returned to Scotland in May 1559, bolstered by the ascension of the pro-Reformation Elizabeth I in England, not only did he launch an iconoclastic campaign to root out the final vestiges of the old religion in Scotland, he also “began writing his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, a task that would last until 1571” (Kyle 1984:461).

Scholars are divided in their views on Knox’s *History*, in particular, its reliability as “history” (Hudson 1951:229; Lee 1966:81). While some deem it a “masterpiece” and “one of our greatest histories” (Henderson 1950:183), others have been more critical. MacDonald calls it “the only history of the Reformation written by one of its makers” (MacDonald 1951:58) and considers its writing style both pungent and offensive. Trinterud refers to it as “sadly deficient in far too many aspects…neither ‘scientific history,’ nor memoirs” (Trinterud 1951:456). One of the more recent criticisms refers to it as “singular, uncompromising, and extremely biased” (Bonner 1996:578). Yet, Kyle and Johnson, while acknowledging its lack of impartiality, remind the readers that the “attempt at *unbiased* history is an eighteenth and nineteenth-century development” (Kyle and Johnson 2009:135). One could only be left wondering if an anachronistic evaluation might be utilised as a justification for a manipulated historiography.

Putting aside the debate on historical accuracy or personal bias, Knox’s *History* contains a total of five records of meetings between himself and Mary, Queen of Scots, beginning in September 1561, soon after the latter returned to Scotland, and ending in December 1563 (Healey 1992:325-327). It is safe to conclude that behind these en-

counters, there was a battle of the will between a 19-year-old queen and a seasoned statesman at a prime age of 46, with each side unyielding to the stubbornness of the other. It is, however, interesting to note that in their first confrontation, when Mary accused Knox of sedition because *The first blast of the trumpet* had undermined her authority, Knox simply backpedalled his intention, stating,

> if the realm finds no inconvenience from the regiment of a woman, that which they approve shall I not disallow, further than within my own breast. I shall be as well content to live under your Grace as Paul was to live under Nero; and my hope is that, so long as ye defile not your hands with the blood of the saints of God, neither I nor that book shall either hurt you or your authority (Knox 1905b:181; Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 2:279).

Certainly, Knox was quick to adapt to political circumstances when expediency required it, for he went on to explain to Mary that the book "was written most especially against that wicked Jezebel of England" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 2:279; Knox and Healey 1994:382-383; Knox 1905b:181). By the time of writing, the *Jezebel of England*, as she was called by Knox, was Mary Tudor, and she had been dead for three years, so she was certainly an easy scapegoat for Knox's wrath. Yet, the irony is that in one of the five unpublished letters to his good friend, Christopher Goodman, Knox refers to Mary Stuart also as "that cursed Jesabel" (Dawson *et al*. 2005:196). This duplicitous exchange with Mary was not the only time Knox had to camouflage his strong disdain, or adjust his theological position regarding gynarchy, as his dealing with Elizabeth I later also demonstrated.

Another interestingly inherent contradiction in Knox's political theology came to the fore when young Mary Stuart objected to Knox meddling in her state affairs. On one hand, Knox discouraged ministers to be involved in political affairs, but on the other, he also ironically "insisted on preacher's freedom to deal with political questions while in pulpit" (Kyle 1988:79-81), especially if he were to be *moved* by the Holy Spirit. This does beg

the question of how a preacher could stay out of political affairs, when they are also free to address political issues from the pulpit? Knox's duplicity is made more poignant when, in 1567, he combined printed pamphlet attacks and pulpit preaching to "threaten the great plague of God to the whole country, if she be spared from her condign punishment" (Shrank 2010:524).

As a theologian, Knox did reference Jesus calling Herod a "fox" in Luke 13:32, while in Acts 23:3, the apostle Paul called the High Priest a "whitewashed wall" to justify his meddling in Mary Stuart's political affairs (Gray 1939:144). However, this study is forced to ponder how Knox could have overlooked the glaring facts that Jesus *never* encouraged or *led* any armed revolt, and Paul apologised straightaway for his mistake of *not* knowing he was actually addressing the High Priest (Acts 23:3-5). It would not have been the first, nor the last time, a powerful *political theologist* like Knox using the Scriptures to justify his political manoeuvres without suffering comparable criticism in return.

Casting theological interpretations aside, his relationship with Mary Stuart had only caused Knox to adapt the delivery of his theological tenets without changing the fundamental thesis. At the same time, one might wonder if their relationship also betrayed the underlying ambiguity in Knox's theological positions? Their persistent stalemate ended in 1568 when Mary fled to England. Even then, Knox pleaded for her death. In Volume VI of his *History of Scotland (1149-1603)*, the 19th-century Scottish historian, Patrick Fraser Tytler, interestingly notes a "letter, which is wholly in (Knox's) own hand, is too remarkable to be omitted" (Tytler 1845, Vol. 6:110), and concludes that Knox pleaded with William Cecil for "the absolute necessity of putting Mary to death" (Tytler 1845, Vol. 6:110). Tytler quotes Knox's letter with the chilling enigmatical words, "If ye strike not at the root, the branches that appear to be broken will bud again"[14] (Tytler 1845, Vol. 6:110).

[14] Footnoted by Tytler as MS. Letter, State-paper Office, John Knox to Cecil, Edinburgh, 2 January 1569-70. Endorsed by Cecil's clerk, "Mr. Knox to my Mr."

6.3.4 Elizabeth I (ca. 1533-1603)

Elizabeth I became the queen of England in November 1558, after the death of her half-sister Mary. Like her mother, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I was "a great patron of evangelicals" (Bernard 1993:2). However, due to the ill-willed and misogynistic *The first blast of the trumpet* that Knox published only a few months earlier, the new queen of England, although anti-Catholic, detested Knox with as much enmity as Mary Stuart in Scotland had for him (Smith 2010:213). Therefore, on his return from Geneva back to Scotland in 1559, when Knox requested Elizabeth for his safe transit through England, the latter flatly refused (Dawson *et al*. 2005:175). Sensing the political awkwardness, Knox tried to repair the relationship. In a letter, *Knox to Queen Elizabeth* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 6:47-51), Knox back-tracked his anti-gynarchic position by singling Elizabeth out above the limitation of all women and affirming her as "just and lawful authorities before men" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 6:49; Schrock 2006:91). In addition, when the later movement of Elizabethan Puritanism was beginning to show more resentment towards Elizabeth's rule (Tyacke 2010:528), it was Knox who "cautioned the Puritan separatists against schism and advised them to live with less than an ideal religious situation" (Kyle 1988:86). It appears that although gynarchy was against the Scriptures in Knox's theology, there could be room for re-interpretation or exceptions if the political situation deemed it necessary.

6.3.5 John Knox's Theology on Female Rulers

Each of the four female rulers discussed so far had not enjoyed her relationship with Knox. Calvin, in his *Letter to Sir William Cecil* (Knox [1558] 2003:13-14), expressed disdain towards Knox's theology on the female monarchs within *The first blast of the trumpet* as "the evil, which could not now be corrected, should rather be buried in oblivion" (Knox [1558] 2003:13), and further denied knowing any knowledge of its publication. Although some have tried to mitigate the impact of such infamous polemic by arguing that Knox's letters to his female friends "are remarkably free of gendered rhetoric" (Felch 1995b:806), one cannot deny the successful shocking effect that Knox generated in the minds of the public, as well as the spiteful vengeance from these women. In fact, besides Calvin's strong reservation, Heinrich Bullinger as well as Théodore de Bèze,

Matthew Parker, John Foxe, and John Aylmer all "wrote an official repudiation of the tract" (Schrock 2006:84). If Knox intended to make a political statement, he sure made it loud and clear.

6.4 JOHN KNOX IN GENEVA

It is important to note that Knox was espousing anti-gynarchic sentiments even before *The first blast of the trumpet* was written. Recalling his exile from England after Mary Tudor ascended her throne, Knox self-exiled to Geneva in 1554. This study calculated from the preface of David Laing's work on *The works of John Knox* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:xiii-xix), and estimated that Knox was in Geneva from February to July 1554, March to August 1555, and finally from September 1556 to January 1559. The total time Knox spent in Geneva is approximated more than three years during which Knox not only uttered the famous words, as quoted earlier, to describe Geneva, "*the maist perfyt schoole of Chryst that ever was in the erth*" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:240), but also found his kindred spirit in Christopher Goodman, a fellow minister residing in Geneva at the time. Knox considered working their ministry together in Geneva was one of the happiest and most fruitful periods of his life. They both published similar tracts challenging the rights of women to rule, and "called for an English uprising to remove Mary Tudor [and] advocated the right of resistance to an ungodly ruler" (Dawson *et al*. 2005:174).

The issue of female monarchs had been bothering Knox for some time. In 1554, when he went to Geneva, he had four questions to ask Bullinger and Calvin: Whether a child could rule by divine right, whether a woman could rule, whether the people should obey ungodly rulers, and what happens when godly subjects rebel against the ungodly rulers? Although these were difficult political questions, "neither Bullinger nor Calvin gave [Knox] any encouragement" (Burns 1955:91). Calvin had insisted on a doctrine of the *Ephorate* (McNeill 1949:163) whereby the "magistrates and estates [would possess] the power to keep the prince to his duty" (Giesey 1970:48). Calvin's utilisation of the Consistory in Geneva was such an example, for it was a ruling body, initially selected by the people (presumably under no small influence from Calvin), but "nonetheless not accountable to

the community but to God once it was in office" (Seidler 1993:555). Seidler adds, "Thus, ironically for a Reformer, [referring to Calvin,] he reinstitutionalized religion and reassociated it with secular authority" (Seidler 1993:555).

Aside from Calvin's religiopolitical symbiosis, it can hardly be ignored that his Geneva had no prince or monarch, but Knox's Scotland had. It also should be pointed out that Calvin, as argued earlier in this study, had successfully consolidated his power in Geneva by 1554. For Calvin to condone any defiance against the ruling authority would be akin to rebelling against the religiopolitical amalgam that he himself had painstakingly created. Therefore, it is hardly a surprise that Calvin cautioned against Knox in such an endeavour, lest the former planned to justify a possible rebellion in his own Geneva. Regarding a rebellion against civil rulers, Calvin was seemingly at variance with himself (Scott-Pearson 1950:521). It is obvious that Knox wanted more than Calvin's non-resistance for the Scottish Reformation.

Interestingly, while Knox sought Calvin's advice, the latter was opposed to rebelling against the civil rulers, but by 1561, after Knox and the Lords of the Congregation had successfully revolted, in a sermon on Daniel 6:22, Calvin endorsed popular defiance against the magistrate who opposed God (Greaves 1976:8-10). One can therefore safely surmise that Calvin's change of his theological position regarding this issue could very well have been influenced by the success of the Scottish Reformation. It seems that from 1554 onward, without Calvin's endorsement, Knox gradually developed his own political theology, even as Mary Tudor preoccupied herself with the brutal crackdown against the English Reformation. In Knox's mind, theological empowerment was never able to match the effectiveness of an armed political revolution.

At any rate, the three-plus years in Geneva was no doubt a time well-spent for Knox. Calvin's Geneva had impressed him enough to want to emulate such a grand plan of religiopolitical symbiosis. The Scottish General Assembly consisted of Protestant Lords, as well as "ministers, nobles, and burgesses" (Kyle 1988:78), which would eventually become Knox's own Consistory. As he worked on *The first blast of the trumpet* during

this time, Knox paid close attention to how Geneva was governed. By 1559, he had in mind to use Calvinism to rein in the laxity of the Scottish Reformation and unify it, and his plan had the help of the Lords of the Congregation (Ryrie 2006:68).

6.5 LORDS OF THE CONGREGATION

The Lords of the Congregation (also called *The faithful congregation of Jesus Christ in Scotland* or *The Lords of the Congregation of Jesus Christ*) drew up a covenant to dedicate themselves, the Scottish nobles, in defiance of Mary, Queen Regent in December 1557. The most notable nobles were Lord James Hamilton, the third earl of Arran, as well as Lord James Stewart, the illegitimate half-brother of Mary, Queen of Scots (Reid 1973:31; Dingwall 1986:26; McLaren 2002:273). In the late 1550s, the nobles were demanding their own ministers for preaching the gospel in their own language and presiding over sacraments such as the baptism, using the English books of common prayer from the reign of Edward VI (Ryrie 2006:72). When Knox concluded his self-imposed exile on the continent and returned to Scotland, he was welcomed by the Lords into their leadership and designated as the secretary of the Congregation. From such a position, Knox not only was appointed to be the minister of the St. Giles Church of Edinburgh, but also acted as the Congregation's agent to England, corresponding to William Cecil (Hart 1908:271-275), and even entertaining the possible marriage of the Scottish Lord with Queen Elizabeth, as mentioned previously in this study.

In the same way that the German princes had Luther championing their Protestant banners, the Scottish nobles acquired Knox in a similar symbiotic relationship. Ryrie stresses that the "military victory of the Protestant Lords" in 1559 was essential for the eventual success of the Scottish Reformation (Ryrie 2006:49). It also should be pointed out that when Knox landed in Leith from France, on 2 May 1559, that he was ushered straightaway to Perth, where the assembled Protestant force of the Congregation was preparing a possible siege from the Queen Regent's force. Knox proceeded to preach a fiery sermon that resulted in not only a riot, but a great morale boost for the Protestant force (Reid 1973:31). It is very likely that his relationship with William Cecil also gave the Lords a confidence boost in their revolution, believing that the Protestant English

force would come to their aid when needed (Mathieson 1902:70-71). In this symbiosis, the Lords of the Congregation can be said to have provided the hardware for the revolution, while Jon Knox provided the software for success.

Besides the nobles in the Lords of the Congregation, Knox also enjoyed support from the burgh Councils around Edinburgh, whose previous Catholic Council was removed by the Lords of the Congregation to make way for the Protestant faithful merchant *oligarchies* who "threw their weight behind Knox" (Dingwall 1986:26). Some of these men have been identified as Edward Hope, James Barroun, and Adam Fullerton, who were all long-time supporters of Knox (Lynch 1975:130), and also James Sym, "in whose house Knox resided" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:700). With such a strong political backing, Knox's Protestant Reformation in Scotland found a sure footing in 1560. It was the same year in which the Scottish Parliament, which was made up of the *Three estates* of senior clergy, nobles, and burgh Council representatives, "enshrined their triumph in Protestant legislation" (Goodare 2003:374-381). Once again, it is the symbiosis of a religiopolitical amalgam that proved to be a necessity in ensuring the success and vitality of the Scottish Reformation.

6.6 THE MAKING OF A POLITICAL REVOLUTIONIST

Did Knox change his theological positions regarding the armed rebellion? If so, what political circumstances necessitated such transformation? It is surmised that Knox was not favourable towards rebellion against the civil authority, "even if they were personally wicked or commanded ungodly things" (Greaves 1976:3). Based on Knox's writings, both Greaves and Mason conclude that he resolved to rule out rebellion, admonishing his followers to "passive obedience" (Greaves 1976:3; Mason 1980:414). Additionally, when he was the Royal Chaplain to King Edward VI, in a sermon on 1 November 1551, after the Duke of Northumberland, John Dudley, overthrew the Duke of Somerset to become the new regent to Edward, Knox was purported to have condemned the *coup d'état* in a sermon on All Saints Day (Ridley 1968:103; Reid 1974:83). The primary source both Ridley and Reid used was the *Letter to the faithful in London, Newcastle and Berwick* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 3:167). It would appear that Knox was not sup-

portive of violence against secular authorities. However, having examined the evidence, this study concurs with Ridley in his conclusion that Knox condemned the *coup d'état* only to warn against the papist conspiracy for trying to bring down "the two chief pillars of Protestant England" (Ridley 1968:103-104), namely the two Dukes engaging in the power struggle, as opposed to a rejection of violence *per se*. Therefore, the argument of Knox being against violence in resisting magistrates, at least around the time of 1551 or 1552, although possible, is not convincing.

Nevertheless, it is interesting that Mason quotes Knox, dating December 1557, stating that "no power on earth is above the power of the Civil ruler; that every soul, be he pope or Cardinal, ought to be subject to the higher Powers. That their commandments, not repugning to God's glory and honour, ought to be obeyed, even with great loss of temporal things" (Mason 1980:416-417; Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:324). As this study has pointed out, by the end of December 1557, Knox had been double-crossed by Mary of Guise and was penning his anti-gynarchic *The first blast of the trumpet* to be published within a few months. It would be illogical by now to assume that Knox advocated for obedience to the civil authorities. In actuality, this could be another example of Knox's political double-talk, duplicitously saying one thing but hinting at something else. Knox seems to be calling for obedience, *as long as* the political authorities are not acting against the will of God. Once Knox proclaimed the gynarchy to be against God's will, the disobedience would be completely justified, as Knox's soon-to-be-published *The first blast of the trumpet* would argue.

It is more than likely that Knox was not static in his approach towards civil authority. His position of rebelling or even killing the ungodly magistrate was justified based on his own participation in the St. Andrews Revolt in 1547 (Greaves 1976:3). After all, Knox's fellow rebels executed Cardinal Beaton, who, only two months earlier, was involved in the execution of George Wishart. Wishart was not only Knox's best friend and mentor, but also the one who inspired a "full iconoclastic fervor" in Knox (Eire 2016:359), and roused the latter to a leadership position in the revolt of 1547. It is therefore easy to assume that Knox, the firebrand, would want to rebel against the unjust magistrate. Then,

during the two years from 1551-1553, working within the Edwardian Protestant administration may have changed his mind to vouch for a non-resistant stance against the civil magistrate, as Greaves, Mason, Reid, and Ridley noted above. However, following the death of Edward and the ascension of Mary I, Knox increasingly lost faith in partnership with civil rulers (Knox and Healey 1994:373), culminating in his total capitulation against any hope in gynarchy in 1558 that resulted in the publication of *The first blast of the trumpet*.

To be clear, throughout Knox's *Works*, he held the civil magistrates in the highest regard, and as such, they "ought to be honoured, feared, and obeyed" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 1:410; Gray 1939:135), with the caveat of "in all things not repugning to the command of God" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 3:26), as mentioned earlier. Therein lies the heart of the matter, for Knox never clarified who would *determine* what was, or was not, *repugning* to the command of God. Gray concludes, "He thus used the king against the pope, the nobles against the king, the subjects against king and nobles, and the church against all" (Gray 1939:144-145). Such political scheming to deal with all parties involved would certainly require someone with a unique set of talents.

Recalling the burgh Councils in the Edinburgh area, supporting Knox with a generous salary and living quarters, and because of Edinburgh's "preeminence within the country" (Reid 1973:33-44), as Knox led the St. Giles Church in Edinburgh, so did he also lead the Scottish Kirk and the whole Scottish Reformation by 1572. Through 25 years of struggle, Knox had triumphed over monarchs, politicians, princes, and even theologians. Therefore, there can be no doubt about his invincible position in Scotland, both spiritually and politically, especially from 1560 onwards. With such a firm hold on power, it is no wonder that Knox, among other Magisterial Reformers, has been compared to Niccolò Machiavelli (Gray 1939:134; Gilbert 1941:443).

6.7 JOHN KNOX AS AN OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET

Part of Knox's unassailable persona could be attributed to his self-identity as a prophet, who "was more at home with the Old Testament than in the New" (Henderson

1950:184). It is a fact that Knox, being inspired by George Wishart in the early days of the former's ministry, believed in his power as an Old Testament prophet, having "the word of admonition and the knowledge of future events" (Kyle 1984:456). At the same time, he was criticised for being "in the habit of prophesying…above all wherever he could not get his own way" (Muir 1929:58). Claiming that "God hath revealed unto me secretes unknowne to the worlde" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 6:229), Knox predicted that because of gynarchy, England was about to be ruled by Spain (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:365-366; Schrock 2006:86). Unfortunately for this particular so-called prophecy, not only was England not ruled by Spain but history had shown quite the opposite, in that the Spanish *Invincible Armada* was destroyed by Queen Elizabeth's English navy in 1588 (Tenace 2003:855).

Knox was not the only theological leader of the 16th century to believe that he was called as a prophet to lead God's people to the promised land. It is well known that Müntzer referred to himself as the "new Daniel" (Williams and Mergal 1957:64; Bainton 1982:11). The irony is not lost today, that while Knox condemned the prophetic leadership in the German city of Münster for their "radical Anabaptist expectation of an earthly kingdom" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 5:13; Kyle 1984:467), he also readily identified himself with the Old Testament prophet (Kyle 1984:469). Such self-identification has allowed a prominent Scottish poet and critic of the mid-20th century, perhaps free of the shackles of confessional bias, to pen a scathing remark for Knox: "Knox used duplicity and persuaded himself that it was the truth, but he was honest enough not to have used it if he had recognized what it was. He did not wilfully deceive others; he did not need to, for he deceived himself" (Muir 1929:189).

To be fair, the timing of the various events and their fortuitous outcomes in Knox's life were so fantastic that it had enough persuasive power to convince, not only himself but also those around him of his prophetic characteristics. Notable samples of events that this study has referenced earlier are summarised below:

- After he was captured at the St. Andrews revolt in 1547, he spent 19 months on French galleys. Although most people did not make it out alive under such brutal conditions, Knox survived unscathed.
- Upon his release, Knox not only survived the ordeal of the French galleys but thrived in England, even working as a Royal Chaplain to King Edward VI.
- In 1558, after more than 200 years of ownership, the English lost Calais to France, because Mary I listened to her husband Philip by sending English troops to help Spain. France won and took Calais (Chettle 1935:492). It was a blow to the English national pride and sensing that the popularity for the Catholic faction was waning, Knox stepped up his attack on gynarchy, as represented by Mary I, by publishing *The first blast of the trumpet*, as well as escalating the iconoclastic struggles in Scotland. The timing matched the rising antagonistic sentiments towards the English Queen.
- Shortly after Knox's *The first blast of the trumpet* was published, his enemies bearing the name of Mary started to suffer unfortunate demises. Queen Mary I died in November 1558, Mary, Queen Regent died in June 1560, and Francis II, the 16-year-old husband of Mary, Queen of Scots died in December of the same year. In a brief two-year period, Knox's enemies died one by one, eventually leaving a teenage Queen of Scots in Edinburgh that was surrounded by the Protestants (Eire 2016:362).
- As if the removal of Knox's enemies was not enough, in 1559, Queen Elizabeth's *Acts of supremacy and uniformity* contained the Elizabethan Injunctions for England to completely break away from Catholicism (Eire 2016:339).
- After Knox was captured and imprisoned in 1547, he predicted that he would once again return and preach at the castle of St. Andrews (Knox 1905b:109). He fulfilled that *prophecy* in 1559 (Kyle and Johnson 2009:156).

One would hardly be surprised when, after these events came to pass, Knox could not be more certain of his calling as a prophet. He related in *To the nobilities and the estates of Scotland* (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:467-520), "My words are sharpe, but consider, my Lords, that they are not mine, but that they are the threatynges of the Omnipo-

tent, who assuredly will performe the voices of the Prophetes" (Laing [1558] 1841, Vol. 4:517; Hart 1908:279). As such, taken all together, the timing of these events not only was convincing to Knox's own mind, but could easily have bolstered his position as a prophet in the eyes of the people.

Another important factor in helping Knox to achieve his great influence in Scotland was his intense or intimidating personality. Hart describes him as a "bold and terrifying preacher" (Hart 1908:267), who made many enemies because of his temper and "bitterest and most uncompromising hostilities" (Hart 1908:271). The judgement of Knox's temperament or character should be suspended if only to gain insights into his ability to wield the larger-than-life influence through carefully calculated political manoeuvres. At any rate, this self-validating construct as an Old Testament prophet served Knox well when he rallied the Scottish Reformation forces in the 16th century and successfully reached their mutual goal.

6.8 CONCLUSION

Writing about "Whig tradition" (Kyle and Johnson 2009:185), where historical accuracy gives way to the romanticising of *heroes*, a revision has been deemed underway since the last century. In fact, the scholars of Presbyterianism have not been shy of heaping adulating praises describing Knox as "Moses and Lincoln rolled into one" (MacGregor 1960:13). While the judgement of the lives of the Reformers may not be the focus of this study, their theologies *vis-à-vis* their political contexts are. In Knox's case, the adulating praises could simply betray his dual functionalities, both as a prophet and a politician. Regarding politics and politicians, yet another scholar, having compared Luther to Nicolai Lenin, goes as far as assessing Knox to be even worse than Luther (Gannon 1930:312). Seemingly more recent scholars are disregarding the confessional yokes in evaluating Reformation celebrities.

Whether or not history is written by the victors, at least it favours them. Such adulatory tendencies in many of the scholarly writings have been observed and criticised as "attempts to rationalize Knox's merry account of Cardinal Beaton's murder" (Greaves

1975:261). The frequent charges of “ignorance of authentic documents and errors made in memoirs” (MacDonald 2015:223) are also accompanied by scathing rebukes, where scholars like Macdonald claim: “[T]he unquestioning support of Presbyterian tradition [is done] at the expense of scholarship” (MacDonald 2015:234).

Without disarranging the focus of this study in a debate of scholarly bias of Knox’s historiography, it is important to recognise that the ultimate form of a symbiosis of religion and politics, i.e*., theocracy*, was the goal of Knox all along. Calling his vision a *pure theocracy*, it has been summarised rhetorically, though concisely as follows: “The only remaining detail in this beautifully simple theory of government was who should decide what was the law of God; and upon that point, Knox never hesitated: in his own mind he was himself the ultimate tribunal” (Hart 1908:277). Additional scholars have even taken such comparison further. By comparing Knox with the Machiavellian Jesuits, Figgis asserts that from 1555 onwards, he used extreme means to reach his aims, not the least of which included “murder and rebellion” (Figgis 1999:97). Gannon (1930:311) refers to Knox’s *sadistic* dealings with the three Marys. Especially Mary, Queen of Scots, echoes Figgis’ assertion. One cannot help but acknowledge these sentiments, but at the same time, is moved to recognise him as someone who clearly had a political end in mind.

If one’s experience shapes one’s worldview, then Knox was a product of such extraordinary circumstances. From revenging his friend and mentor’s death to surviving pernicious slave labour on a French galley, then overcoming powerful foes through what seems to be a series of providential interventions, Knox no doubt could be excused for considering himself a prophet with a mission. Inevitably, his vision for what was possible in Scotland, being inspired by Calvin’s Geneva, moved even beyond Calvin’s religiopolitical amalgam, to the rarefied air of *pure theocracy*, as noted earlier by Gannon. It makes sense as Knox learned through the geopolitical landscape, that without the full submission of the magistrate, God’s will and his saints could only patiently wait in agony.

The English people and the Scotts, as well as the French Huguenots, suffered greatly under the ungodly monarchs, Knox must have reasoned, and it was his duty, as a

prophet of God, to ensure that Protestantism not only survived but thrived, with him at the helm. To this end, Knox preached and schemed, even at times brutalised or simply compromised. This study concludes that Knox, after Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin who set the examples before him and inspired him, could only sharpen his political acumen, which allowed him to take the church-state symbiosis to a new level.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the time of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, his attempt to unify the Christendom in the 4th century and the Frankish King Pepin the Short gifting the land from the south of Ravenna to Rome's papacy four centuries later (Sefton 1979:217), the pope had become both the ecclesiastical and political ruler, and politics have been profoundly grafted into the DNA of the Western church. Therefore, try as one may, it is impossible to separate theology and politics even in the 16th-century Europe. While the Protestant Reformation has been identified as one of the key "changes that constituted the transition from late medieval to early-modern European history" (Bireley 2009:221), the impact of the political landscapes by such religious awakening cannot be underestimated. Nations and city-states jostled for political control as feudalism gave way to the egalitarianism inherently contained in the Reformation. Movements led by great thinkers and Reformers dominated the landscapes with their compelling and competing narratives.

It seems as if the individuals who did align with a significant geopolitical faction were able to ensure that their voices were heard, agendas propagated, and ultimately their theologies enshrined. Conversely, those who did not, or were unwilling to ally with any political actor, would find themselves simply or promptly faded into the pages of history. This study concludes, after a careful re-examination of the data of the early 16th-century Europe, that the Magisterial Reformers, such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Cromwell, Cranmer, and even Knox all underwent a theological transformation as they engaged and reacted with their particular political contexts. Their partnerships with the princes or kings were successful in forming a symbiotic church-state amalgam, which enabled them to further advance their Reformation agendas, even at the expense of compromising their theological tenets.

Among these political theologists, the infamous outliers such as Müntzer and the millenarian Melchiorites partnered with the peasants for political means to their theological

ends. Unfortunately, in the end, their symbiosis simply failed. On the contrary, the modest non-Magisterial Reformers, such as the ones broadly grouped into the Anabaptist camp, were mostly inert and unaffected by their political contexts, at least demonstrating consistent theological orientations throughout their short tenures, even at the expense of their own lives.

This study demonstrates that the prominent Magisterial Reformers of the 16th-century Europe were mere mortals with oscillating and even contradicting thoughts and theologies buffeted by various political forces of their times. Nevertheless, it is precisely such pliability that allowed them to navigate the volatile political conditions and eventually dominated the evangelical narratives today. As far as mortals are concerned, these Reformers who changed history, deserve plenty of respect but not adulation, and certainly not blind or biased devotion, as some may be tempted to do so. One should do well to keep this caution in mind in any ongoing ecumenical conversation to avoid contemptuous confessionalism bias.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Seminal works such as Williams (1992) and Eire (2016) have been utilised to lay the groundwork for this investigation. It is ascertained that the political landscapes of the 16th-century Europe were as complicated as they were fluid (Morris 2002). At the same time, Wuthnow (1985) as well as Lowe and Lowe (2013) assert the inevitability of external influences on an individual's theological convictions. As such, books and journals have been searched to identify each Reformer's political contexts and associations to reveal any theological modifications. Careful assessment is also considered for confessional bias, for example Curley (2003) who is quick to defend Calvin, while Rives (2008) indicts him. Gordon (2009:220-223) clearly declares that Calvin did not want Servetus executed, yet quotes Calvin's letter which seemingly states exactly the opposite. Knox proves to be even more controversial, with MacGregor (1960:13) heaping adulations, while Gannon (1930:319) compares him to Lenin. Therefore, this study utilises plenty of available primary sources like Laing ([1558] 1841), as well as Calvin and Bonnet ([1564]

1980), both online and in print, to unbiasedly dissect the theological evolutions of the Reformers against the background of their political experiences.

While there are plenty of books and journals detailing the Reformers' theologies or histories, seldom are their theological alterations examined against any given political stress. Through the investigation of primary sources, this study endeavours to re-examine the nuances of the Reformers' theological variations in light of their political expediencies. This is important, as it provides insights into the study of some of the esteemed founders of various confessions without succumbing to any shackled loyalty, and at the same time, it frees ongoing ecumenical discourses of *faux* constraints.

7.3 SUMMARY OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

With the help of the historical research methodology, rich historical data were used to portray the Reformation against its political backdrop. Document Analysis was used to ascertain the interconnectivity between the Reformers' theological leanings and their respective political surroundings. Care was also taken to avoid potential bias in the data, and inconsistencies or errors were called to attention in this study.

7.4 RESEARCH RESULTS

This section summarises the answer to the main research question: *How did the 16th-century political context influence the theology of the Reformers?* It is important to first approach this question through the related sub-questions. The answers to the latter would lead to the conclusions in the main research question.

7.4.1 The Political Contexts in which the Reformers Lived and Worked

According to the doctrine of *cuius regio, eius religio*, the Reformers who operated under the magistrates that were not beholden to the Catholic authority, often had much more freedom to prosecute their Reforms. Some of the German princes and the independent-minded Swiss cantons allowed themselves to form advantageous symbiotic relationships with their local Magisterial Reformers. However, the non-Magisterial Reformers,

particularly the Anabaptists, found themselves everywhere persecuted by the established political authorities for espousing radical and sectarian ideologies.

7.4.2 The Major Reformers and Their Political Associations

The Magisterial Reformers, including Luther collaborated with the German princes who wanted to be free of Charles V, whereas both Zwingli and Calvin worked with the anti-clerical city magistrates of the Swiss cantons. Apart from the continental European Reformers, both Cromwell and Cranmer of England served under King Henry VIII who wished to be free of the old church. Knox became the spiritual leader of the political faction known as the Lords of the Congregation, struggling for the independence of Scotland. While the chiliastic branches of the Anabaptism may have allied themselves politically with the peasants to launch political struggles for control, the majority of the Anabaptists chose to disengage themselves from the state.

7.4.3 The Theological Changes or Shifts that the Reformers Underwent as a Result of their Political Contexts and Affiliations

The study has demonstrated that all the Magisterial Reformers had undergone theological transformations, or at least had adapted their theological stances as a result of their political contexts and affiliations. The geopolitical dynamics between the holy Roman Empire, the papal state, the German princes, the English monarchs, France, and even the Ottoman Turks inevitably influenced the theological bearings of the Magisterial Reformers. Their relationships and even loyalties to their magisterial patrons also contributed to these Magisterial Reformers' theological restyles. Doctrinal positions such as a tolerance with divorce, usury, the Eucharist, baptism, or heterodoxy often witnessed such theological modifications. On the other hand, the Anabaptists remained largely unchanged under political pressure.

7.4.4 Main Research Question: How Did the 16th-Century Political Context Influence the Theology of the Reformers?

The research that focussed on the sub-questions above has brought the investigation to a point where the main question can now be answered. It can be concluded that the

Magisterial Reformers, namely Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Cromwell, Cranmer, and Knox all succumbed to external political pressures and exhibited various degrees of theological oscillation. From complete capitulations of their theological positions, as in the case of Cromwell and Cranmer, the rest of the Magisterial Reformers modified their teachings for political expediencies. The only Reformers of the 16th century that did not yield to any political sways were the Anabaptists, who often paid for such inflexibilities with their lives.

7.5 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.5.1 Discussions

While it is impossible to delineate a clearly defined typology for the Reformers in this study, the classification along the line of their dependency on magistrates has been quite convenient, but inadequate. This study reveals the axiom that political powers underpinned the motives of the early Reformers. As such, a further investigation to explore the possible re-classification of the 16th-century European Reformers could be warranted. This study further proposes two major categories along the political axis. On the political side, there are the *political strategists*, and on the other side of the spectrum, there are the *biblical restorationists*. While the former group strategises through political powers to bring about the righteous church, the latter chooses to restore the pure church through the patterns in the New Testament.

7.5.2 Political Strategists

This study has demonstrated that the major Reformers who have influenced the historiography of the Reformation were some of the best *political theologists* of their time. Scholars in the last century have re-examined and revised their assessment of many of these theologists, and have identified some of the more famous Reformers with their political aspirations. For example, Calvin has been called the “arch-inquisitor” and “*le pape de Genève*” (O’Malley 1953:378), and “Calvinism is noted for being a decidedly political kind of Christianity” (Bolt 2000:205). Evidently, as the 16th-century scholarship advances, more reassessments of this nature on the myriads of Reformers will likely be

conducted and the conclusions will frame more debates on the Reformers against their political backdrops.

For the sake of this study's extended argument and discussion, it is assumed that the *political strategists* intuitively allied with leverageable political forces through a calculated understanding of a given political climate to achieve their goals. In such a case, for the Magisterial Reformers, such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Cromwell, Cranmer, and Knox, the political forces that they tended to amalgamate with were the princes and the city magistrates. However, in the case of the apocalyptic spiritualists like Müntzer and Hofmann's followers, they joined forces with the proletarian class, who when mobilised, could also be a formidable political force. To the demise of the spiritualists and their followers, the 16th-century Europe saw the princes and the city magistrates wielding much more overwhelming power. Therefore, in those particular cases, the symbiotic political forces that they formed did not help them to attain their goals, except to sacrifice their lives on the altar of revolution. Nevertheless, as far as the proposed typology is concerned, Müntzer and Hofmann, although designated as Anabaptists, could be better categorised as political theologists.

7.5.3 Biblical Restorationists

On the other side of the political spectrum, the *biblical restorationists* were determined to follow the pattern in the New Testament, where the early church lived under the suspicions of the Roman political system. Although the Roman authorities were ambivalent towards the Christians at the inception of Christianity, and only started their persecution after 64 CE under Nero (Croix 1963:6; Plescia 1971:127; Janssen 1979:131), it can be argued that in general the political authority of the time was definitively unsupportive of the young church. Yet, from the time of Jesus to the writings of the apostles, there was no precedence of the church ever being actively engaging in or in rebelling against the political authorities. The *modus operandi* of the early church was to stay out of the way of the magistrate while suffering through the latter's unjust treatment, even as Christ suffered under the religiopolitical amalgam of the High Priest and the Roman authority.

One can assume *a priori* that Christians were aloof towards political forces or even willingly suffered under them because of a collective strong eschatological hope and belief in the imminent *Parousia* (Dunbar 1983:313). Nevertheless, the aloof political stance of the 1st-century church might be understandable, but definitely not applicable, especially in the post-Constantine era. In any case, it is interesting to note that even during the 2nd century, when the church re-adjusted herself after "the non-fulfilment of the expectation of the Parousia" (Lake 1911:25), that there was still no evidence of any involvement between the church and the state. It seems that the teaching of Christ in Mark 12:17 (KJV) (cf. also Mt 22:21), "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and that which is of God unto God," had been kept faithful by the church well into the 2nd century. In fact, in the early 3rd century, both Origen and Tertullian kept to this demarcation, until Augustin's *Just war theories* appeared on the scene a century later (Howes 2013:429). It would be safe to conclude that some of the 16th-century Reformers, such as Grebel, Karlstadt, Sattler, Hübmaier, and the second-generation Anabaptist leaders, Marpeck and Simons, after realising how far the Catholic faith had deviated from the Scriptures, were resolved to restore the type of Christianity that they observed in the New Testament. Nevertheless, as the study has shown, their lack of political backing allowed them not only to restore their vision of a free church but also the same freedom in suffering as well.

7.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The Reformation was not a singular event, and as such, the scope of its study involves immense complexity. While most scholars have delved into the history and theologies of the early Reformers, this study has endeavoured to focus on the political context and relationships surrounding these Reformers, in order to delineate how their theologies might have been influenced. Therefore, the investigation focussed mainly on the first 50 years of the Reformation, which is from 1517 to about 1570, in both Europe and England. The entirety of each Reformer's theology was not considered, but only the tenets that had changed when external political pressures were applied. At the same time, not all Reformers were studied, but only those who demonstrated through sufficient data that they had direct political associations or experiencing geopolitical tensions. The

sample size is not meant to be exhaustive, but adequate to illustrate the compromising power of politics on the theologies of the 16th-century Europe.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The conclusion of this study can only be considered a hypothesis, as numerous nuanced details are requiring further investigation and research. The distinction between *political strategists* and *biblical restorationists*, or even *Magisterial Reformers* and *Radical Reformers*, were simply constructs being helpful to better understand the complexity that is known as the Reformation. Further proposals to differentiate the multitudes of Reformers could be beneficial in future.

While this study has investigated the interactions between the Reformers and their political counterparts, the individual relationships between the Reformers could be probed further, especially between the Magisterial Reformers and the myriads of non-Magisterial Reformers collectively labelled as Anabaptists. Except for Zwingli, who was a close mentor to Grebel, none of the Magisterial Reformers seemingly had any direct contact with Anabaptist leaders. Granted, the latter often did not survive long enough to engage with the Reformers, but one still wonders if there were not some of them who made the attempt.

Also, was there any theological modification between the first-generation Reformers and their second-generation torch-bearers, such as Melanchthon and Bullinger? If there were, was there any change in the political dynamics that necessitated such changes?

Indeed, there are plenty of intrigues and lessons to glean from further research, as history provides inexhaustible lessons for those who are willing to uncover it.

7.8 CONCLUSION

How did the 16th-century Reformers' political contexts influence their theological outcomes? This study has demonstrated that the early Reformers, just like everyone else, could hardly escape from the political forces that surrounded them. While some found

themselves forming symbiotic relationships with political elements, others chose to disengage from them. The former mostly thrived and enlarged their theological domains or enshrined their theological tenets when their symbiotic partners proved to be robust; some did not fare so well, as their political counterparts floundered. This study identified them to be *political theologists* that relied on political might to accomplish their agendas. On the other side of the theological spectrum of the Reformation is the *biblical restorationists*, who rejected political collaboration, and as such, were themselves rejected, but not before birthing the free church movement that continues to this day.

This analysis is important, in that a connection is made between sacred confessionalism and political interference of the 16th century. Not only the connections between the political dynamics were abundant in the case of the Magisterial Reformers, but the latter's theological tenets are also found to be amenable, depending on the strength of the political forces applied. As for the rest of the early Reformers, although there may be fewer data due to their lack of political leverages, the study found them less likely to be malleable when confronted with political coercion. This is not to say that they all rejected political partnerships, but the partnerships did not compromise these Reformers' theologies that much. To various degrees, the data analysis has shown the Reformers to have largely succumbed to these political pressures, resulting in the discount of either doctrines or longevity.

More importantly, this study has established that the foundational doctrinal positions of many confessions today could have been built on politically influenced dogma, and as such, it is important to avoid ingrained creeds that would hinder ecumenical dialogues. At any rate, the stories of the 16th-century Reformers, although complicated by their circumstances, should not be for one to follow indiscriminately, but serve as a reminder to each individual of their deficiencies, as humility empowers humanity to seek the unity that is in Christ Jesus.

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