

REFORMATION NOTES

News for Partners of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection
Spring 2001, Number 18

Images of faith

For about two years now, the Pitts Theology Library has been developing a web page that will provide the church and the academy access to a wealth of printed images from the mid-fifteenth century onward, all taken from the nearly 100,000 volumes in the library's rare-book collection. These images were

engraved on blocks of wood or pieces of metal, often based on sketches by premier artists of the day, and used to adorn title pages, signify the identity of the printer, or illustrate the text of a book. They are of varying quality, but

(continued on the next page)

The Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection is a repository of rare and valuable documents produced in connection with the Protestant Reformation. The collection now contains more than 2,500 pieces written by Martin Luther, his colleagues, and opponents and printed during their lifetimes.

Supported by the vision and resources of Lutheran laypeople Richard and Martha Kessler and partners throughout the Southeast, the collection is housed in the Pitts Theology Library of Candler School of Theology. It provides a rich resource for scholars of the Reformation and for clergy and laity who seek to understand the history of the Christian faith.

*For more information about the collection, contact:
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THE CREATION OF EVE, FROM THE ZURICH BIBLE (1536)

This woodcut is the first and largest of all illustrations in the 1536 printing of the *Zurich Bible*, a two-volume, folio Bible of more than 1,300 pages. It contains 200 woodcut illustrations of the biblical text and eighty woodcut initial letters, typically based on the sketches of Hans Holbein (1497/8–1543). Leo Jud, an associate of H. Zwingli, directed the production of what has been called the “most artistic and typographically significant printed Bible of the Reformation era.”

many represent the highest quality of the printer's art, having been engraved in fine detail and on the basis of beautiful designs. For more than 500 years, they have proclaimed the faith of those who produced them; and by means of electronic technology we hope to share those expressions of faith with the Christian community worldwide.

Dr. Richard Wright has directed the project and been assisted by Timothy Tucker and Margaret Peddle, also of the Pitts staff, and by library volunteer Ann Sargent. In addition, Professor Jonathan Strom was especially helpful in the selection of images from sixteenth-century materials and in suggesting ways that the project could best support teaching at Candler.

On the basis of all these contributions, digital reproductions of more than 1,000 engravings have been indexed and mounted on the Pitts server and made accessible at no charge via the World Wide Web for teaching, research, or other noncommercial purposes. It is our hope to increase that number of digital images into the thousands during the next several years and that they will prove useful not only to seminaries but also to ministers and others who teach Bible classes and design church bulletins and worship programs.

Anyone may access this database of images from the library's homepage at <www.pitts.emory.edu/> and search it by keyword or Scripture text, and images may be downloaded as JPEG or PDF files. (The JPEG file is fine for viewing on a computer monitor, but enlargement of details or printing is best done from the PDF.) The results of some sample searches are as follows:

"Jesus"	203 images
"Luther"	15
"angel"	106
"cross"	64
"temple"	35
"Moses"	53
"Mary"	60
"creation"	15
"disciples"	85
"Book of Revelation"	44

Approximately fifty images were taken from a 1477 German Bible, 200 from the famous *Zurich Bible* of 1536 (most of these engravings are based on the sketches of Hans Holbein, one of the greatest German artists of the sixteenth century), more than ninety illustrations (most of New Testament texts) from a 1563 printing of Luther's sermons for the church year, and more than fifty portraits of early Protestant reformers from a 1602 Dutch book.



THE APOSTLE JOHN

This is one of more than fifty woodcuts, most by Lucas Cranach the Elder, printed in *Hortulus animae* or *Lustgarten der Seelen* (Wittenberg, 1550).



THE APOSTLE PETER, *HORTULUS ANIMAE* (WITTENBERG, 1550)

The Apostle Peter, with key and book—typical attributes for one who heard Jesus's promise of the keys of the kingdom and is credited with writing two epistles in the New Testament—as he stands upon waves of the sea (Matt. 14:28–31).



MARTIN LUTHER, *HORTULUS ANIMAE* (WITTENBERG, 1550)



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Policy direction for the Reformation Collection is provided by a standing committee composed of representatives of Emory University and the local and national Lutheran community.

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“TAKE THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER AND FLEE TO EGYPT.”

An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and urges him to remove his family from Herod’s reach. From *Kercken Postilla* (Wittenberg, 1563), a Low German translation of a collection of Luther’s sermons for the church year on the Epistles and Gospels of the New Testament.



JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH

Taken from a folio Bible, printed in Augsburg in 1477, the artwork in this German translation of the Latin Vulgate is reminiscent of the miniatures in late-medieval manuscripts.

We encourage people to make use of this resource and send along to us suggestions not only for improving the web page but also for the sorts of images that you would like to see added in the future. In addition, we solicit your financial contributions to support the project. Names of project patrons are recorded electronically alongside the images that their donations support, at the rate of \$10 per image.

Inquiries about the project and its support should be directed to:

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FROM AN EARLY STAGE IN THE REFORMATION, GERMAN PROTESTANTS—ESPECIALLY THOSE INFLUENCED BY LUTHER—BEGAN TO EMPLOY THE REPRESENTATIONAL ARTS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THEIR POLEMICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL GOALS. IMAGES PRINTED FROM WOOD BLOCKS OFFERED AN ESPECIALLY SERVICEABLE MEDIUM OWING TO THEIR LOW COST AND CAPACITY FOR LARGE-SCALE REPRODUCTION. ENORMOUS NUMBERS OF THESE INEXPENSIVE WOODCUTS CIRCULATED THROUGHOUT EUROPE. SINCE THEIR USE AND ENJOYMENT DID NOT REQUIRE LITERACY, IT SAFELY MAY BE ASSUMED THAT THESE VISUAL MATERIALS APPEALED TO AN AUDIENCE COVERING A MUCH WIDER SOCIAL SPECTRUM THAN WAS THE CASE WITH WRITTEN TEXTS.

See Carl C. Christensen, "Art," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: OUP, 1996) vol. 1, p. 75.



DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

From Jacob Verheiden's *Praestantium aliquot theologorum* (The Hague, 1602), which presents nearly fifty large engravings of notable reformers, including Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Johann Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Casper Cruciger, M. Flaccius Illyricus, and Sebastian Munster.



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