

**“There are Many Brothers but Few Friends”: Damasus Dürr’s Response
to the Rise of Confessions in 16th Century Transylvania**

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Introduction

In the city of Torda, Transylvania became one of the first states in Europe to grant legal religious freedom to its subjects. In 1568, Prince Johann Sigismund Zapolya signed the Edict of Torda in 1571 which recognized Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Unitarianism as official religions in Transylvania. The Edict is praised today as a landmark achievement of religious tolerance during an era of religious violence and persecution. However, its creation had implications for Lutheran pastors who saw the edict as a state-sanctioned endorsement of religious groups that the Lutheran churches simply could not include into their congregations. While the state wanted to tolerate, the Lutheran church wanted to exclude

Living in the small village of Kleinpold, forty kilometers from the city of Sibiu, the pastor Damasus Dürr commented on the new religious groups that were forming around him. As a Lutheran pastor, Dürr used his sermons to malign these religious groups so that his congregation would remain Lutheran. When the first major Transylvanian reformer, Johannes Honterus, began to enact Luther's reforms in the 1540s, intended to create an inclusive Saxon Lutheran church was and who could belong in the church. Two decades

later, Damasus Dürr preached no a strict understanding of who belonged to the Lutheran church and took pains to explain who did not. In my thesis, I will argue that the Transylvanian Saxon churches did not begin to identify themselves as truly Lutheran until they had to respond to confessional diversification. They responded to this diversification through maintaining local church traditions while imbibing the activities of the church with Lutheran doctrine. I will support this claim by establishing these points:

First, when Johannes Honterus enacted church reforms in Transylvania in the 1540s, he implemented and incorporated select ideas and beliefs from Martin Luther rather than create a widespread reformation. As most Saxons were still Catholics, Honterus wanted this “evangelical” church to keep traditional ceremonies while embracing Lutheran ideas so that other Saxon pastors and laity would accept these church reforms. By using the sermons of Damasus Dürr, I will show that the evangelical church became Lutheran in the next forty years and went from being inclusive and theologically mixed to becoming moderate, traditional, and defensive. The Saxon Lutheran churches no longer attempted to be inclusive but were hostile to contrary Protestant beliefs because of internal divisions among “Lutherans,” the influx of Calvinists and Antitrinitarians into Transylvania, social, and political unrest. Lastly, stories of injustice, martyrdom, and persecution that afflicted evangelicals allowed pastors to create unity in their congregation in their shared identity as suffering, evangelical martyrs who were surrounded on all sides by heathens, heretics, and unbelievers. The evidence I am using to support these points are a collection of thirteen sermons given and written down by Damasus Dürr and through three of the founding documents of the Saxon Lutheran reformation written by Johannes Honterus.

Political and Ethnic Background

During the Middle Ages, the Kingdom of Hungary ruled the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious territory of Transylvania. Historian Istvan Keul explains that during the 12th century, ethnic Germans were encouraged to settle at the borders of the kingdom in order to defend Hungary against invaders. These so-called Transylvanian Saxons became one of the politically influential groups in Transylvania, settling in many cities and villages.¹ Over the next two centuries, the Saxons thrived as Hungary transformed economically.

Geographically centered at the crossroads of eastern and western trade routes, Hungary's cities began to become heavily trade oriented. Goods were not the only thing that came from Eastern and Western Europe; ideas spread as well. Kronstadt (Brasov), Clausenburg (Cluj), and Hermannstadt (Sibiu) became urban centers that would later emerge as centers of the Reformation.²

The ethnic diversity of the region influenced how the Reformation spread through Transylvania. During the 13th and 14th centuries, the Hungarians, Szeklers,³ and Saxons were given political and religious rights and privileges as the three "nationes" of Transylvania by the King of Hungary. These groups had control over their own churches and communities so long as they were loyal to the King of Hungary. The Romanians, on the other hand, were second-class citizens within Transylvania who did not have the same political and religious privileges as the other three nations. During the Middle Ages, these three nations embraced

¹ Istvan Keul, *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe Ethnic Diversity, Denominational Plurality, and Corporative Politics in the Principality of Transylvania, 1526-1691*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 17-25.

² Keul, 41-45.

³ The Szeklers were an ethnic group similar to the Hungarians who spoke a dialect of Magyar.

Catholicism while the ethnic Romanians adhered to the Orthodox Church.⁴ In this diverse milieu, Saxons became a dominant nation within Hungary.

However, in the 14th century, the Ottomans began to pose a threat to the kingdom of Hungary. For almost two centuries, the Hungarians had rebuffed the Turks. By the early 16th century, the Hungarian monarchy became unstable, as the kings were unable to muster enough troops to defeat Ottoman forays. In 1526, the Hungarians under the young king Louis II (reigned 1516-1526), fought the army of Suleiman the Magnificent near the town of Mohacs. The Ottomans defeated Hungarians and King Louis II died during the battle. Seizing his opportunity of King Louis II's brother-in-law, Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand declared that he was the rightful King of Hungary. However, the Ottoman Suleiman also claimed the kingdom of Hungary by right of conquest. Adding to the confusion, many Hungarian nobles supported the Voivode Jan Zapolya of Transylvania's claim to the throne. Sultan Suleiman backed Jan Zapolya's claim in return for Transylvania becoming a vassal state under Ottoman protection. The Habsburgs seized the rest of Hungary but for the next three decades, the Habsburgs and Ottomans vied for control over Transylvania.⁵ The political turmoil caused by the conquest played a significant role in allowing the rapid spread of the Reformation in Transylvania.

Until the battle of Mohacs in 1526, the Catholic Church had a strong presence in Transylvania. Throughout the previous three hundred years, the autonomy and power of the Catholic Church grew and the See of Esztergom, which presided over the churches in

⁴ Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 146-147.

⁵ Alexander Sándor Unghváry, *The Hungarian Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century under the Ottoman impact: essays and profiles*, (Lewiston, New York, USA: E. Mellen Press. 1989), 46-50.

Transylvania, was one of the most lucrative positions in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁶ Religious orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans settled in Saxon cities during the 14th and 15th centuries.⁷ In the decades leading up to the beginning of the Reformation, the church was brimming with activity as bishops in Transylvania called several synods to discuss matters such as sermons and other reforms to church services.⁸ After the Battle of Mohacs, the Catholic churches in Hungary and Transylvania had less support from the Vatican to face issues such as declining attendance at mass, assaults on clerics, and the spread of the “Lutheran heresy.” Transylvanian clerics pleaded for help from the Archbishop of Esztergom to little avail. Lutheran ideas began to spread among the clergy with little resistance. Adding to this, Jan Zapolya, the Voivode of Transylvania was excommunicated in 1529 for allying himself with the Ottomans. Zapolya became reluctant to quash the spread of Luther’s ideas.⁹ Luther’s ideas were attractive to pastors as they provided pastors a sense of independence from the Vatican and advocated church reforms that mirrored the reforms that had taken place in Transylvanian churches in the centuries prior to the Reformation. Thus, there was an impetus for Saxon churches to adopt Luther’s ideas.

Meanwhile, the court of the Voivode in Alba Iulia experienced a high amount of political tension. After the death of Jan Zapolya in 1540, Giorgio Martinuzzi, the bishop who administered the Honterus’ church, began to push his policies on the court of his son Johann Sigismund (reigned 1540-1571). Queen Isabella, the wife of Jan Zapolya, served as regent and tried to keep the court aligned with other interests. Factions grew around Queen Isabella

⁶ Keul, 26-27.

⁷ Krista Zach, *Konfessionelle Pluralität, Stände und Nation*, eds. Joachim Bahlcke and Konrad Gündisch (LIT Verlag: Münster, 2004), 184.

⁸ Ulrich A. Wien, “Raumbezüge reformatorischer Predigt am Beispiel des Kleinpolder Pfarrers Damasus Dürr,” in *Formierungen des konfessionellen Raumes in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Evelin Wetter (Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart, 2008), 79.

⁹ Keul, 49-54.

and Giorgio Martinuzzi that led to political instability throughout the 1540s and 1550s. As Transylvania was a semi-autonomous territory of the Ottomans, Transylvania allowed some measure of religious tolerance as opposed to the Catholic Habsburgs who supported the Catholic Reformation. When the Catholic Habsburgs sought to reclaim Transylvania during the 1550s, Johann Sigismund was forced to flee Transylvania for five years. He returned to Transylvania in 1556 to rule. During this time, he was influenced to first convert to Calvinism and then to Unitarianism. When Johann Sigismund died in 1571, the Bathory family and Stephen Bathory (reigned 1571-1586) became the voivode and then Prince of Transylvania.¹⁰ It is in the backdrop of this political environment that the Saxon churches began to consider how to improve their organization.

Although Martin Luther's ideas started to come to the Transylvanian Saxons around 1518, it would not be until the 1540s when the Saxon cities began to discuss the implementation of Luther's ideas. Saxon cities held numerous debates considering although they faced major opposition during the 1520s and 1530s from Catholic priests. The second largest community of Transylvanian Saxons, Kronstadt, paved the way for the evangelical Reformation and its spread through the region. The cosmographer and humanist Johannes Honterus (1498-1549) dedicated himself to reforming the church and schools of Kronstadt.¹¹ From 1540 until 1549, Honterus put Luther's ideas into practice through composing a manual and an ordinance on church reforms.

¹⁰ Stephan Sienerth, "Ein beherzter lutherischer Prediger: Damasus Dürr." In *Die deutsche Literatur Siebenbürgens: von den Anfängen bis 1848*, eds. Joachim Wittstock and Stefan Sienerth (Munich: Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1997), 42-43.

¹¹ Keul, 57.

Between 1545 and 1578, several synods and disputations took place among evangelical pastors that compelled the Saxon church to take up Lutheran ideas with greater fervor. Ludwig Binder argued through his account of the first three decades of the evangelical Saxon church of Transylvania that the first evangelical pastors wanted to create a sense of conformity within their different congregations. This was a trial period where pastors experimented with Lutheran ideas and beliefs and tried to apply them to their own congregations. With the pressure of the voivodes of Transylvania, Saxon pastors began to clarify what evangelicals believed.¹² The first issue the young church needed to resolve was its stance on the Augsburg Confession. In 1530, the Augsburg Confession, which was written primarily by Philipp Melancthon, was intended to clarify the beliefs of Lutherans to Emperor Charles V. Yet as theological differences among “Protestants” grew, Melancthon wanted to revise the Augsburg Confession so that it became more inclusive to other Christians, much to the chagrin of many evangelicals who despised the revisions as it allowed people to interpret the Eucharist as symbolic. Many Lutheran churches in Germany rejected the document completely. Both Hungarian and Saxon pastors discussed the *Confessio Variata* at the Synod of Erdöd in 1545. As Binder argues, the words they adopted came from the “Variata”, as it allowed for greater freedom of interpretation, but the meaning came to justify the more orthodox version or “Invariata”. Whether the Saxon churches wanted the Variata or the Invariata, the subsequent actions of the Saxon church showed hostility of the Eucharist being considered only symbolic.¹³ At the same time, as Hungarians began to be attracted to Calvin’s ideas while Saxons increasingly dominated the ever-

¹² Ludwig Binder, "Theologie Und Bekenntnis Auf Synoden Der Evange. - Sächsischen Kirche 1545-1578," In *Reformation, Pietismus, Spiritualität: Beiträge Zur Siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Ulrich Wien. (Köln: Böhlau GmbH, 2011), 38-46.

¹³ Ibid, 50-56.

changing evangelical church. In 1555, one synod decided to keep traditional Catholic ceremonies although they were infused with new evangelical meaning. At the Synod of Hermannstadt in 1557, the Saxons began to discuss heretical groups in Transylvania.¹⁴ For the Saxon pastors, straying away from the Lutheran interpretation of the Trinity or the Eucharist meant heresy. In the same year, a synod in Klausenburg showed significant differences between Lutheran bishop Matthias Hebler and Pastor Franz David. The conflict between David and the Lutheran church sparked a decades-long conflict between Lutherans, Calvinists, and Antitrinitarians. David would eventually become a supporter of Calvinism and the Antitrinitarianism that ultimately divided the Saxon community.

The influx of Calvinist and Antitrinitarian ideas weighed heavily on the minds of Lutheran pastors. In the town of Klausenburg, the largest Saxon community in Transylvania, two major pastors of the city named Kaspar Helth and Franz David began to question Lutheran theology on baptism and the existence of the Trinity. The 1560s and 1570s saw increasing clashes between Lutheran bishops such as Paul Wiener and Matthias Hebler in Hermannstadt with the Klausenburg pastors that caused the Saxon churches to adopt stronger and stricter Lutheran language. Hebler wrote the *Brevis Confessio* in 1561 that declared that all evangelical pastors would hold to the same articles of belief as other Lutherans.¹⁵ However, neither Helth nor David accepted the *Brevis Confessio* and the Saxons divided by the now Calvinist David. Helth and David initially adopted the ideas of Calvinists during the 1560s and then became Antitrinitarians in 1569. At the behest of his court chaplain Franz David, Prince Johann Sigismund had converted from Catholicism to Calvinism in 1562. He held an open and tolerant court and Franz David eventually pushed him to adopt an

¹⁴ Ibid, 57-59.

¹⁵ Ibid, 60-63.

Antitrinitarian. In 1571, David had gone so far as to influence the Prince to issue the Edict of Torda that recognized Lutherans, Unitarians, and Calvinists as legitimate Christian religions. However, these political and social changes radically changed the attitude of the evangelical pastors. Not only was it possible for evangelical pastors to be estranged from their church, they could also push towns and political leaders to embrace “heretical” or non-Lutheran doctrines.¹⁶ After Zapolya’s death in 1571, Stephen Bathory urged the Saxon church to accept the unedited *Confessio Invariata* and to help him fight against a common enemy: the Unitarians.¹⁷ At the Synod of Mediasch in 1572, the evangelical church adopted the Augsburg Confession and began to actively suppress Franz David and other Unitarians.¹⁸ Bathory eventually imprisoned David and the Unitarian church went into the background of Transylvanian life. Although this was not the last synod of the Lutheran church, the Saxons were now permanently connected to an ethnically and theologically exclusive Lutheran church.

Damasus Dürr

It was in the midst of this religious turmoil that Damasus Dürr came to find his calling. He was born in 1535 in Brenndorf in Transylvania. His family was wealthy enough to fund his education at Honterus’ Gymnasium in Kronstadt and there are records that show he attended the school from 1553 to 1557. He went on to study theology and natural sciences under Melancthon at the University of Wittenberg from 1558 to 1560 where Dürr was ordained there in 1559. Afterwards, he went to Hermannstadt and served as a pastor under the Lutheran bishop Matthias Hebler from 1560 and 1569. In 1570, he moved to the small

¹⁶ Istvan Toth, "Old and New Faith in Hungary, Turkish Hungary, and Transylvania," In *A companion to the Reformation world*, ed. Po Hsia. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004), 215-216.

¹⁷ Binder, 38-41.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 45-47.

village Kleinpold that had only around 150 people lived. He would serve his parishioners in Kleinpold for the next 15 years until his death in 1585. Throughout his career, he experienced many personal tragedies. He outlived two of his wives and many of his children. Most tragically, in 1573 plague hit Kleinpold that killed much of the population as well as his second wife.¹⁹ As many of the sermons date from when he was preaching Kleinpold, these personal tragedies along with the social and political unrest shaped the tone and severity of many of Dürr's sermons. Additionally, the transformation of the Saxon churches affected Dürr's sermons and critiques of other religious groups.²⁰ The general uncertainty of the era, the endemic conflicts between the Transylvanian nobility, Ottomans and Hapsburgs, and epidemics loosened the religious moral standards and regulations and forced Dürr to exhort his congregation towards the Lutheran church from the pulpit.

The sermons of Damasus Dürr are one of the few surviving collections that demonstrate how the Lutheran confessional identity evolved in rural Transylvania. In his explanation of how Dürr's sermons came to be, Stephan Sienerth explains Dürr wrote his sermons down which were compiled into two large volumes with about a total 1120 pages. After Dürr's death in 1585, the sermons stayed in the family for the next century until they were given to the Hermannstadt Kappellbibliothek. For the next two centuries, the sermons remained unnoticed until they moved to the Hermannstadt Archiv where writer Albert Amlacher found them. During the 1880s, Amlacher was interested in the collection as the documents represented some of the first Transylvanian texts written in "teusch" or German rather than Latin. In the next four decades, historians such as Oskar Wittstock, Friedrich Schuller and Ludwig Klaster wrote on the religious significance of Dürr's sermons. As Lutheran scholars,

¹⁹ Sienerth, 189-190.

²⁰ Ibid., 191-193.

they focused on Dürer's sermons and their importance for building the Lutheran confession in Transylvania. During the 1930s, Ludwig Klaster began the process of compiling and printing Dürer's sermons so that others could study them. However, World War II prevented Klaster from publishing more than thirteen sermons in 1939. These sermons constitute ca. 25% of the original 1120 pages. Keeping with Dürer's thematic organization, Klaster organized these sermons from the first week of advent until Epiphany. For the next six decades, there was hardly any mention of Dürer or Lutheran church history as the Communist regime in Romania prevented any more publication from the Transylvanian Saxons.²¹ Compounding this, after three hundred years, only the first volume of sermons survives. The first volume of sermons is still in the Hermannstadt Archiv and Doctors Martin Amgart and Ulrich Wien at the University of Koblenz-Landau in Germany are currently digitizing the collection.

The historiography of the Reformation in Transylvania divides between primarily Hungarian, Romanian, and German historians. The German historians who were originally just Transylvanian Saxons who wished to gain a better grasp of their own history, has expanded throughout the German world. In the 20th century, an era of critical studies on the Saxon reformers began. There were marked denominational differences between the various historians, they were either looking with Calvinist, Lutheran or Catholic understandings. As a result, religious affiliations color their accounts.²² It is only during the last three decades that historians have begun to tackle the confessional divide and argue the documents of the Saxon reformation in a comprehensive manner. Language defines some of the boundaries within the

²¹ Sienerth, 192-195.

²² Ulrich A. Wien, "'Sis bonus atque humilis, sic te virtusque Deusque Tollet in excelsum, constituetque locum.'" Die humanistische Reformation im siebenbürgischen Kronstadt: Johannes Honterus und Valentin Wagner," In *Deutschland und Ungarn in ihren Bildungs- und Wissenschaftsbeziehungen während der Renaissance*.(Stuttgart: Frank Steiner Verlag, 2004), 136-137.

field as German and Magyar texts dominate discussions of the Transylvanian Saxons and their beliefs. The secondary scholarship on Lutheranism in Transylvania falls into two distinct periods. From 1930 to 1950, theologians and historians wrestled with the question of why Calvinism won out in much of Transylvania over Lutheranism. This research focused primarily on theological issues found in Melancthon's and Calvin's works. However, research emerged after this period that centered on understanding the lived experience of Protestantism within this ethnically, politically and religiously diverse world.²³ The major source of this research has come from Siebenbürgisches Institut (Transylvanian Institute) which has published a journal series called the Siebenbürgisches Archiv for several decades. In the pages of these journals, several historians such as Krista Zachs and Ulrich Wien dominate the new research. The research also continues with more and more modern journals containing articles about the Reformation in Transylvania. In recent years, Authors such as Ulrich Wien, Evelin Wetter, and Maria Crăciun have focused on themes such as Dürer's insistence of the preservation of church traditions and polemical language against Unitarians.²⁴ My thesis delves specifically into the strategies Dürer used to create community. Rather than just focusing on the messages of his sermons, I am analyzing the sermons in the context of Honterus and new religious groups. Both play an important part in shaping Dürer's sermons and his polemical tone. Furthermore, I focus on the arguments he made and what influences he had.

²³ Ludwig Binder, "Forschungsergebnisse zur Reformationsgeschichte." Vol. 19. (Munich: Siebenbürgisches Archiv, 1985), 113.

²⁴ For an essay that discusses Dürer's opinion on the use of confessional space, Maria Crăciun's article provides some insight into his process.

Crăciun, Maria. "The Construction of Sacred Space of the Confessional Identity of the Transylvanian Lutheran Community," In *Formierungen des konfessionellen Raumes in Ostmitteleuropa*, Edited by Evelin Wetter, 97-124. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008.

Damasus Dürr's sermons present many limitations. Since these sermons were published after he had given them, there is no definitive way to show what he actually said when he delivered these sermons. The sermons serve as a source to show the perspectives he wanted to teach his parish. We do not know when he gave the sermons unless he wrote down that dates. Additionally, these sermons were usually written for certain occasions where there may have referred to specific events that would only make sense to readers who lived in Kleinpold at the time. These limitations present different challenges for interpreting what the sermons are like.

Structure

In Chapter I, I will argue that the first major Saxon reformer, Johannes Honterus, methodically created a system of reforms that incorporated some of the ideas of Martin Luther while couching these reforms in language that avoided a direct break with the Catholic Church. I will examine Honterus' reforms through the *Reformationsbüchlein*, "die Apologie" and *Kirchenordnung aller Deutschen im Sybembürgen* to make this argument. I will show the problems Honterus claimed to be confronting in Kronstadt, the solutions that were both Lutheran meaning and held to Transylvanian traditions, and the justifications he used to ensure the success of these reforms. In so doing, Honterus hoped to create an evangelical church that implemented Luther's reforms in a way that was moderate for both the Transylvanian laity and nobility.

In Chapter II, I will turn to Damasus Dürr's sermons. I will argue that these texts reflect a change in the history of the evangelical church in Transylvania. Dürr presented the clergy as martyrs who were obligated to keep the laity from joining other congregations or adopting beliefs, he considered not part of Lutheranism. Dürr focused on educating the laity on

theological concepts through analyzing both the enemies within the church and those outside of it. By polemicizing these new religious groups, Dürr was able to create boundaries that demarcated what Lutherans should not believe and what they should believe. By mentioning non-Christian groups such as the “Turks” and “Tatars,” Dürr hoped to encourage the laity to avoid damnation. Through these textual strategies, Dürr hoped to persuade his congregation to stay Lutheran.

In Chapter III, I will argue that Damasus Dürr used accounts of persecution taking place inside and outside of Transylvania, biblical accounts of suffering, and his Lutheran education to draw his congregation together. Dürr sought to explain why persecution, be it religious or otherwise, happened to Lutherans. He polemicized secular rulers in an abstract manner and allowed the readers to come to their own conclusions about whom he wrote. Dürr demonstrated that pastors played an important role not only as shepherds of their congregation but also as influencers of rulers. This in turn allowed him to analyze pastors who used their influence to lead their princes astray, particularly Unitarian Franz David who served as the court chaplain to Johann Sigismund Zapolya. Dürr sought to create a common link between the Christians suffering through religious persecution and the Kleinpolders suffering from plague and famine. Dürr intended the theme of suffering to connect suffering Lutherans experienced throughout Europe and show the inclusiveness of the Lutheran church. In these ways, Dürr build a congregation that was inclusive to other Lutherans through showing the strength and sacrifices of the Lutheran church in the face of persecution and suffering.

Terminology

The terminology I use here is influenced by German historiography and sources. For example, I contend that there were two different phases to implementing the Lutheran reformation. The first phase, led by Honterus, mixed Lutheran and Catholic theology and these “evangelicals” were not entirely comfortable with separating from the Catholic Church. The second phase, typified by Dürr, had a more concrete understanding of what the Lutheran church stood for. I contend that Lutherans also did not begin to consider themselves as such until they had to face new religious groups such as the Calvinists and Unitarians. This is not to say that the version of Lutheranism Dürr asserted was the same as that in Germany. In his sermons, Dürr referred to the ‘Lutrischen’ only once. Dürr instead used terms such as “evangelisch” to describe himself. Confession or confessional groups are terms that I use throughout the essay to point to different religious ideas and practices. Confession refers to the founding documents of various religious groups that helped articulate the positions these religious groups took. Confessional groups were the religious entities that adopted these confessions although they had not necessarily defined themselves during the 16th century. For examples, the Calvinists and Unitarians were still developing through the 1570s and they would not necessarily identify themselves as Calvinists and Unitarians until much later in Transylvania. By the 1570s, the Lutherans had formed their own religious group and had a solid identity. The names of specific religious groups vary through sources. For examples, Calvinists were not usually referred to as Calvinists during the 16th century but as “reformed” and occasionally “evangelical-reformed”. This can sometimes make it difficult to distinguish them from evangelicals who embraced Lutheran ideas. Unitarians were another group that seemed to have gone by many names. The German historiography referred to Unitarians as Antitrinitarians. The historiography tends to lend itself to using both terms to describe these

groups and I too refer to Antitrinitarians and Unitarians as referring to the same group of believers. The boundaries between these religious groups were fluid during much of the 16th century even after Dürr's death in 1585. However, Dürr demarcated the boundaries between Unitarians, Calvinists, and Evangelical Lutherans and I will try to show how confessions emerged in the course of my thesis.

Chapter I: Putting Reform into Practice: Honterus' "Evangelical" Reformation

As the voivodes of Transylvania sought to maintain regional autonomy and address political instability, Transylvanian Saxon communities began to address the disorganization of their churches with radical new solutions from Wittenberg. Through the works of Johannes Honterus, one of the early Transylvanian evangelical reformers, Saxon communities began to implement some of Luther's ideas of reform into their own church as an experiment. Honterus was in a challenging position. While the Catholic Zapolyas ruled Transylvania, Honterus understood that he would alienate them by embracing Luther's ideas of reformation too quickly. On the other hand, Honterus knew that implementing reforms throughout the Saxon churches would be difficult as there would be resistance from the laity to changing traditional ceremonies. Wedged between these two scenarios, Honterus planned his reforms to address these situations.

In this chapter, I will argue that Honterus methodically created a system of reforms that incorporated ideas of Martin Luther while couching these reforms in a language that allowed

for maintaining unity with the Catholic Church. I will examine Honterus' reforms through the *Reformationsbüchlein*, "die Apologie" and *Kirchenordnung aller Deutschen im Sybembürgen* to make this argument. First, I will show the problems Honterus claimed to be confronting in Kronstadt that were (or so he argued) the result of a lack of oversight from the Catholic Church. The solutions Honterus proposed aligned his reforms with the "evangelical" church of Wittenberg while showing that these reforms were in fact reinstitutions of previous church practices, a re-formation, or a return to the standards once introduced in the early church. All the while, Honterus sought to cement a certain standard of uniformity among the churches in the region and that the town councils would hold power over these churches. Afterwards, Honterus legitimized these reforms by accusing the Catholic Church of inaction and he claimed that he was loyal the political nobility of Transylvania. In so doing, Honterus hoped to create an evangelical church that implemented Luther's reforms that was moderate for clergy to enact, for laity to be accustomed to and for rulers to tolerate as Catholics.

During the 1530s and 1540s, the major Saxon towns of Transylvania began to respond to the concerns expressed in Luther's writings. Pastors and members of town councils were open to the reforms Luther pioneered but exercised restraint. Kronstadt became the first Saxon city to spread and implement Luther's ideas on church and clergy reform into practice. As the second largest Transylvanian Saxon community, Kronstadt influenced the churches of the Bärzenland.²⁵ For years, the town council was reluctant to enact any of Luther's clerical reform, as there were still council members who were resistant to Luther. The Kronstadt town council saw the need for church reform as they could properly serve the laity and they could take control of religious institutions within their walls. By 1541, the town council of

²⁵ The southeastern portion of Transylvania

Kronstadt was unanimously pro-Wittenberg and the reformer leading the reform effort was a member of the town council named Johannes Honterus. Eight years prior, Honterus had arrived back in his hometown from his studies in Krakow and Basel so that he could begin reforming the town's schools.²⁶ Now, the humanist was dedicated to improving the education of not only the laity but also the clergy. The town council decided that Honterus was the perfect person to enact Luther's understanding of clerical reform and thus the council put Honterus in charge of writing the main documents explaining Kronstadt's reforms.

The *Reformationsbüchlein*, "die Apologie," and the *Kirchenordnung* provided models of how to carry out these reforms Kronstadt's church reforms. In 1543, Johannes Honterus wrote the *Reformationsbüchlein* or *Die Reformation der Kronstädter Kirche und des ganzen Bürzenlandes*.²⁷ The town commissioned this manual to describe and explicate the first efforts church reforms. This manual was circulated among the pastors of the region so that they would have a guide for their own reforming policies.²⁸ The policies Honterus hoped to enact were rooted primarily in improving the quality of the clergy, the structure of the service and better management of the churches. These reforms came not just from Luther's ideas of clerical reforms but responded to Transylvanian ecclesiastical issues. As Queen Isabella, the regent for Johann Sigismund, had concerns that this document would undermine her authority, Honterus wrote a letter to her known as the "Apologie" which was sent with the *Reformationsbüchlein* the following year. The "Apologie" was a defense of the manual Honterus wrote to Queen Isabella to explain the motives behind these reforms. The Wittenberg reformers praised Honterus for his *Reformationsbüchlein* and gave their approval

²⁶ Keul, 57-65.

²⁷ The Reformation of the Church of Kronstadt and the entire Bürzenland

²⁸ Keul, 65.

to press on with reforms. Queen Isabella never responded to the manual or its defense but she did not hinder the reforms either.²⁹ Four years later, Honterus affirmed the new practices and reforms of the churches and published the *Kirchenordnung aller Deutschen im Sybembürgen* that served as the official ordinance for all Saxon churches to begin their own reforms.³⁰

Although Honterus was not the main writer of the *Kirchenordnung*, many of Honterus' ideas from the *Reformationsbüchlein* were reiterated. The ordinance described how the clergy needed to reform their practices. It offered an official review of the bad practices of the Saxon churches prior to these reform efforts, solutions to said practices and justification for the reforms.³¹ Through these different documents, Honterus launched a system of reforms that gradually changed the churches from purely Catholic churches into evangelical churches, all the while maintaining a close-knit Saxon community.

The Need for Reform in the Saxon Churches

The problems reflected throughout the *Reformationsbüchlein*, the “Apologie”, and the *Kirchenordnung* concerned the everyday issues clergy faced. Honterus wanted to decrease the use of commentaries in Scripture to reduce the amount of quarrels within the church. Second, Honterus wanted to encourage pastors to use Scripture as a way to standardize his reforms. Using arguments resembling those of Martin Luther, Honterus specifically asserted that the clergy needed to hold themselves to a standard that aligned with their role as spiritual teachers in the community. In concurrence with Luther, he also argued that the laity needed a proper understanding the Communion had to be developed and that the consequences for people who refused to believe the pastor's teachings needed to be severe. Furthermore, he wanted to ensure that pastors focused solely on their spiritual role for the community as

²⁹ Ibid. 68-70.

³⁰ The Church Ordinance for All Germans in Siebenbürgen (Transylvania)

³¹ Keul, 79-81.

opposed to getting involved in worldly business. Honterus was in line with Luther's understanding of these issues but he adapted Luther's message to suit a Transylvanian context.

Quarrels and disunity caused by with commentaries and documents haunted the church but Honterus found the solution through Luther's understands of Scripture. Luther advocated that the authority of Scripture alone was sufficient for people to understand about God and religious texts other than Scripture caused departure from Christian standards. In the "Letter to the Christian Nobility", Luther complained about the way theologians taught Aristotle. Luther explained that although he would agree to keep Aristotle's books, *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*, he argued, "the commentaries and notes must be abolished... [As] today nobody learns how to speak [well] nor how to preach from [commentaries on Aristotle], the whole thing has become nothing but a matter for disputation and a weariness to the flesh."³² Endless arguments were not productive for students and the clergy needed to be uniform in their understanding of theological issues. In a similar way, Honterus scorned the quarrels that came from overemphasizing commentary over Scripture. These texts could only result in disagreements about spiritual matters and create disunity within the community. In the *Kirchenordnung*, Honterus explained that "On this [meddlesome quarrels or discord] our learning teaches that we should desire hardworking pastors [and] one will find redundant in [many] books that are not [written] out of necessity."³³

³² Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," in *Luther's Works*, (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1966), 44:200-202.

³³ "Was darüber die lere betrifft, und von fleissigen seelsorgern begert mag werden, wird man in andern buechern ueberflussig gnug finden, und ist nit von noeten," Johannes Honterus, *Kirchenordnung aller Deutschen im Sybembürgen*, In *Honterus: Schriften, Briefe, und Zeugnisse*. (Bucharest: Kriterion Verlag, 1996), 205.

Honterus did not reveal if Luther was the influence of this critique. Instead, Honterus argued for simplicity and Scripture. Honterus wanted unity especially because the Saxons needed to keep together. Honterus, however, viewed unity as coming from Luther's teaching which meant Kronstadt would control the churches more closely. During the 1540s, Honterus argued that the Saxon church could create unity in this way.

The supposed shortcomings Honterus accused clergymen of having similar issues to what Luther found with clergy. Honterus adopted an idea of the role of pastors that mirrored Luther's own. Luther expounded his conception of the role of pastors in "Concerning the Ministry." He stated that pastors were "to teach, to preach, and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to consecrate or administer the Eucharist... but the first and foremost of all on which everything else depends, is the teaching of the Word of God."³⁴ This idea of the duties of ministers came from Luther's understanding that pastors were not spiritual intercessors for the laity but rather knowledgeable resources who could guide the people towards salvation. For Honterus, it seemed that the clergy in Transylvania could not even do that. He argued in the *Reformationsbüchlein*:

It is sufficiently known to all that horrible depravity has come into God's church through clergy [who] are completely unknowledgeable in Christian teachings. [They] have relied solely on their Ordination when taking positions in Church... Therefore, in the future, anyone with an office that teaches about or administers the sacraments should ensure that they are furnished with good and approved books and with sure knowledge of the Holy Scripture.³⁵

³⁴ Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," 40:21.

³⁵ "Denn es ist alen hinlänglich bekannt, welch schreckliches Verderbnis in die Kirche Gottes gekommen ist durch solche Kirchendiener, die in christlicher Lehre völlig unbewandert, im Vertrauen allein auf ihre Ordination sich allenthalben in Kirchen hineingedrängt haben... Deshalb sollen kunftighin alle, welche ein Amt zum Lehren und zum Verwalten der Sakramente uübernehmen dafür sorgen, dass sie mit guten und bewährten Büchern und mit sicherer Kenntnis der heiligen Schrift ausgerüstet seien," Johannes Honterus, *Reformationsbuchlein, Honterus: Schriften, Briefe, und Zeugnisse*. (Bucharest: Kriterion Verlag, 1996) 171.

Honterus demonstrated anxiety over training in the clergy that there were incompetent clergy that did not know Christian teachings. Luther's works offered Honterus a chance to standardize teaching throughout churches and create a uniform structure. As formal structures for replacing pastors did not exist and the schools did not have well-trained teachers, Honterus saw a great need for properly educating the clergy. Regardless of whether this genuinely reflected the state of the churches in Kronstadt or was simply what Honterus wished to argue, Honterus applied Luther's standards to the Saxon churches. The *Reformationsbüchlein* implied that Honterus and the Kronstadt town council were doing what the Catholic Church would have been able to do if they exerted a stronger influence. By emphasizing proper teaching, then these clergy could teach properly and uniformly the laity basic scriptural messages.

Another problem Honterus wanted to address was curtailing clergy involvement with "worldly business". In particular, Honterus seemed to argue that selling church offices made the clergy less able to guide their laity to salvation. In the *Reformationsbüchlein*, Honterus argued:

Not only do pastors teach through sermons, but also through their reputable lives and deeds. Because they serve God, they should not attend to worldly business through which the Word of God is made unfruitful and stifled; rather they should worry much more about the general salvation of souls.³⁶

As town councils carried out religious reforms, pastors depended on councils rather than on their own or on their church's resources. With this reliance on the laity and the community, Honterus hoped to ensure that the clergy focused on their spiritual roles rather than on material wealth.

³⁶“und nicht nur durch Reden, sondern vielmehr durch ein ehrbares Leben und Tun lehren, und da sie Gott dienen, sollen sie sich nicht mit weltlichen Geschäften befassen, durch welche das Wort Gottes erstickt und unfruchtbar gemacht wird, sondern sie sollen vielmehr für das allgemeine Seelen-Heil sorgen.” Honterus, *Ibid*, 171.

Although education was important for the clergy, Honterus also worried about who should and who should not partake in the Sacrament. He believed that Communion of both bread and wine was very important for the laity to partake in as it allowed for salvation. Thus, the clergy needed to be careful with how they administered the sacraments and be smarter. Luther took up this issue and provided near verbatim similar passages for what the church should do. In the “Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors,” Luther expounded:

It was well, too, if we did not entirely do away with the penalty of the ban in the true Christian sense described in Matt. 18. [The Excommunication] consists in not admitting to the Lord’s Table those who, unwilling to mend their ways, live in open sin, such as adultery, habitual drunkenness, and the like. However, before taking such action, they are to be warned several times to mend their ways. Then, if they refuse, the ban may be proclaimed. This punishment is not to be despised. Since it is a curse commanded by God to be pronounced upon the sinner, it is not to be minimized, for such a curse is not without effect. Thus Paul in I. Cor. 5 delivered the man who was living in sin...³⁷

Honterus invoked the same Biblical verses in the *Reformationsbüchlein* although he applied Luther’s meaning to his specific circumstances. Honterus wrote:

Careless with how the Last Supper admitted, out of extreme recklessness, and without timidity, poor innocent people have been excluded for hardly approvable causes. It seems advisable to us, that in the future no one shall be kept away from [the Sacrament] except for the reasons that Paul told in 1 Corinthians 5 and elsewhere. Spiritual not worldly punishment will be done through the clergy. And one should become excluded according to the parish, through the order bequeathed to us from Christ from Matthew 1. When nine brothers are present, the first for himself then before witnesses, the last also will be exhorted before the parish. If he does not cease proselytizing, he should be told of his excommunication with the approval of a public servant of the Church and like a pagan and tax collector, he should be avoided by much of the community until he himself has been improved and has spoken freely and publicly of his sins before the parish.³⁸

³⁷ Luther, “Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Priests,” 40:311.

³⁸ “unbedacht zum Abendmahl zugelassen und dagegen aus den leichtfertigsten und ohne Scheu kaum zu billigenden Ursachen arme unschuldige Leute aus geschlossen haben, so erschien es uns ratsamer, dass künftighin niemand Davon ferngehalten werde ausser aus den Ursachen, die Paulus 1.Kor.5 und anderswo aufzählt, so doch, dass zu solcher geistlicher Strafe keine weltliche durch die Kirchendiener hinzu getan werde. Und nicht nur nach der Gemeinde soll einer ausgeschlossen werden, nach der von Christus uns hinterlassenen Ordnung Matth. 1, dass, wen sein Bruder gefelt hat, er zuerst für sich darnach vor Zeugen, zuletzt auch vor der Gemeinde ermahnet werde, und wenn er sich auch dann zu bekehren unterläßt, soll er durch einen öffentlichen Diener der Kirche mit Zustimmung der Volksmenge als in den Banngetan erklärt und wie ein Heide und

The *Reformationsbüchlein* hoped to ensure that no one needed to be prevented from taking communion except for the reasons of 1 Corinthians 5:6. Paul wrote, “Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough”? For Honterus, the point of this quote was to make sure that those who are malicious and sinful should not partake in the ceremony. Otherwise, the ceremony would tarnish the rest of the community. So long as one was not malicious or held onto other beliefs on Communion, potentially anyone could celebrate the Communion. In close relation to Communion was the practice of Excommunication. For Honterus and Luther, this was not intended to be permanent but rather a process for bringing people into line with the church. This practice of excommunication was communal and gave power to the congregation to take action on their own beliefs. As a result, Honterus argued for a system that pastors could use to enforce discipline within the community.

The importance of the partaking in Communion as one of the two sacraments the evangelical church recognized cannot be overstressed. To Honterus, improper understanding meant that someone did not have the true meaning of salvation. Preventing others from getting Communion also created disunity within the community that divided the congregation between those who had or did not have communion. Honterus wanted to avoid discord within the community and therefore he showed that the excommunicated person had several opportunities to recant. This process, taken from Matthew 1,³⁹ revealed the emphasis that Honterus placed on keeping the community united in the presence of what he considered

Steuerpächter von den ubrigen gemieden werden, bis er sich nicht gebessert hat und vor der Gemeinde wieder oeffentlich (von seinen Suenden) freigesprochen worden ist.” Honterus, *Reformationsbüchlein*, 179.

³⁹ If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-18)

false teachings and improper behavior. Maintaining the strength of the congregation as well as securing the “appropriate” interpretation of Scripture was the essence of Honterus’ message in the *Reformationsbüchlein*.

Honterus wanted to solve many problems. He wanted to make sure clergy and laity was properly informed about baptism and communion. Honterus indicated the problems to show the abuses of the clergy and their inability to perform properly the tasks of their office. Honterus argued that various corrupt practices hampered the salvation of the laity. Honterus thus placed the need of adopting reforms that would lead the clergy closer to the Gospel. Through adopting the ideas of Martin Luther, Honterus saw an opportunity to create a new set of uniform understanding of procedure so that churches within Kronstadt and throughout Transylvania would be united and controlled.

Honterus’ “Evangelical” Solutions

Honterus reported many problems throughout the church, and he found solutions that were in line with Luther’s ideas but also resembling previous Transylvanian church practices. First, he wanted to ensure that pastors had leeway to conduct their services on matters that were not proscribed in the Gospel. At the same time, Honterus urged the churches to embrace the ideas from Wittenberg although Saxon churches kept some traditional Catholic ceremonies. Lastly, Honterus sought to reintroduce church visitations and provide for the education of students. Many of these reforms encouraged practices that were not only “evangelical” but also Transylvanian. As a result, Honterus helped to create a new consensus among Saxon churches; namely, these churches would adopt evangelical reforms so long as they were able to maintain some of their traditional practices.

By creating a faith based on “Scripture alone,” there would be no need to quarrel since it grounded itself only one binding text: the Bible. When Luther was asked to recant his works

before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms, Luther said, “unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason . . . my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything.”⁴⁰ Luther’s emphasis Scripture was a theme Honterus carried through his own writing. Honterus indicated that there was a general sense within the laity of that the clergy were not adhering to their duties. Although the churches had some disorder, Honterus may not have discussed this issue with the people but rather set up this situation as a problem that needed to be solved. He did not reflect the extremeness of the doctrine of *sola scriptura* but the Gospel seemed to provide a way for Honterus to promote education of the clergy. It also made sense to emphasize knowledge of the Gospel that placed Christ’s role as the savior of the world as central in the institution of the Holy Supper. By centering on Christ, Gospel, and Scripture, Honterus narrowed down the potential quarrels that could happen also decrease the opportunities to confuse the laity. It was sufficient for clergy and laity to know the truth of Scripture and so Honterus asserted in the *Kirchenordnung* “through the Gospel all has become open, what adversity is known to our salvation and no one who loves the truth, can have no further doubts, because Christ has faithfully promoted all.”⁴¹ Honterus encouraged a stronger emphasis on the Gospel to help heal the divisions that he believed had riven the Transylvanian church. For the sake of unity, Honterus saw the need to emphasize Scriptural knowledge.

Honterus reaffirmed the importance of liturgical reforms in the *Apologie* and the role pastors had within their communities. Given the political instability and the increasing disorder and ecclesiastical disorganization after Mohacs, Honterus desired to empower

⁴⁰ KDG Wittenberg, „Luther at the Imperial Diet at Worms (1521)”, Luther.de. accessed March 6, 2015, <http://www.luther.de/en/worms.html>.

⁴¹“So doch durchs Evangelion überal offenbart ist worden alles, was zu unserm heil not ist zuwissen, und niemand, der die warheit lieb hat, kein zweifel weiter kan haben, sonderlich weil uns Christus getrewlich verkündiget hat alles.” Honterus, *Kirchenordnung*, 204.

pastors to act on matters that were not stated in the Gospel especially when the church hierarchy became drastically smaller. Luther seemed to set the model for how Honterus could have resolved this situation. In his “Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors,” Luther advocated that there were certain times when pastors could act in their own fashion. He mentioned that “on Sundays, we allow whatever practice each individual pastor follows in Christian ceremonies...the many different forms of the mass should not greatly agitate or disturb us, until we can (as far as possible) achieve uniformity.”⁴² This flexibility in the mass meant that pastors did not have to constantly consult their superiors in order to introduce something new. In a similar way, Honterus empowered fellow pastors to act at their own discretion on matters that were not addressed in the Bible. By allowing pastors to have this freedom, it could allow the pastors to respond to the concerns of the laity without having to receive permission from higher church authorities. Honterus wrote:

Therefore, the booklet [Reformationsbüchlein] was printed [to show] what we wanted to know is now convinced of. For our pastors and clergy to know there is no other cause [except] that when one appointed form in the administration of the sacraments is following God’s word all in the same manner and the remaining uses [are made at his discretions] so that he should carry no worries during the present confusion of wars and other occupations⁴³

Pastors did not have to rely on bishops but could rather address the situation at hand in their own ways or as Honterus described. Honterus encouraged pastors to act in this way to promote a more independent pastorate that followed his own rules rather than those of the Catholic churches.

⁴² Luther, “Instructions for Visitors to Parish Pastors,” 309

⁴³“So ist denn das Büchlein gedruckt worden, wie wir auch sonst vorher und jetzt bezeugt wissen wollen, für unsre Pfarrer und Diener der Kirche aus keener anderen Ursache, als dass ein allen in derselben Weise nach dem Wort Gottes festgesetzte Form in der Verwaltung der Sakramente und den übrigen Gebräuchen habe seine Gutdünken in der gegenwärtigen Verwirrung der Kriege und (anderweitigen) Beschäftigungen auf keine Weise Sorge getragen werden konnte.” Honterus, “die Apologie,” 200.

Honterus also wanted to preserve the traditional ceremonies concerning the Last Supper all while adopting the evangelical understanding of the ceremony. Honterus was explicit in that he asked pastors to conform to Luther's ideas on communion. Honterus wrote in the *Kirchenordnung*, "in the Holy Communion we follow the evangelical churches because we want the same [in our churches]. Out of humility, we will be holding to the special ordinances in each [church] as it happened formerly although Christian unity was not harmful."⁴⁴ While adopting something new, Honterus wanted to make churches hold onto Luther understands of ceremonies and remain closer to them. At the same time, Honterus sought to create a sense of Christian unity among the followers of Luther and the Saxon church. By establishing a sense of unity that allowed churches to retain old traditions, Honterus created a bridge between the old traditional Saxon churches and new evangelical ideas.

The reintroduction of church visitations emphasized that Honterus was not just enacting Luther's reforms but also used Transylvanian traditions. Church visitations were practices that went back to the 13th and 14th centuries in Transylvania.⁴⁵ Right before Honterus wrote the *Reformationsbüchlein*, the churches of Kronstadt were in the process of organizing the visitation churches throughout the Bürzenland.⁴⁶ Luther also supported the practice of church visitations as a response to the deterioration of churches in the German lands. He addressed this concern in the "Instruction to Visitors of Parish Pastors" and explained the origins of the practice in the medieval church. He stated, "this kind of activity [visiting churches] that the

⁴⁴ "in dem heiligen Abentmal folgen wir auch dem brauch der inn evangelischen kirchen gehalten wird, und willen von dem selbigen nit abstehen, auff das nit aus ubermut an einem ieden ort besondere ordnungen gehlaten werden, wie vormals geschehen ist, wiewol christlicher einigkeit nichts schedlichers gewesen ist." Honterus, *Kirchenordnung*, 212.

⁴⁵ Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte Der Ev. Kirche in Siebenbuergen*, Vol. 1, (Hermannstadt: W. Krafft, 1921), 89.

⁴⁶ Teutsch, 220.

bishops and archbishops had [to do] – each one was obligated to a greater or lesser extent to visit and examine.”⁴⁷ Luther also commented on the usefulness of visitations stating, “one can sense it [the need for church visitations] in the abuses which have come through a period of deterioration and perversion.”⁴⁸ As Honterus envisioned it, officials would come regularly to the Transylvanian Saxon churches and ensure that the town councils provided for churches. Honterus also remarked on very specific items that visitors needed to check.

Honterus stated:

[The visitors] should also inquire as to how the preachers give their teachings to the people, which ordinances in ceremonies and chants they keep, how the holy sacrament, baptism and the Lord’s Supper are handled, how little children are baptized in emergencies... One should ensure that all churches and pastors describe their general inventories and keep them at secure places.⁴⁹

Through this list, Honterus sought to create a sense of conformity within the churches.

However, by asking visitors to look at matters such as how the pastors gave emergency baptisms (which was at the pastor’s discretion), conformity may not have necessarily been as important. Since Honterus did not lay out the specifics of the procedures that were at the pastor’s discretion, he allowed both the officials and pastors’ flexibility to act as they had to. Thus, Honterus was able to ensure that churches had a solid direction all while allowing pastors some flexibility. Enforcing the *Kirchenordnung* through visitations was one way to keep some degree of evangelical unity all while maintaining Transylvanian tradition.

While Honterus sought to bring Lutheran ideas into the church, many of the ceremonies or holidays of the liturgical calendar persisted even though did not necessarily have a specific

⁴⁷ Luther, “Instructions to Visitors of Parish Pastors,” 270.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹“ über das sollen sie auch erforschen, wie die predicanten ire leer dem volck furtragen. Welche ordnung in cerimonien und kirchengesand überall gehalten werden. Wie die heilige sacrament, der tauff und des herrn abentmals gereicht und gehandelt werden. Wie die kindlein in der not getaufft, die krancken bericht und communiciert. Darüber sol man verlassen, das aller kirchen und Pfarrn inventaria überall beschreiben, und an sichern orten gehalten werden.” Honterus, *Kirchenordnung*, 228.

Lutheran function. In the celebration of the Vespers in the *Kirchenordnung* begins “in the office of the Vespers absolutely nothing is changed.”⁵⁰ Rather than trying to limit the number of ceremonies, it became more prudent to make sure that they were infused with a proper understanding of the faith. Instead of emphasizing these ceremonies, Honterus wanted to keep uniformity between churches in the cities and the villages. If the cities were able to carry out a more radical version of reform, the villages needed to follow suit. As a result, Honterus was replacing the hierarchy of the Catholic Church with his own regional authority.

He wrote:

An ordinance of matins determined beforehand is to be kept in villages, solely enough to help finish [the Mass]... The same also goes for the office of the Mass. In order that the holy supper is kept, none should break something new, rather the ordinance written beforehand should all ways and overall to be kept the same with the cities...Therefore on the Vespers which, alone [the songs] are sung on holy evenings and holy days in villages, shall one [song] not differ from previous ordinance.⁵¹

The *Kirchenordnung* reinvigorated the authority of the cities and their churches over village churches. Thus, Honterus was able to set a standard for what churches should do with ceremonies.

Honterus intended his reforms to be somewhat cautious in regards to the Mass. Instead, songs in vernacular German accompanied the usual Latin songs sung in the parishes.

Honterus wrote, “we changed nothing of [the songs used during the service] and kept what the first church had. However, we needed to sometimes have German songs after the Epistle

⁵⁰ “Im Vesper ampt ist gar nichts verendert...” Honterus, Ibid, 231.

⁵¹“Vorbestimpte ordnung der Metten mag an feirtagen auch in Doerfern gehalten werden, allein wo genugsam hilff abgieng, oder andere not vorhanden were. Das gleichen auch in dem ampt der Mess, so das heilig Abentmal gehalten wirdt, sol nindert etwas newes auffbracht, sonder die vorgeschribne ordnung allweg und ublich zu gleich mit den Steten gehalten werden. Also auch in Vespem welche, allein an feyrabenten und feyrtagen in doerffern gesungen werden, sol man von voriger ordnung nit abweichen.” Honterus, Ibid, 231-232.

... if they do not speak against it in Scripture.”⁵² The emphasis on making sure that these new songs adhered to Scripture showed that Honterus intended to maintain the traditions but also to reaffirm their purpose of the Mass that was more accessible to the laity and strongly connected to the teaching of the Bible and the Reformation. Moreover, these smaller changes allowed pastors to more effectively enact these reforms in a controlled manner.

Justifying Honterus’ “Reformation”

The motives for making the reforms appear to be minor were manifold. One potential motive was to persuade hesitant pastors to take up the reforms. In the “Apologie”, another reason becomes clear; fear of royal disapproval. The “Apologie” analyzed the idea of reforms and characterized the reforms as finding the “right catholic meaning” of the sacrament.

Whereas the *Reformationsbüchlein* presented a reformation that had some Lutheran influences the later “Apologie” presented Honterus’ reforms as general. It was important to see that Honterus’ reforms were not just for the pastor but powerful rulers would observe their behavior. Honterus wrote:

Besides that, if ... we did not have the right catholic meaning of the sacraments, which we measured the worthiness of the handing and receiving of the sacraments from a truthful person, this was never our purpose. We did not want to print that through our words and we can show with little effort...⁵³

Honterus argued that the evangelical movement could be a unifying force or at least a force that strengthened political authority. He had to appeal to different people in order to allow his reforms to spread. As the evangelical reforms only emerged at the time, Honterus’

⁵²“... die üblichen Gesänge nach der Zeit, und wir ändern nichts an dem, was die erste Kirche gehalten hat, außer dass wir nach der Epistel zuweilen deutsche Gesänge gebrauchen, manchmal auch andere übliche, wenn sie der Schrift nicht widersprechen.” Honterus, *Reformationsbüchlein*, 175.

⁵³ “Im übrigen, wenn ... wir nicht die richtige katholische Meinung über die Sakramente haben, indem wir nach der Würdigkeit der darreichenden und empfangenden Person die Wahrheit der Sakramente bemessen, so ist das niemals unsere Absicht gewesen und unsere Worte wollen das nicht ausdrücken, was wir mit leichter Mühe beweisen können...” Honterus, “die Apologie,” 195.

conception of community came from reforming and renewing the understanding of church practices. He relayed this message to those political leaders who were wary of the new religious ideas in order to keep them from attacking the Saxons and their reform-oriented communities. When Honterus wrote the *Reformationsbüchlein*, he understood that the audience would not just consist of the Saxon pastors of Transylvania. As he had sent this document to the reformers in Wittenberg as well as to Queen Isabella, Honterus had to write something that would persuade the reformers to support his movement and provide theological support to Kronstadt while at the same time prove to the rulers of Transylvania that his reforms were not contravening royal authority.

In the opening of the *Reformationsbüchlein*, Honterus shows the reformers the importance of Kronstadt in potentially spreading Luther's reforms. Because Kronstadt was a mercantile center, Honterus could argue to the reformers in Wittenberg that they were bringing Luther's ideas to new groups. While Honterus proposed that Kronstadt's trading connections created venues to bring Luther's evangelical message to more people, Honterus revealed that there was the mutual hostility between the Saxons and other ethnic groups:

We observe according to our modest faculties [of understanding] that the trading city of Kronstadt lies at the outermost end of the occidental church, and is visited constantly by Greeks, Bulgarians, Moldavians and Trans-Alpine Wallachians as well as from others affiliated people of the Eastern Church⁵⁴

However, Honterus did not discuss the problematic relations the Saxons had with their trading partners. He continues the passage by stating:

[Orthodox believers] take offense at us, on the one hand, on the amount of altars and pictures and, on the other hand, they stubbornly assault us with all of the disputations

⁵⁴ “Wir bemerken nun dieses nach unserm bescheidenen Vermögen recht genau und sehen, dass die Handelsstadt Kronstadt, die am aussersten Ende der abendländischen Kirche liegt, von Griechen, Bulgaren, Moldauern und transalpinischen Walachen sowie auch anderen der orientalischen Kirch angehörigen Völkern beständig besucht wird.” Honterus, *Reformationsbüchlein*, 170.

over the faith... They often divert some souls from the truth and through their unanimity, they raise doubts among the simple minded.⁵⁵

Language, ethnicity, status, and recognition by the reigning rulers had an influence on how the Saxons interacted with the unrecognized members of the Eastern Church.⁵⁶ As stated earlier, Honterus ridiculed members of the Orthodox Church for their uses of altarpieces. While Honterus may have commented on the members of the Orthodox Church in order to promote the need to reform these people, Honterus seemed to neglect that people would not switch allegiances to the Lutheran church without more effort. In effect, Honterus exaggerated the potential to bring new people under the control of Transylvanian Saxon churches and to sway people from the Orthodox Church.

The Saxon reformation owed much of its structure to the ability of Transylvanians to find supporters and patrons among the elites. This was difficult as the Saxons began to turn to the words of Martin Luther even though the ruling elites of Transylvania remained staunch Catholics. In the “Apologie,” Johannes Honterus explained the legitimate concerns that led him to write the *Reformationsbüchlein*. The “Apologie” defended much of the content and explained in a purposeful manner why the reforms they took up were not a threat to royal Catholic power. Instead of pointing out potential flaws in the Catholic rulers, Honterus argued that they never spoke against the word of God and that he aligned his reforms along with the Catholic Church. Honterus also argued that he was acting out of concern for “the

⁵⁵ “die einerseits an der Menge der Altäre und Bilder, andererseits auch an gewissen törichtigen Gebrauchen großen Anstoß nehmen und uns durch allerlei Disputationen über den Glauben hartnackig bestürmen, so dass sie oft manche Seelen von der Wahrheit ablenken und durch ihre Einstimmigkeit Zweifel über das, was ganz fest steht, bei den Einfältigen erwecken.” Honterus, *Reformationsbüchlein*, 170.

⁵⁶ Keul,36.

Church of Christ” in the absence of a council that could decide whether Luther’s reforms were acceptable. Honterus wrote:

Although we, along with many believing Christians, have expected a general council for many years... for so long the hesitation of certain men has held uncertainty for all of Christendom, that it has spoiled souls of many thousand men through vexation, strife, doubt, and despair.⁵⁷

By blaming the creation of the *Reformationsbüchlein* on the “hesitation of certain men,” Honterus shifted the focus from his reforms to the lack of support the Catholic Church gave to the Transylvanian churches. He wanted to justify adapting Luther’s ideas in the lense of issues facing the Catholic Church. Honterus made another crucial move by naming his lords and protectors as “not being of blame.” He wrote:

Because now neither her blessed royal majesty, nor our revered Lord and Protector [Bishop George Martinuzzi], nor other most Christian Lord Prelates have spoken against the word of God, but have honored and loved the same [Word of God], and have loved those who follow them, we trust that we will be found without fault in this matter. If we prove to them that, we have acted with hindsight of greater harmony and with regard to the authority of Holy Scripture, and that we have resolved to do the commands of the all high God in this dangerous time and we set out the many dangers of this place.⁵⁸

Honterus mentions both Lord Protector Bishop George Martinuzzi was highly involved in Transylvanian court politics. He and his political allies were in favor of a stronger union with the Habsburgs rather than Transylvanian independence that the Zapolyas and Queen Isabella

⁵⁷ “Obwohl wir mit vielen gläubigen Christen viele Jahre hindurch ein allgemeines Konzil sehnlichst erwartet haben ... so hat doch das Zögern gewisser Menschen die ganze Christenheit solange in Ungewissheit gehalten, dass inzwischen die Seelen vieler tausend Menschen durch Ärgernis, Zwist, Zweifel und Verzweiflung verdorben wurden.” Honterus, “die Apologie,” 187.

⁵⁸ “Da nun weder die geheiligte königliche Majestät, noch unser Hochwürdiger Herr und Beschützer [Bischof Georgius Martinuzzi] sowie die anderen allerchristlichsten Herren Prälaten jemals dem Wort Gottes widersprochen haben, sondern dasselbe sorgfältigste ehren und pflegen und diejenigen lieben, die ihm folgen, so vertrauen wir darauf, dass wir in dieser Sache ohne Fehl und ganz ohne Schuld befunden werden, wenn wir nur diesen wenigen beweisen, dass wir nichts ohne Rücksicht auf größere Eintracht ihrer Untergebenen und nicht ohne Beachtung der Autorität der heiligen Schrift und der Gebote des allerhöchstens Gottes in dieser so gefährlichen Zeit und an einem vielfachen Gefahren ausgesetzten Ort vorgenommen haben.” Honterus, *Ibid.*, 189.

avored.⁵⁹ Whether this note signified an appeal to both of them to bring unity or whether this was, simply Honterus' way of avoiding conflict is uncertain. However, Honterus showed how evangelical maneuvering could be useful to the Saxons who wished to maintain their independence and power.

In these ways, Honterus set his system of reforms as completely legitimate and allied himself with those in authority. This allowed him to garner the attention and support of the Wittenberg reformers and to pacify concerns that Queen Isabella may have had about Honterus' reforms. Furthermore, Honterus presented his reforms as motivated by the gross negligence of the Catholic Church in preventing continuity. He justified the older reform efforts through implying a continuity between his reforms and those that took place before the Reformation.

Conclusion

Honterus launched reforms that incorporated the ideas of Martin Luther while presenting his reforms as in line with the Catholic Church. The problems Honterus saw revolved around claims that the Catholic clergy were corrupt, uninformed about Scripture, and unable to serve the laity. Honterus proposed reforms that would make sure that the town councils and laity would support the local churches financially but also enforced a hierarchical structure between the churches in the villages and cities. Rather than arguing for drastic reforms, Honterus argued for reforms with a new emphasis on the Gospel and Christ that emulated Martin Luther but retained at least some of the practices of the medieval Transylvania church. Furthermore, Honterus desired uniformity so that there would some way to enforce what churches were doing. In order to gain the support of the authorities and other people, he

⁵⁹ Keul, 60-61.

also deftly argued that his reforms were contiguous with older reforms in the Catholic Church. This allowed him to publish his ideas with the support of Saxon pastors, the Transylvanian nobility, and the Wittenberg reformers. In short, Honterus sought to create reforms that could resolve the issues of the Saxon Churches and ultimately unify the Saxon community.

Chapter II: Creating Boundaries for the Congregation: Damasus Dürr and Other Religions

Although the first sermons of Damasus Dürr and Johannes Honterus' *Kirchenordnung* are only a decade apart, the religious landscape of Transylvania had changed drastically. While Honterus' message concerned Catholics and "evangelicals," Saxon pastors such as Dürr began to build religious boundaries between Lutherans and the two new emerging confessional groups: Calvinists and Unitarians. For Saxon pastors, Calvinists and Unitarians posed a threat to their congregations. Dürr feared that the congregations could be led astray by the beliefs that these religious groups held. As such, Lutheran pastors such as Damasus Dürr responded to this changing situation and urged their congregations to stay with the Lutheran church.

In this chapter, I will argue that Damasus Dürr's sermons reflect a change in the main goals of spreading the evangelical church. Instead of having an evangelical church that blended Catholic and Lutheran influences, Dürr made his church as exclusively Lutheran.

The Saxon Lutheran church had now set up boundaries. Whereas Honterus focused on reforming the practices of the clergy, Dürr presented the clergy as martyrs who were obligated to keep the laity from moving to other congregations. I argue that Dürr presented clergy through the lens of numerous allusions to Biblical martyrs, showing the sacrifices pastors needed to take in order to keep unity within the communities. Much like Honterus, Dürr focused on the importance of maintaining the rites of baptism and communion but Dürr focused on showing these messages through attacking the enemies within and outside of the Lutheran church. I will argue that Dürr's polemical stances served two major functions. Dürr wanted to educate his congregation on the basic theological differences between Lutherans and other groups, specifically Calvinists, Catholics, and Unitarians. He exposed them to some of the theological controversies in an easy-to-understand format so that they may learn the importance of the Lutheran rites of communion and baptism and hold steadfast to the Lutheran church. His criticisms built a dichotomy that presented Lutherans as moderate, orderly, unified, and theologically solid while he presented every other group as quarrelsome. Through reviewing non-Christian groups such as the "Turks" and "Tatars," Dürr showed that having the right beliefs and right participation in the church in order to avoid damnation. Honterus had tried to create an inclusive community, while Dürr argued that only Lutherans belonged in his. Through these textual strategies, Dürr presented his congregation with an understanding of the Lutheran Church that he intended to persuade his congregation to stay Lutheran.

The Role of Clergy

The Lutheran clergy served not only as leaders of the congregation but as examples of piety for the congregation. When Dürr preached to the laity, he emphasized the connection

clerics had with the community. Dürr did this for a number of reasons. First, Dürr addressed a congregation that was homogeneously Saxon and Lutheran. Dürr's sermons indicate this because they contain many vicious statements against Catholics or "Bepstler." His uses of polemical language showed that Catholics along with many other religious groups did not belong to Dürr's church. Second, Dürr wanted to ensure that his congregation understood the importance of pastors in guiding the faithful and keeping them in the Lutheran church. Calvinism and Unitarianism were entering the region when Dürr began preaching in 1554. He consistently defended the Lutheran church and its practices through his reforms. When Saxon pastors such as Kaspar Helth and Franz David began to convert to Calvinism and Antitrinitarianism, evangelical pastors faced the possibility that they themselves might turn away from the Lutheran church. Dürr's sermons reflect this anxiety of shifting allegiances. He presented pastors of the church as humble and obedient servants of the church who had to guide people to a proper understanding of Scripture. They had to speak the unsavory truth to the people even if it brought them death.

Cooperation between the laity and the clergy was an essential element of preserving unity in the parish. As Honterus had discussed in his own texts, the clergy needed the support of the community's financial resources and support. In his sermon on "The Birth of Christ," Dürr argued that pastors needed support just as the flock supported Jesus. Dürr wrote, "just as these pious people spread their clothes under Christ, in this we should serve him as well."⁶⁰ This allusion to Palm Sunday in Matthew 21 was meant to urge the laity to be more

⁶⁰ "Gleich wie aber diss fromme leut dem hernn Christo ire kleyder untegestrewt habenn, dermassenn sollenn mir helfenn zur erhaltung des gottesdiensts," Dürr, "Sermon of the first Sunday of Advent: The Birth of Christ," In *Predigten: 1554-1578*, (Muhlbach: Unterwalder Kapitel, 1939), 8.

giving.⁶¹ Through the community's gifts, the "faithful servants" of Christ could continue their role in leading their congregations. He urged fervently "no one should retain their [the pastor's] income nor minimize their access, rather add something from their own. [The clergy] are also flesh and blood. They have wives, children, and servants, that must live, eat and drink."⁶² Honterus preferred to focus on corruption within the clergy; by comparison, Dürr stressed the duty of the laity to help the clergy. He was building on the relationship Honterus created between the local congregation and the church. The church was effectively dependent on the laity for support. Dürr called on the laity to support the pastors so that they might serve better. In a sense, he was responding to Honterus by arguing that pastors deserved more money from the community while emphasizing the relationship between the clergy and the laity.

The preachers served a vital role in maintaining social discipline within the community. For Dürr as it had been for Luther and Honterus, pastors kept sinful men out of the church. As the educated elite within the parish, the clergy needed to be able to assert their authority to discipline moral wrongdoers. He wrote in the "Sermon on John the Baptist":

As often as preachers punish sinful men, it affects the rulers and the people since the word of God is indivisible. However, the people should not regard this as a curse or as a disgrace. One scorns therefore no one, but rather it is the preacher's office and masses must herein follow the godly majesty and their will, more than that of men.⁶³

⁶¹ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (Matthew 21:7-8).

⁶² "niemand ir einkommenn verhaltenn noch den zugang kleinern, sondern vonn dem unserichtenn etwas auffiestzenn, den sie sein auch fleisch und blut, sie habenn weib, kinder, gesind, die müssen eben wie du, leben, essenn und trincken." Dürr, "Sermon of the first Sunday of Advent: The Birth of Christ," 8.

⁶³ "Drumb so oft die prediger die sündhaftig menschen strafen, es betref die herrschaft aber das gemeynn volck: dieweil ia das götlich wort niemandenn zertelt. . . Solchs sollen die leut nicht für eyn fluch, für ein schmach annemen, man schmeht deshalbenn niemanden, sondern es ist der prediger ampt und messenn hierinn der göttlichen Maiestet und yrem willenn volgenn, mehr als den menschenn." Dürr, "Sermon of the third Sunday of Advent: Praise of John the Baptist Precursor of Christ," 22.

Dürr mirrored Luther who had said something similar in his “Instruction to Visitors of Parish Pastors” and that passage served as the model for Honterus’ explanation of excommunication.⁶⁴ Dürr followed Honterus’ idea as it empowered him to assert his authority as the pastor over his congregation. It is hard to know whether he ever disciplined anyone through excommunication. This statement would have particular salience for Dürr, as he was concerned about possible “heretical” ideas that could have come from Calvinists and Unitarians. Instead, Dürr’s argument may have served more as a reconfirmation of what Honterus and Luther argued and served as a potential warning to his congregation.

Throughout these sermons, Dürr presented the clergy as people who needed to take unpopular stances. Clerics needed to hold true to the proper Lutheran understanding of Scripture in order to save the souls of the congregation. However, the actuality of holding the laity to high theological standards was difficult. Using the entire corpus of Dürr’s work, Historian Ulrich Wien argues that Dürr had many difficulties in keeping proper behavior and ensuring that his laity paid attention. He addressed the congregation’s reactions such as falling asleep in church or complaints about the length of sermons on a repeated basis.⁶⁵ Although Dürr seemed to be exasperated with his congregation at times, he also stressed that the pastor needed to bring messages that touched on relevant concerns such as family life, social concerns, and economic problems. Thus, it is questionable as to how often Dürr needed to excommunicate people. Dürr seemed to use his words as a warning and a call to improve the laity. Other Christian groups that surrounded the Saxon church, he focused on

⁶⁴ “This punishment is not to be despised. Since it is a curse commanded by God to be pronounced upon the sinner, it is not to be minimized, for such a curse is not without effect.” Luther, “Instruction to Visitors of Parish Pastors,” 311.

⁶⁵ Ulrich A. Wien, “Sozialdiziplinierung in der Predigt. Die Beeinflussung der siebenbürgische-sächsische Gemeinde von Kleinpold durch ihrer Pfarrer im 16. Jahrhundert,” In *Spiegelungen*, Vol. 1, (Munich: Spiegelungen, Zeitschrift für Kulturelle Geschichte Südosteuropas, 2006), 59-63.

showing the sins of people and of concentrating on the improvement of the community. In the sermon “Praising John the Baptist,” Dürr called on pastors to “announce God’s will to men, to show sins for the same purpose, [so that] they shall bring the betterment of life.”⁶⁶ The process of betterment itself was something Dürr wanted to ensure happened for his congregation and through his sermons, Dürr hoped to stress the clergy’s role for bettering the community.

However, pastors served not only as disciplinarians and ministers of but also as guides towards salvation. Honterus did not address hierarchy within the church. Dürr defended the roles of the hierarchy and different offices of bishops, pastors, and clergy members. He intended these offices to guide the community so that they recognize the gifts of God. Out of the other Transylvanian churches during his lifetime, the Calvinists did not have bishops and instead relied on a different organizational structure. In “Praising John the Baptist,” Dürr stated that the “beloved heavenly father gives us bishops, pastors, and clergy, through whom he gives mercy to the community assembles the people.”⁶⁷ Church hierarchy was a theologically complex concept that Lutherans, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Catholics debated with each other. Rather than explaining a long discussion of why Lutherans kept clerical hierarchy, Dürr made the message simple and said that these people were just gifts from God. He defended the hierarchy to his congregation and kept tradition. The major reason for these different levels of clergymen was to help educate the laity on Scripture. He was critical of laypeople who sought to interpret scripture for themselves. Dürr wrote, “the people become

⁶⁶ “die den menschen des hernn willen verkuendigenn, denselbenn die suend anzeygenn, und zur besserung des lebens bringenn sollen” Dürr, “Sermon of the third Sunday of Advent: Praise of John the Baptist Precursor of Christ,” 21.

⁶⁷ “Der lieb himlisch vater gibt zwar auss lauter gnadenn, Bischoff, pharherr, kirchendiener, durch welch personenn er ym samlet eyne gmein auf erdenn.” Dürr, Ibid, 28.

self-reliant, tired and weary that they want all day new, and thus the preachers ought to be treasured.”⁶⁸ Having many different interpretations of Scripture could be confusing and presented congregations with theological conflicts. More importantly, pastors needed to interpret scripture so that there would be some uniformity. Dürr proposed that the laity should hold on to the preacher’s interpretation. He was therefore able to defend church hierarchy as well as minimizing different interpretations of Scripture in order to maintain unity.

Throughout his sermons, Dürr illustrated the role and purpose of clergy by alluding to the martyrs of the Bible and early church. The martyrs he referred to were often teachers who were distant from his own time (with the exception of Jan Huss). He pointed to martyrs such as Ignatius of Antioch to show what qualities the clergy needed to embody humility, obedience, a willingness to defy authority, and even the courage to face death. In the sermon “Fleeing the Edict of Augustus,” Dürr recounted the story of St. Ignace of Antioch who lived during the reign of Emperor Trajan. For being a bishop in the Christian church, Trajan sentenced Ignace to be thrown to the lions. As his last words, Ignace exclaimed, “I am a grain of my beloved Lord Christ. I should be ground up by the teeth of wild animals so that I may become clean, unpolluted bread...”⁶⁹ Death and punishment featured prominently in these sermons as they emphasized that death was close by. Dürr praised these pastors for being heroic though they seemed to be distant. As a pastor of a small village, he did not have to concern himself with these matters but rather, he depicted the clergy as capable of being

⁶⁸ “die leut werden derselbigenn, mued und uberdruessig wollten gernn alle tag newe, und so zu schezenn gemalt prediger habenn.” Dürr, *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ “Ich binn das kornn meynes liebenn hernn Christi, izt sol ich gemalenn werdenn mist denn zeenen der wilden tier, damit ich werde, ein reines unbeflectes brodt...” Dürr, “Christmas Sermon: Fleeing the Edict of Caesar Augustus,” 65.

heroic. He chose to insult rulers who persecuted good preachers but he mentioned no current day rulers. Dürr did not state his opinions on the Catholic rulers of Transylvania. Rather, he let his congregation come to their own conclusions on earthly rulers. In this way, Dürr could criticize the princes of Transylvania for their wrong beliefs and their harsh treatment of the churches without incurring their ire.

One of the few instances where Dürr showed the martyrdom of a priest closer to his own times, Jan Huss's death at the Council of Constance. In 1415, Jan Huss went to Constance understanding that he would go on trial for his heretical beliefs. Dürr again discussed how this one clergyman "stood against two men, the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, and the landed gentry. Huss did not fear the world. He feared not the noose, the sword, nor burning at the stake"⁷⁰. Lutherans regarded Huss as the forerunner of Martin Luther and his devotion to bringing scriptural truth to the laity. Luther himself had remarked in his "Letter to the Christian Nobility" that he had not "not yet found any errors in his writings according to my way of thinking."⁷¹ However, Dürr goes further by recounting the last words of Huss at the stake. Huss exclaimed, "Now you Papists, here roasts a man, but a swan will come in a 100 years, that you will not be able to burn. A splendid great man will begin to preach the Gospel with power that is so great that no man on Earth can stand against his learning."⁷² This apocryphal prophecy of the swan seemed to come true with Martin Luther. Regardless of whether these were Huss's last words; Dürr took a decidedly "Lutheran" turn in the sermon.

⁷⁰ "da eyynn gantz Concilium wider zween Mann stundt, Bapst, Cardinarn, Bischoff, keyser, landfürstenn, Der furchtet nicht die welt, er furchtet nicht strick, schwert, die hitz des fewrs." Dürr, "Sermon of the fourth Sunday of Advent: The Jewish Embassy and John's Baptism of Christ," 36.

⁷¹ Luther, "Letter to the Christian Nobility," 196.

⁷² "Nu ir Bepstler, bratet heutt ein ganssm, uber 100 iar wird eyynn Schwaan kommen, den ir nicht werdet bratenn koennen. Trefflicher bestendiger Mann, undfangt das Evangelium mit gewaltigem geist an zu predigenn, das kein mensch auff erden seiner leer kann widerstand thunn." Dürr, "Sermon of the fourth Sunday of Advent: The Jewish Embassy and John's Baptism of Christ," 36.

Through showing the meekness and humility of preachers, Dürr showed the religious transformation that was unfolding before the Saxons. Huss became distinctly Lutheran and by embracing this martyr, Dürr was forging a stronger connection between his church and Luther. Scriptural truth needed to triumph and the clergy ought to bring the truth to the people. In addition, when Dürr described preachers who had died centuries ago, he avoided the pitfall of criticizing the reigning regime. In this way, Dürr not only justified the worthiness of clergy through their willingness to die but also further emphasized that they died because they defended Lutheran and biblical truths

The Enemies Within and Outside the Church

In his sermons, Dürr presented Christendom as full of chaos and enmity. This was his rhetorical strategy. According to him, the church was rife with groups that opposed salvation from Christ but also threatened to bring destruction to the people who believed them. The characterizations of these “enemies” divide into two categories. The enemies within the church were those groups who claimed to be Christians but disagreed with the beliefs that Dürr and his Lutheran church held. Of these groups, he was particularly critical of the Anabaptists who play a crucial role in his sermons on baptism. In the second category were those groups who were outside of the church. These were Jews, Turks, pagans and other eastern foreigners. For Dürr, these groups signified people who would be damned to hell because they ignored Christ. However, the criticism served more of a rhetorical effect. With these two different categories, Dürr not only taught his congregation the importance of participating in certain rites and ceremonies but also promoted a positive image of the Lutheran church. The Lutherans rejected the concerns that these other groups had and while the other churches only provoked disaster and sorrow, Dürr’s church was a haven of order

and stability, or so he claimed. In a world filled with diverse churches, Dürr argued that the Lutheran church was moderate, orderly, and focused on the true path to salvation.

As Calvinism and Unitarians spread in Transylvania, Dürr contended with what new churches were saying. Like Luther before him, Dürr held scriptural interpretation to be of the utmost importance. He was concerned that these new groups exploited Scripture for their own purposes. In his sermon “On the Extreme Signs of Judgment,” Dürr noted that each of these Christian groups committed “abuses of Christian freedom” and “these groups rid the churches of all splendor and ceremonies, they plundered and pushed out god-fearing people from the house of God have to honor what is ordered.”⁷³ Using decidedly Lutheran language, Dürr described how these groups misused Scripture. This quote is particularly revealing because not only does Dürr link this religious divide to the abuses of (as Dürr referred to it) “Christian freedom,” he went further to describe what he viewed as actual sins. These sins, which a mysterious “they” are committing, reflected the beliefs of many different Christian groups. For example, the Calvinists, who argued for a greater focus on sermons rather than rituals, could have been associated with “throwing splendor out of the churches.” However, because many groups held similar beliefs, they mostly remain unidentified. This lack of specification in Dürr’s sermons served many different functions. First, naming the different groups would have been overwhelming and confusing for the congregation. Sermons were primarily tools to educate the congregation about every-day Christian messages, not to confuse them with too much information. Second, the mysterious “they” allowed Dürr to make categorical and sweeping claims about these groups. By remaining unspecific, he

⁷³ “das sie unter solchem schein, all gepreng und Ceremonien aus der kirchen werffen, plundern und auffstossenn, was gotsfurchtige leuet dem haus gotts zu ehrenn geordnet habenn,” Dürr, “Sermon of the second Sunday of Advent: On Extreme Signs of God’s Judgment,” 13.

allowed the congregation to come to their own conclusions about who he may have been referring to and perhaps they may have seen this discord among these new Christian groups. In so doing, he rhetorically showed that all of these groups are problematic, dangerous, and untrustworthy. Thus, he indirectly promoted the ideas of the Lutheran church.

One of the main issues that Dürr felt was especially disturbing about these new Christian groups was that they caused disorder, as he saw it. Even more so, they were hostile to the ideas of his Lutheran church. This was a major theme in Dürr's sermon "On Extreme Signs of Judgment." Dürr wrote that, "in the holy church, there [was] much strife, disunity, discord, envy, and hatred. One [found] that there [were] many brothers but few friends."⁷⁴ He acknowledged that although these groups were brothers in Christ but that they were hostile towards each other. Much like Honterus bewailed the quarrels and discord caused by having too many commentaries, Dürr was similarly displeased with the different interpretations of the sacraments and of Scripture. In light of the harsh statements he made about other churches, it is hard to make sense Dürr's own idea of unity within the church. He engaged in polemical discourse but still urged for a larger Christian brotherhood. At the same time, Dürr thought that these groups sought to propel their own messages rather than the Gospel, he felt that their idea of the clergy clashed with his. He wrote that "one [pastor thought] oneself the learned and the other the 'high donkey.'"⁷⁵ The enmity between the pastors appeared unpleasant and incredibly divisive. In the context of a sermon, this would have had the effect of drawing the laity away from these messages as they "[interwove] and [darkened] God's

⁷⁴ "Inn der kirchenn zwischenn den geistlichenn, ist vil hadder, uneynikeit, zwitracht, neid hass, es find da vil brueder aber wenig freund. wie die leut ym schierstenn sollen selig werden." Dürr, "Sermon of the second Sunday of Advent: On Extreme Signs of God's Judgment," 13.

⁷⁵ "Eyner duenckt sich gelerter den der ander, da bringt ein izlich Eselshaupt ein besonder leer erfur," Dürr, "Sermon of the second Sunday of Advent: On Extreme Signs of God's Judgment," 13.

Word.”⁷⁶ In this way, Dürr presented his congregation with an image of Christian groups who were too prideful to understand their own flaws while at the same time not coming to terms with his own polemical descriptions of religious groups.

Whereas Honterus placed much of the blame for confusion among the laity on the Catholic clergy, Dürr saw the blame as belonging squarely on the clergy of other Christian groups. He detailed all of the possible crimes of other groups while repeatedly refusing to name them. While that served to identify why the laity should not turn to these groups, this strategy was an attempt to delegitimize them. Dürr asserted that, “one [did] not have the presence of the three godly persons. The other [disowned] the Holy Ghost, and [took] out the power of the eternal son of God [to turn him] into a poor man. The third [did] not wish to baptize children. The fourth wrongly [performed] the Lord’s Supper. The fifth [angered] himself at the eternal providence of God. Some believe that there [was] no resurrection of the dead...”⁷⁷ Many of the figures Dürr mentioned in this sermon seemed to characterize religious groups that lived in the region. Calvinists had different ideas than Lutherans on Communion. The Unitarians, who believed that Jesus was not the son of God, also began to gain influence in the 1560s and especially at the court of Johann Sigismund Zapolya. In one instance, Dürr may have responded to the increasing influence of Unitarians as he complained “and henceforth, as many opinions as there are people they confound Christian teaching, and confuse their poor

⁷⁶ “Mann hört vonn mancherley Religion, von Mancherley glaubenn, dadurch der götlich namenn gelestert, gottes wort verfelicht und vertunckelt wirdt,” Dürr, *Ibid*, 13.

⁷⁷ “Eynber will nicht habenn drey personenn ym goetlichenn wesenn. Der ander verlaugnet den heyligen geist, und macht aus dem ewigen Sonn gottes eynenn schlechtem zeitlichen menschen. Dem drittenn gefelt nicht die kinder taut. Der virt irret vom abendmal des herrn. Der funft ergert sich ann der ewigenn fuersehung gotts. Mancher glaubt kein aufferstehung der todtenn, und also fortann, weevil haupter, so vil sinn : Die verwerrenn die Christliche leer, und betruuebenn die gewissenn der armen zuhoerer dermassenn, das sie schier nicht wissen, welchem teufel sie glaubenn sollenn.” Dürr, *Ibid*.

listeners so heavily, that they do not know which devil they should believe.”⁷⁸ While Dürr did not mention his name, Zapolya’s conversion was one of the well-known events of the 1560s that Dürr and his congregation would have been aware of. Dürr may have been appealing to the congregation’s sense of outrage and as a result, he attacked the beliefs of other Christian groups categorically and mercilessly.

Dürr also accused certain people of being guilty of compromising the faith. Dürr saw these people as particularly dangerous as they were people who might merge Luther’s ideas with those of Calvin or David. In this particular example coming from the sermon “On the Jewish Embassy and John’s Baptism of Christ,” he framed compromise in the analogy of *adiaphora*. *Adiaphora* (indifferent things in Greek) were certain church practices that were not necessarily harmful but Scripture or a statement of confession commanded them. Edit Szegedi argues that for the Transylvanians, the Augsburg Confession was the source of problems concerning *Adiaphora*. While the Confession addressed many issues important to the clergy, practical matters that pastors might deal with such as emergency baptisms appeared neither in the Confession nor in the Bible. Honterus did not really address the subject and simply urged the removal of “unchristian annoyances.” At the synod of 1557 in Hermannstadt, the Saxon churches defined *Adiaphora* as anything that the church could retain without disturbing the quality of the service. With the influx of Calvinist opinions, the synods sought to redefine the confessions so that there would be clear differences between *Adiaphora* and “unnecessary and dangerous ceremonies.” *Adiaphora* were also along confessional lines as well. Saxon pastors forbade the destruction of altars and were in favor of keeping paintings in the churches whereas Calvinists considered altarpieces and religious

⁷⁸ “und also fortann, weevil haupter, so vil sinn : Die verwerrenn die Christliche leer, und betruébenn die gewissenn der armen zuhoerer dermassenn, das sie schier nicht wissen, welchem teufel sie glaubenn sollenn,” Ibid.

paintings to be distracting to the faith. For evangelicals, communion was a sign of confessional belonging whereas Calvinists associated any mention of substantiation as Catholic nonsense.⁷⁹ Dürr took the stance that the so-called Adiaphorists confused the ceremonies and disputes of the church. He characterized them as being unable to come to decisions regarding the ceremonies. In a mockery that pits Adiaphorists against so-called Subdiaphorists and Neutralists, Dürr ridiculed these different versions of the faith. Dürr wrote:

An Adiaphorist, who is a compromiser, said, ‘Dear Men, neither you, nor Christ, nor you Pharisees, are entirely wrong to be placed next to each other. If one yields to another just a little and moves closer together. It is better, to hold very little to the Gospel, than to lose the whole. A Subdiaphorist had spoken tragically, or with inflated words, and said: ‘I have understood a short contract, in which each part holds its own meaning. A Neutralist said: “Dear Men, I don’t understand any part enough, therefore I cannot adhere to any of it.”⁸⁰

In these satirical characterizations, Dürr criticized the ideas of people who compromised the faith. The effect of showing these different and ridiculously named groups was to show not only the divisiveness among Christians but also their unwillingness to follow what he considered truth.

The importance of keeping the rites and ceremonies of the church figured heavily in Dürr’s sermons as well. Although theological matters such as baptism and communion

⁷⁹ Edit Szegedi, “Was bedeutete Adiaphoron/Adiaphora im siebenbürgischen Protestantismus des 16. Und 17. Jahrhunderts?” in *Formierungen des konfessionellen Raumes in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Evelin Wetter, (Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart, 2008), 59-68.

⁸⁰ “Ein Adiaphoritsicher, hett gemittelt, und gesagt: Lieben hern: Ewr keyner, weder Christus, noch ir phariseer, habenn so gar unrecht kennet woll nebeneynander stallenn, gebet nur eyner dem andern wenig nach, und ruecket zusamen, es ist besser, vom Evangelio wenig behaltenn, den gantz verloreenn. Ein subdiaphorist het gespilet mit Cothurnis, das ist mit geschraubten wortenn, mit stifelnn auf beyde fuesse gerecht, und gesagt: Ich hab eynenn kurzenn vertrag begriffen, darinnen eyn yedes teyll seyne meynung behllt. Ein Neutralist hett gesagt: Liebenn hernn, ich verstehe kein teil gnugsam, darumb kann ich mich keynem teil anhengig machenn.” Dürr, “Sermon of the fourth Sunday of Advent: The Jewish Embassy and John’s Baptism of Christ,” 34.

played a large role in Dürer's critique of other Christian groups, he was concerned with the traditions of the Lutheran church. The Transylvanian Saxon Church held on to many traditions such as keeping on to church paintings and altarpieces. In the sermon "On the Extreme Signs of Judgment," Dürer described that some religious groups "[destroyed] the paintings in the churches. Several threw the lights, the chasuble and the boards from the altar, as one found in each of these his [own] meaning, thus they think it best to be."⁸¹ This, Dürer found to be not only unacceptable and needlessly violent but also another instance of an "abuse of Christian freedom."⁸² On these ceremonial matters, tradition took precedence over Scripture. Dürer did not feel that it was necessary to destroy them, as they did not bring harm to the faith. Rather, Dürer defended the use of these decorations by stating that, "we kept the chasuble, the lights, the paintings, and the holy days. We like a difference between the house of God, where we hear God's Word and where we pray and need the revered sacrament, and between our hours, where we feast, blaspheme, swear but we conduct our business."⁸³ Dürer's defense falls in line with Honterus' own description of the traditions of the church. At the same time, Dürer did not show any conflict between these traditions and Lutheran teaching. For him, this was simply another instance of religious groups creating disunity and disorder that he used to persuade the congregation to remain Lutheran.

Dürer also used his sermons to show not only the discord created by new Christian groups but also to teach the congregation the importance of sacraments. For example, Anabaptists

⁸¹ "Mancheynen stürmen die bilder, das gemael ynn der kirchenn. Etliche verwerfenn die liechter vom altar, die missgewand und die Tafeln, wie es ein ieder ynn seynem sinn findet, also dünkst ynn ym bestenn seynn." Dürer, "Sermon of the second Sunday of Advent: On Extreme Signs of God's Judgment," 13.

⁸² "Aber es ist ein anders, wenn mann sagt vonn Christlicher freyheit, und wider ein anders, wenn mann redet von Christlichenn Ordnung." Dürer, Ibid.

⁸³ "Wir behaltenn die mesgewandt, die liechter, das gemael, die feirtag, nicht deswegen, das moeg seine in unterscheid zwischen dem haus gottes, da mir gotts wort hoerenn, da mir betenn und der hochwirdigen Sacrament brauchenn, und zwischenn unsern heuesern, da mir schlemmen, fluchenn, schweeren, aber unser hantierung treybenn." Dürer, Ibid.

were a target of Dürer's attacks. There are two potential ways to understand who Dürer believed were Anabaptists through Luther or in the context of the Unitarians. In 1528, Luther wrote a letter addressed to two pastors concerning adult baptism. John Oyer argues in his book that Luther took a narrow, authoritarian, and even almost Catholic stance against Anabaptists. Oyer argues that the Anabaptists seemed too radical to Luther and, as a result, Luther turned conservative to preserve the status quo. Luther rejected Anabaptist arguments against rebaptism, as reason and experience were insufficient to connect with Christ. He thought that Anabaptists were too subjective in saying that a person's ability to understand the grace of God was sufficient.⁸⁴ However, given that Anabaptists loosely referred to any group that did not believe in infant baptism, Dürer may have referred to the Unitarians as Anabaptists because of their beliefs. Although this is pure speculation, Dürer used "Anabaptists" in sermons to show the importance of baptism for Lutherans. Dürer characterized the unwillingness of baptize children and thereby save their souls as "abuse."⁸⁵ Because Dürer believed that innocent children were put at risk of facing damnation, the Anabaptists were dangerous to the community. He further argued that baptism:

has been kept by the Christian church for 1500 years, and will remain until the end of the world: This is not a Carnival play, as the Anabaptists and the Epicureans say, who mock all, ... This is what [the pastor] concerns himself in the church, with baptisms, with reports, with sermons, confessions and other useful ceremonies.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ John Oyer, "Chapter IV: Luther and the Anabaptists," in *Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists*, " (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 116-121.

⁸⁵ "Die widertauffer miss brauchenn der tauf, wollen die kleyne kinder nicht taufenn, biss sie zu yrem verstand kommen undeyn eygenn galuben gewinnenn. Die Sacramentschender schemen sich seiner wort, sagen, Mann musse sie anders verstehenn, und sey nicht seyne meynung, wie die wort ann ynnnn selbst lautenn." Damasus Dürer, "Sermon of the third Sunday of Advent: Praise of John the Baptist Precursor of Christ," 24.

⁸⁶ "Diese Sacrament hat die Christliche kirch biss ynn die 1500 iar behaltenn, und wird auch biss zum ende der welt bleybenn: Nicht eyenn unnutz fastnacht spill, wie die widertauffer und Epicurer furwenden, die alles verspotenn... was mann ynn der kirchenn handelt, mit tauffenn, mit berichten, mit predigenn, beichtenn und anddern nützlichen Ceremonienn." Dürer, "Sermon of the Sunday after the Circumcision of Christ: The Flight of Christ into Egypt," 117.

As Dürr diverged from his discussion on baptism, he established that the ceremonies were “useful” and thus pastors needed to protect them. The point though with these comments was to teach the congregation the importance of keeping the baptism as he and other Lutherans conceived of it. The Anabaptists therefore became a rhetorical device to teach the importance of baptism to a people wary of all of the different sects that grew in Transylvania.

The enemies Dürr considered outside Christianity played a minor role compared to the Christian groups. Dürr categorically dismissed these different groups for rejecting Jesus and he mentioned of these groups function to point to undesirable behaviors of Christians. In the sermon “Fleeing the Edict of Caesar Augustus” he wrote, “the Jews, Turks and heathens scorn our father and beloved, holy Jesus Christ. They dishonor the father of the newly born infant of Bethlehem. Therefore we should honor as believers, what God has predestined of the world and we should console ourselves with godly mercy...”⁸⁷ Dürr lacked much of the feverish criticism that he held for these groups compared to his own Christian brethren. On one level, he made this point to show that doctrine as opposed to other religions. However, Dürr’s concern on the proliferation of creeds and confessions was much more threatening to him than those who were considered lost anyways. In another explanation of the baptism, he argued that this was a sign that Christians could use to “differentiate [themselves] from Jews, Turks, Tatars, and other unbelieving heathens.”⁸⁸ This was a mark of difference between Christians and everyone else and for that reason was extremely valuable to Dürr. While Dürr

⁸⁷ “Judenn, Tuerckenn, und heydenn, schmeheenn denn vater unsers liebenn heilandes Jhesu Christi, sie unehreenn denn vater des newgebornenn kindleins zu Bethleem. Drumb sollen ynn die glaubigenn ehreenn, welch got vonn der welt ausserwelet hatmir sollenn uns der goetlichenn gnadenn troestenn...” Dürr, “Christmas Sermon: Fleeing the Edict of Caesar Augustus,” 64.

⁸⁸ “Also hat der allmechtige got den Christenn ein heerzeychenn gebenn, den christlichenn glaubenn, damit werdenn sie unterschiedenn, vonn Juden, Tuerkenn, Taternn, und andern ungläubigenn heydenn...er gibt ym die besoldung, seyn gnad und den vollenn himmell mit allenn wolthatenn.” Dürr, “On the Circumcision of Christ”, 90.

expressed animosity for Jews, Turks, Tatars and heathens, he added a provocative group to the mix. When describing the need to find hold onto salvation through Christ because of one's mortality, Dürr commented that, "the love of our benign lord Christ helps alone, and does not help the Turks, the Tatars, nor the Muscovites."⁸⁹ Dürr's inclusion of the Muscovites provides an interesting inclusion of a group that reformers eventually deemed impossible to convert and reflected the Transylvanian context.

Evangelical pastors originally saw the possibility of converting members of the Orthodox Church. However, the efforts were not successful. Translations of Luther's Short Catechism circulated among Orthodox Christians during the late 1550s and early 1560s. These publications circulated with the intention of converting Orthodox priests to Lutheranism.⁹⁰ The Romanians were suspicious of these German works and saw them as an effort by the Saxons to control them.⁹¹ Eventually, attempts to convert Orthodox Christians ended. Thus, Dürr's inclusion of the Muscovites as a group of outsiders shows how the initial plans of Honterus and other Saxon reformers fell short of their expectations. Dürr did not consider them fellow Christians; instead, the "Muscovites" became simply an example used to warn the congregation at Kleinpold against turning away from Lutheranism.

Thus Dürr's criticisms of the other Christian groups/confessions and non-Christian groups served as a concrete way to stress distinctions and demonstrate to the congregation the benefits of the evangelical church. He systematically refused to name new religious groups and characterized their activities as harmful to Christians. The groups he named such

⁸⁹ "Aber wens mit diesem zeylichenn lebenn will auss seynn, das mann die augenn zudrueeckenn soll, da ists zeytt, das der heyland Jhesus Christus komme, den da kann weder keyser, weder vater noch mutter...noch ichenn Creatur helfenn. Allein der lieb freundlich herr Christus huelft, und huelft nicht den Türken, Tatternn, Moscouiternn..." Dürr, "New Years Day Sermon: On the Circumcision of Christ," 96.

⁹⁰ Keul, 81.

⁹¹ Ibid., 57-61.

as the Anabaptists played a rhetorical function to show the congregations examples of who truly did not understand necessary rites and ceremonies such as baptism. His characterization of the Anabaptists was especially harsh since Dürr compared them to atheists such as the Muscovites and to pagans. This development taught the laity what to avoid and created enemies that Dürr considered dangerous. Dürr advocated for a Lutheran church that had traditions that kept the right beliefs on baptism and communion, and would provide salvation to its followers at the expense of excluding other Christian groups.

Conclusion

Damasus Dürr's sermons responded in many ways to the challenges of fulfilling Honterus' ideas of the evangelical church in a multi-confessional region. While he sought to keep the rites and ceremonies of the Lutheran church, he also wanted the clergy to foster a functioning relationship with the community. Dürr also promoted the image of the clergyman as a martyr. Compared to Honterus' understanding of the clergy, Dürr emphasized more the clergyman's role as a servant of the laity and as a defender of truth. Dürr's rhetorical strategies criticized other Christian groups and their beliefs. The intent of these sermons was to both educate the laity on various theological controversies (in a polemical and watered-down way) but also to make sure that the laity would stay in the church. He presented Christians and non-Christians as buffoons who needlessly squabbled and who were unable to make the right decisions. Dürr was also decidedly more threatened by Christians groups than by other religious groups who often just served as examples of people who scorned Jesus and would go to Hell. His exclusionary rhetoric made the Lutheran church small. In these ways, Dürr set up a confessional identity for his Lutheran church that he systematically argued was

moderate, traditional, and a true source of Christian unity in the midst of unending
confessional strife.

Chapter III: Damasus Dürr in His World: Persecution and Injustice All through Tolerance

During the last fifteen years of his life, Dürr lived in the small village while the rest of Europe dealt with the problems of Protestantism. While Kleinpold did not experience the devastation of Ottoman conquest of Hungary or the persecution of Huguenots in France, Kleinpolders experienced plagues, famines, and tragedies to which Dürr responded. While Dürr created a sense of exclusion between new religious groups and Lutherans, he tried to reconcile this exclusion by creating an inclusive community among Lutherans.

In this chapter, I will argue that Damasus Dürr used accounts of persecution taking place inside and outside of Transylvania, biblical accounts of persecution, and his Lutheran education to draw his congregation together. Dürr sought to explain why persecution, be it religious or otherwise, happened to Lutherans. He first looked to political injustice where Dürr adopted the idea that kings were supposed to punish the wicked and subjects were supposed to be obedient to the king. He then used this description to show that some kings

acted like tyrants. However, his critiques of rulers were abstract and concerned rulers from antiquity, rather than pointing to specific tyrants of that age, he allowed the readers to come to their own conclusions about whom he referred. I argue that Dürr wanted the congregation to focus on salvation rather than on earthly misery. He also demonstrated the role pastors played as influencers of powerful rulers. His understanding of the role of prophets allowed him to comment on pastors who used their influence to lead their princes astray, particularly Unitarian Franz David who was at the court chaplain to Johann Sigismund Zapolya. Lastly, Dürr's descriptions of persecution emphasized the importance of keeping the community together. While Transylvania did not experience the level of religious persecution as other regions of Europe, Dürr sought to connect Christians suffering through religious persecution and the Kleinpolders suffering from plague and famine. Suffering and chaos confirmed unity in their Christian faith. He intended the theme of suffering to show that the afflictions Lutherans received throughout Europe were not a sign of judgment but a sign of their growth in the face of stacked odds. Honterus made commonality through their Saxon identity; Dürr used Lutheranism as a means to unify his congregation. In these ways, Dürr built a congregation that and united under the strength of the evangelical community and a sense of common suffering.

Dürr's Understanding of Secular Authority

Rather than criticizing the Zapolyas or the Bathorys for their rule in Transylvania, Dürr was respectful, if not neutral, when he discussed the present political realities. Instead, he criticized political rulers of the day through allusions to the classical and Biblical rulers that paralleled situations Dürr's contemporaries encountered. Much like Luther, he viewed the relationship of rulers and their subjects as God given, where rulers ought to be just and subjects needed to obey. Dürr created a respectful, abstract, and critical message about the

role of rulers in society and their persecution of Lutherans. Furthermore, his message on authority focused on the fact that their power would not last forever and that because of their faith, the Kleinpolders could focus more on their eternal riches rather than enjoying their earthly lives.

Dürr accepted Luther's ideas on secular authority while at the same time placing them in a context meaningful to his congregation. In his pamphlets, Luther wrote to both the "common man" as well as the social elites. Luther's ideas on this subject were complicated because he did not just write for both of these audiences. In the pamphlet "On Temporal Authority," Luther argued that commoners were "under obligation to serve and assist the sword (secular authority) by whatever means [they could]."⁹² While Luther advocated obedience to the state, he understood that there were times when rulers could be unjust. Furthermore, Luther was just as likely to criticize the rulers of the day for their pride and cruelty. In the "Admonition to Peace" which was written partially for the peasants of Swabia, Luther urged the rulers of Swabia to reflect on their oppressive acts against their subjects and scolded them for the trouble they caused their people. He argued that if "God intends to [either] punish you... [or] to stir up the people against you... what can I or my gospel do? Not only have we suffered your persecution and murdering and raging; we have also prayed for you and helped to protect and maintain your rule over the common people."⁹³ For Luther, the rulers and peasants needed to respect each other and their separate roles so that social harmony and religious life could flourish.

Dürr built on Luther's understanding of the roles of the secular authority and their subject but used Luther's ideas to condemn "tyrants." In the sermon "On the First Week of

⁹² Martin Luther, "On Temporal Authority," 45: 95.

⁹³ Martin Luther, "Admonition to Peace," 46:21.

Advent,” Dürr used the word “tyrant” to show the difficulties that rulers created for their subjects. He defined tyrants as “the worldly kings that often become tyrants, [who] have many desires that worry and encumber their poor subject... [and] the greater their own power and violence is, the greater sorrow they create on earth.”⁹⁴ This selfishness and lack of fulfillment of the duties of rulers resulted in suffering for the “common man.” Dürr then proceeded to describe that rulers “are god fearing, but it is, however, their fault, if their people are not helped out of their unhappiness.”⁹⁵ Rulers had to ensure that the people lived well. In these ways, Dürr confirmed the Lutheran idea of secular authority where order and harmony was key.

However, what Dürr wanted his congregation to focus less on tyranny and persecution but rather on the common humanity of rulers and the common people. He reflected upon the circumstances of his congregation and compared them to those in antiquity. In the first sermon on “First Week of Advent” given in 1569, Dürr presented many examples of rulers who were powerful. He detailed the lives of Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and other well-known great rulers of antiquity. The descriptions of these earthly rulers all center on their greatness and ability to control the events around them. For the villagers of Kleinpold who faced plagues and famines, life was hardly in their control. Kings had both power and control over them. He urged his congregation to avoid focusing on the power of social elites. Dürr explained that, “although the earthly rulers, sit year and day in their kingdoms, with great honors, leading a life given to pleasures and joys, it will not be forever. There will

⁹⁴ “Die weltliche koenige thunn nicht also, die geratenn offt zu tyrannenn, das sie lust habenn, die armenn unterthanenn zu bekummern und zu beschweeren... Je grosser derselbigenn macht und gewalt ist, desto grosser iammer richtenn sie ann auff erdenn.” Dürr, “Sermon of the first Sunday of Advent: The Birth of Christ,” 7.

⁹⁵ “das die fuerrstenn gotsfuerchtig sein, so ist dennoch der mangell ann ynenn, das sie yrem volk nicht uberall, nicht zu ieder zeytt, noch auss allem unglueck koennenn helffenn.” Dürr, Ibid.

come a bad hour, when they must abandon everything.”⁹⁶ He focused on the powerlessness of kings. He described heaven as eternal “and the peace shall be without end, there will be no devil, no man who is too strong, whom Christ will remove from their seats (of power).”⁹⁷ By urging his followers to focus less upon the power of others, he hoped to bring them together in their shared eternal future. This in turn was a way for Dürr to keep the congregation together and not concern themselves on power.

Pastors as Leaders during Times of Persecution

Dürr demonstrated that clergy were not just spiritual guides for the common people but also for the political elites. Through the examples of Old Testament prophets, Dürr argued that pastors who had influence on the elites could easily abuse their influence and lead them to embrace false religious ideas. Although Dürr did not often discuss Transylvanian politics in his sermons, in a sermon titled “The Widow and the Prophetess Anna,” Dürr gave a small glimpse into his own political views. Written in 1573, two years after the death of Johann Sigismund Zapolya, Dürr denounced Zapolya and praised Bathory for their respective beliefs (Unitarianism and Catholicism). Although Zapolya was the Prince who established tolerance for all his Protestant subjects, Dürr distrusted him because of Zapolya’s beliefs. Dürr remarked on prophets and their power to corrupt in order to demonstrate that they ought to defend Christian orthodoxy to prevent disorder within the church.

Dürr described the prophets (and certain pastors) as leaders of their communities. In these passages taken respectively from the sermons “Praise of John the Baptist Precursor of Christ”

⁹⁶ “Ob woll die irdischenn Regentenn, iar und tag ym reich sitzenn, ynn grossen ehren, lebenn ynn wolustenn, ynn freudenn, so werets nicht ewig, es kompt, ein boese stund, sie mussenn alles verlassenn.” Dürr, *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹⁷ “und des friedens kein end, es wird kein teuffl, kein mensch so stark sein, der Christum vonn seyem Stuel wird abstossenn koennenn.” Dürr, *Ibid.*, 3.

and “John’s Baptism of Christ,” Dürr showed how Jewish prophets served as advisors to the kings and guide kings to rule well. Dürr wrote:

From the pious faithful court chaplain is made a picture, of a pious, god-fearing teacher, that does not see the favor of the world, but rather he searched for God’s honor through the souls of men and bliss. For the almighty God calls more of such people at this time, who speak the Holy Word, and announce to men God’s will, to show them their sins and bring the betterment of life.⁹⁸

The court chaplains held very high positions and therefore held audiences that were more influential.

The Old Testament was full of prophets who were not only spiritual leaders but also leaders of great political power. He pointed to the examples of Moses and Isaiah. He wrote that, “Moses was not solely a preacher, but rather the ruler of the Jewish people for nearly 40 years. Isaiah was not the only teacher in Jerusalem, but also the highest counselor of the king.”⁹⁹ Yet, the Old Testament prophets were not powerful and influential, but they also had to guide the people and its rulers to believe properly. Dürr saw in Elijah an example of a good prophet. As Dürr interpreted the story of Elijah, Elijah was willing to confront King Ahab and Queen Jezebel with their sins despite threats of death. He wrote “Elijah was a valuable prophet of the lord, who served his God faithfully and proclaimed his will to the people: He pretended nothing, was not ambitious, and did not search for the favor of men. He

⁹⁸ “Abb den frommenn getrewenn hoffprediger wird furgehaltenn ein bild, eynes frommenn, gottsfurchitgenn leerers, der nicht der welt gunst angesehnn, sondernn gotts ehr und der menschen seelen selikeyt gesucht hat. Die weil nu der allmechtig got yziger zeytt nicht weniger solch personen berueft, die sein heyligs wort ym mund fuern, die den menschen des herrn willen verkündigen, denselbenn die suend anzeygenn, und zur besserung des lebens bringenn sollen.” Dürr, “Sermon of the third Sunday of Advent: Praise of John the Baptist Precursor of Christ,” 21.

⁹⁹ “Moses ist nicht allein ein prediger gewesen, sondern war auch die oberkeyt des judischenn volks fast bey die 40 iar. Esaias war zu Jerusalem nicht alleyn ein leerer, sondern auch ein oberster Rad des koenigs worternn” Dürr, „Sermon of the fourth Sunday of Advent: The Jewish Embassy and John’s Baptism of Christ,“ 33.

fought against idolatry powerfully...”¹⁰⁰ He showed the qualities that prophets or pastors needed to embody humility, obedience, and a willingness to defy authority. One of first teachers he alluded to was Elijah. These Old Testament leaders were meant to signal the proper role of pastors who used their power to lead their community.

Through his understanding of the role of prophets, Dürr was able to criticize political elites. In 1573, two years after Prince Johann Sigismund Zapolya passed away, he wrote the sermon on “The Widow and Prophetess Anna.” In the sermon, he wrote passages that praised the Catholic Stephen Bathory, the new Prince of Transylvania, and denounced Johann Sigismund. It is possible that this could have simply been political propaganda to find favor with the Bathorys. However, to his congregation, his remarks on the two princes were very much in line with Dürr’s ideas on prophets and new Christian groups.

Dürr saw the Unitarians as a threat to the Christian church and he saw David as a court chaplain who used his influence to corrupt Zapolya. Dürr wrote that, “under [Zapolya’s] rule violators of the Sacraments, Arians, and Anabaptists grew. He was prone to be favorable, benevolent to them more than vis-à-vis us.”¹⁰¹ Dürr’s harsh comments towards Johann Sigismund Zapolya stand in contrast to what he said about Catholic successor, Stephen Bathory. Although the latter wanted to bring the Counter-Reformation to Transylvania, Bathory tolerated Lutherans, Catholics, and Calvinists. Dürr wrote that, “now (god be praised) a more faithful prince is in power, who did not like the previous

¹⁰⁰“Elias war eyn tewrer, werder prophet des herrn, der seynem got trewlich dienet, und desselbigenn willenn dem volk verkuendiget: Er heuchelt niemandem, war nicht ehrgeyzig, sucht nicht gunst bey den menschen. Er straft die abgoetterey gewaltiglich.” Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “so wuchsenn unter seynem Regiment, Sakramentenschender, Arianer, widertauffer. Denselber war er geneygt, er war ynen guenstig, wolthetig, mehr, als denn unserichtenn.’ Dürr, “Sermon on the Sunday after Christmas: The Widow and Prophetess Anna,” 83.

understanding, and who was an enemy of violators of the Sacraments and Arians.”¹⁰² Dürr understood the political reality of keeping the church in the good graces of the ruler and he may have been more inclined to tolerate Bathory over Zapolya because the former was not a Unitarian. He presented the alliance between Bathory and the Lutherans that made sense because they both suppressed Unitarians. However, this commentary would have shown to the congregation an example of how bad pastors could lead their rulers away from what Dürr interpreted as Christian truth. Thus, Dürr used these examples to support his argument that certain prophets should not have influenced over earthly rulers as they cause discord and chaos.

Surviving Persecution

Creating a sense of Christian unity between Lutherans across Europe and his congregation was another way to keep control over his congregation. Religious persecution was not a major issue for the Transylvanian Saxons. However, Dürr sought to create a commonality between the Kleinpolders who were “persecuted” by famine and plague and those who suffered religious persecution. He saw in these situations a sense of suffering. Dürr could both show the similar instances of suffering as well as educate Saxons about the issues facing other churches. Thus, Dürr wanted to encourage the community to rally behind their evangelical background and stay together as a community in spite of their suffering and unite with other believers.

Dürr anchored his idea of persecution in his understanding of Luther as well as his hostility for the dangers of the outside world. In the sermon “On the Flight of Christ,” Dürr described how Mary and Joseph fled with Jesus to Egypt after Herod began to order the

¹⁰² “nach dem (got lob) ein frommer furest ym Regiment sizt, dem das vorige wesenn nicht gefellt, der denn Sacramentschendern, denn Arianern feind ist.” Dürr, *Ibid.*, 84.

deaths of infants throughout Judaea. Throughout this sermon, Dürr revealed his ideas of suffering and persecution and how this was both an experience that could divide the congregation or drive them together. In the sermon, Dürr asserted that, “we live in danger on land, in danger on water, in danger in cities, in danger in all corners.”¹⁰³ Dürr interpreted the danger as a sign that could drive people away from sin as they readied themselves for God’s judgment. While fleeing difficult situations would have been an appropriate response to war, Dürr questioned his congregation on “whether poor Christ should have preserved his neck through only flights, when the tyrants caused the persecutions.”¹⁰⁴ His discussion of persecution reflected the difficulties created by fleeing persecution as and may show some Lutheran influence. In the treatise “On Councils and the Church,” Luther stated that Christians “must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh... and the only reason they must suffer is that they steadfastly adhere to Christ and God’s word.”¹⁰⁵ Although Luther also advanced ideas of resisting those trials, Dürr saw that advising his small community of 150 villagers to fight against earthly princes would have ended in disaster. Taking up these ideas, Dürr added “that no creatures in heaven or on earth can change the resolved counsel of God... as Paul has said: Christ is my life and my death is my victory.”¹⁰⁶ Rather than worrying about events that were out of their control, Dürr urged his congregation to find comfort in Christ and the

¹⁰³ “Lebenn ynn gefahr zu landt, ynn gefahr zu wasser, ynn gefahr ynn stedtenn, ynn gefahr ynn allenn winckellnn.” Dürr, “Sermon of the Sunday after the Circumcision of Christ: The Flight of Christ into Egypt,” 105.

¹⁰⁴ “Ob ein armer Christ den halfs nur flux darhalten soll, wenn die tyrannenn vervolgunenn anrichtenn.” Dürr, *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁰⁵ Martin Luther, “On Councils and the Church”, 41:164-165.

¹⁰⁶ “das keyne Creatur ym himmell und auff erdenn denn beschlossenn Radt gottes endernn kann... mitt dem heyligenn Paulo sprechenn sollenn: Christus ist meynn lebenn, und sterbenn mein gewinn.” Dürr, “Sermon of the Sunday after the Circumcision of Christ: The Flight of Christ into Egypt,” 109.

Gospel. Dürr intended this exhortation to keep them strong in their faith and united as a community.

Dürr tried to explain religious persecution to his congregation. Although Kleinpold experienced difficult situations, religious persecution was a very different matter entirely. Dürr described why some people became martyrs. While Dürr recognized that it was permissible to flee difficult circumstances, Dürr did not believe that fleeing was always feasible. He wrote that for some Christians:

All circumstances, all causes, means and ways are cut off, so that the few faithful can flee from persecution with good certainty, neither can they run away from tyrants, nor hold onto life, but rather one must be undaunted and encouraged, one must hold still, and we must let the blood be shed over the confession of our faith. Thus, temporarily many martyrs were created, that they were willingly murdered by hand, under the sword, or walked into the fire, and they were strangled. Then they took solace from the promise of God: Whoever wishes to keep his life, will lose it, whoever will lose his life, will keep it.¹⁰⁷

This invocation of Matthew 16:25 confirmed both Dürr's and Luther's understanding of the life of a believer.¹⁰⁸ People had to react first to Christ and think of the lives of others rather than their own. In return, the Christians could take comfort in knowing they had an eternity with Christ. Yet, Dürr did understand that there were moments which justified fleeing. The plague of 1573, for instance, forced Dürr to leave Kleinpold for a short period. Dürr wrote that if a Christian could "...flee persecution, if he has the time, circumstances, and the

¹⁰⁷ "Die alle umbstende, alle ursachenn, mittell und weg abschneydenn, Das nirchen frommer mitt gutem gewissenn ynn der vervolgung kuend flihenn, weder denn tyrannenn entlauffenn, weder das lebenn erhaltenn, sondernn man must unverzagt und beherzt seyenn, mann must still haltenn, und das blut uber dem bekentnues des glaubens vergissen lassenn. Hiedurch sein zeytlich vil mertreer verursacht wordenn, das sie denn moerdernn williglich, ynn die hend, unter die schwerter, und uns fewr gelauffenn seyenn, habenn sich lassenn wuergenn und toedtenn. Denn sie tröstetenn sich mitt der verheysung des herns: Wer sein lebenn erhaltenn will, der wirdts verlirenn, wer aber sein lebenn verleuert umb meynet willen, der wirdt erhaltenn." Dürr, *Ibid.*, 106.

means, which he would need to flee.”¹⁰⁹ In that same vein, Luther had written a pamphlet “Whether One May Flee from the Plague,” that declared similar ideas about whether one was justified to flee. Luther explicated that “according to Holy Scripture, God sent his four scourges: pestilence, famine, sword, and wild beasts. If it is permissible to flee from one or the other in clear conscience, why not from all four?”¹¹⁰ Preserving one’s life was part of one’s duty as a Christian but not out of selfishness but out of a sense of Christian unity and maintaining the community. Contrasting with the previous message that said to endure all suffering, Dürer seemed to go back and forth, as he could not have come up with one answer that could fit all situations. Instead, much like Luther, he tried to create different standards that could apply for different situations. However, when fleeing he urged them to keep order. Dürer asked, “if one has the means to travel through occupied, Ottoman territory, thieves, and devils and one has a convoy of people. Such convoy should furnish all Christians and by this we learn: If God gives comfort the danger flees, we should stay with God and not search elsewhere.”¹¹¹ Having a convoy meant that even if the town had to disperse, they would still be able to keep some semblance of unity. It also helped to preserve the lives of others in the midst of physical and spiritual difficulties that they could encounter in their journeys.

For Dürer, hope came from understanding that persecution would not go on forever and that the people should still hold onto their lives. Dürer had to flee Kleinpold with his family and congregation and in so doing; he fled to preserve his family. As the holy prophets had

¹⁰⁹ “Das ein Christener mitt gutem gewissenn fur dem ungluck und gefahr kann flihen ynn der vervolgung, wenn er zeytt, umbstende und mittl fur ym hat, das er kann flihen.” Dürer, *Ibid.*, 107.

¹¹⁰ Luther, “On Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague,” *Martin Luther's basic theological writings*, 3rd ed. Online. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 476.

¹¹¹ “Also ists gutt wandernn und flihen, wens die noth erfodert, auch mittenn durch Tuerckenn, rauber und teueffell, wenn mann solch gefaerten und geleitsleuet umb sich hat. Solches geleits sollenn sich alle Christen zu ym versehenn, und dabey lernenn: Wenn got bequemlikeyt gibtt der gefahr zu entflihen, sollenn mir mitt bleybenn got nicht versuechen.” Dürer, “Sermon of the Sunday after the Circumcision of Christ: The Flight of Christ into Egypt,” 109.

done, he took refuge and went into hiding so that he could come back to take care of his parish. He reminded his congregation in the same sermon that:

“There are many lands. If one chases you out of one, so you flee to another. There are cities, castles, deserts, forests, mounts and earth, where one can go. We read from many holy people, that through the same means they found respite.”¹¹²

These were ideas that Dürr must have remembered when plague and famine came to Kleinpold and compelled Dürr to go elsewhere temporarily. Thus, a plague may have been part of God’s judgment but Dürr did not expect nor want his congregation to become martyrs. He used these terrible circumstances to draw commonality within his congregation and drive them together through their shared experiences.

The Rise of a Protestant Identity

Through the latter part of the 16th century, Protestant movements and ideas spread through Europe. For Damasus Dürr, their dissemination showed how proper Christianity was beginning to take hold in Europe. Dürr implicitly argued that because of Luther’s ideas spread to more people. These Christians could collectively find faith. In his sermon “On the Circumcision of Christ,” Dürr established a parallel between the rise of the Israelites from Abraham to David to the rise of Christianity and then to the rise of Protestantism. These parallels demonstrated not only growth in the number of Protestants but the difficulties they faced. The sermon titled “On the Flight of Christ” established a view that evangelicals were justified through their suffering for the faith and that they too would enjoy the promise of the Israelites and first Christians. Through these ideas, Dürr sought to connect his congregation with the legacy of the Israelites and Christians.

¹¹² “Es sein vil landt, iagt mann dich auss eynem, so flihe uns ander land, Es sein stedt, schloesser, wustungenn, waeld, berg und gruend, dahinn mann sich kann vertrichenn, Wie mir von vilenn heyligenn lesenn, die durch dieselbige mittl ir lebenn gefristet habenn.” Dürr, *Ibid.*, 106.

When Dürr directed his attention to discussing the Jews of the Old Testament, he saw a story full of hardship and political turmoil. Dürr emphasized to his congregation God's promise in the story of the Israelites. He wrote about how Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people, came as a stranger to what would eventually become Israel. Abraham however was in a humble position. Dürr wrote, "I am a foreigner (he said to the Hittites) give me a gravesite, so that I can bury my dead that come with me."¹¹³ Taken from Genesis 23, Dürr used this story to show the humble beginnings of the Israelites who had to beg for a gravestone rather than owning one.¹¹⁴ This humble beginning for the stranger may have appealed to Saxons who were the descendants of immigrants who migrated from other German speaking lands into Transylvania during the 12th through 14th centuries. This humble beginning however allowed the Israelites under Moses and Aaron to become a people though a people that lived in persecution. Even though Israelites united, Dürr reminded his congregation "the Jewish people, they lived in Egypt in a foreign land for 215 years, in the deserts for 40 years, in Babylonian captivity 70 years."¹¹⁵ He mentioned their captivity in Egypt and Babylon – a story that would have been salient to the Saxons who lived under the threat of possible invasion from either the Ottomans or the Hapsburgs. This story of unity was an encouragement. Dürr proceeded to show in another example how Christians had spread throughout the world. Dürr also pointed to the similar fate of Christians among the "Muscovites, among the Tatars, in Arabia, in Asia and Africa; so wonderful does the holy

¹¹³ "Ich bin ein fremdbling (sprach er zu denn Hetithern) gebt mir ein begrebnues, das ich meynenn todtenn begrabe der fur mir ligt" Dürr, Ibid.,104.

¹¹⁴ Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, "I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead." (Genesis 23:3-4).

¹¹⁵ "Moses, Aaron sampt dem judischenn volck, lebetenn ynn Egipto ynn eynem frembdenn landt 215 iar, ynn der wustenn 40 iar, ym Babilonischenn gefenknues 70 iar..." Dürr, Ibid., 104.

God illumine his church on earth ... that out of all of the people he chooses many.”¹¹⁶ The spread of the Christianity paralleled the beginnings of the Reformation that had spread from throughout Europe and among the Saxons. Dürr showed how Lutherans observed many forms of tyranny and it began with the persecution of Luther himself. Dürr described:

How did it go in Luther’s times when the heavenly teaching of the Gospel was seen? He had many friends, and many adopted his teaching, he was held for a holy man and prophets. However, the Papacy, the emperor caused persecution, and [the Pope] wrote in all countries, that man should burn Lutherans, take their goods, and expel them from their houses and courts¹¹⁷.

However, when Dürr described the conditions of the Lutherans throughout the world, he again showed the great misfortune they endured for their beliefs. He described how Catholics forced Lutherans to leave their homes, perhaps pointing to the beginning efforts of the Counter-Reformation. He wrote:

What a gruesome persecution is now happening in Germany. The Papists have chased away many Lutherans who have relocated their wives, children...in less than ten years, many Spaniards have become evangelicals in Spain, in Wales, in France and in England, like the cattle that are being choked, many are burned, many imprisoned, many drowned, strangled, broken on the wheel and tortured with rare forms of torture.¹¹⁸

At the same time, Dürr described other places where Reformation ideas have spread and commented on the ruthless treatment that these believers endured.

¹¹⁶ “Es sein auch Christen bey denn Moscoviternn, bey denn tatternn, ynn Arabia, ynn Asia und Affrica: So wunderbarlich erhellt der ewige gott seyne kirch auff erdenn, so wunderbarlich samlet er yumm ein gemeynn, auss allerley voelkernn nimpt er etliche.” Dürr, Ibid., 104.

¹¹⁷ “Wie gings zu des Luthers zeytenn, der die himlisch leer das Evangelium ansahet? Er hatt vil freuend, vil namen die leer ann, hieltenn ynn fur eynenn heyligenn Mann und propheten. Als aber der Bapst, der keyser eyne vervolung anrichtetenn, schreybetenn auss ynn alle lender, das mann sollt die Lutrischenn verbrennenn, die gütter nehmen, von hauss und hoff veriagenn” Dürr, Ibid., 106.

¹¹⁸ “Wie ein grausam vervolung ist dann neylich geschehenn, Das ynn teutschemlandt die Bepstler vil Lutrischenn veriagt habenn, die mitt weib, kindernn, umbgezogenn seynn, habenn vom almuss gelebt. Innerhalb zehenn iarnn, sein vil evangelischer ynn Hispanienn, ym wehlischenn land, ynn Frankreych und ynn Engelland, wie das vieh gewuert wordenn, vil verbrennet, vil gefangenn, ertrenckt gespiset, geradbrochenn, und mit selzamer marter auffgeerbeytet wordenn.” Dürr, Ibid., 104

There are few instances in Dürer's sermons of where he described current events apart from those that happened in Kleinpöld. However, Sienerth notes that contemporary Catholic sermons in Transylvania tended to use the same critiques of Luther's ideas as they had during the 1520s. Dürer, on the other hand, used current events to inform his critiques of Catholicism and other confessional backgrounds.¹¹⁹ In two instances of persecution, Dürer detailed the accounts of persecution in the Netherlands and in France. He remarked on the situations not of Lutherans but of Huguenots and Calvinists. In a particular passage, Dürer decried the action the Duke of Alba took against people in the Netherlands and called him, "a cruel enemy of the Lutherans. He was hostile and sufficiently hard ... he judged many imprisoned Christians."¹²⁰ However, he speaks not of reformed but of the "Lutrischen" people. Although there were Lutherans in the region, they were not the main target of persecution among the Catholics but rather Calvinists. While Dürer is referring to the Duke of Alba's rule of the Netherlands, Dürer referred to the Calvinists as Lutherans. Doing so served two functions. Rather than point out differences between Lutherans and Calvinists as he did in many sermons, Dürer simply chose to ignore this difference in order to prove a sense of community among the persecuted people. Second, the Duke of Alba had fought against Lutherans during the Schmalkaldic War and thus Dürer avoided confusing his congregation by not discussing different denominations. Throughout Dürer's clerical career, Dürer rarely mentioned the names of different Protestant groups in his sermons. Dürer exclaimed these people in other sermons as incorrectly partaking in the Sacrament. The followers of Calvin's ideas were also the people who had influence among the Hungarian nation. Yet, looking at the larger theme of

¹¹⁹ Sienerth, 195.

¹²⁰ "...ein grausamer feind der Lutrischenn. Damit er nu sein feindselig hertz gungsam offenbar macht, liess er ein fort vil gefangner Christenn richtenn." Dürer, "Sermon of the Sunday after the Circumcision of Christ: The Flight of Christ into Egypt," 104.

his sermons, these confessional differences did not play a significant role. His accounts of international episodes did not discuss religious issues but created a sense of unity for Christians. As a result, Dürr hoped to lead the congregation to believe that the “Lutherans” in the Netherlands were connected and similar to the evangelicals living in Kleinpold.

In the same vein, he discusses the events that took place during the St. Bartholomew’s Massacre that killed many Huguenots in Paris in 1572. He did not pay attention to the denominational differences between evangelically minded believers but instead reacted with shock as he learned of the tragedy. Dürr seemed to be agitated by the fact that this event took place during a wedding, as he recounted:

In Paris France, the blood of many Christian nobles was shed over the Gospel. Through swirling winds, nothing holy came. Only the devil spun. It was resolved that the king of France had his sister engaged to pious blissful princes of Navarre in a hostile and dog-like [manner], than with a faithful true heart. When the wedding should take place, the prince came ... and pulled out [his sword], with his greatest lords, [and killed] the nobility, together with women and children, who generally were Evangelical.¹²¹

The wedding between Henry of Navarre and Marguerite of France was intended to help unite the country. Instead of unity, Dürr claimed that the Catholics were committing atrocities and murders against innocent people. Whether he knew that the Huguenots were Calvinists is unclear and irrelevant. Instead, he appealed to the one thing Protestants had in common with each other: a love of the Gospel. Thus, Dürr seemed to ask his congregation to be compassionate to these fellow believers so that they would realize that this event was a

¹²¹ “das tzu Pariss ynn Frankreich, vil christliches edelblutt uber dem Evangelio ist vergossenn wordenn, durch geschwinde ist, welch keynn heylig, allein der teuffl gespunnenn hatt. Es war beschlossen, das der König vonn Frankreich dem frommenn gottseligen fürstenn zu Navarrenn, seyne schwester verlobet und vertrawett hatt, mehr mit feindseligem hundischem, denn mitt frommem getrewem herzenn. Als aber die hochzeyt mitt grossem gepreng sollt gehalten werdenn, kompt der fuerst ...[und] mitt seynenn grösstenn herrn, grabenn und edelleutenn, sampt weyb und kindernnm, die gemeyniglich gar Evangelisch warnn.” Dürr, *Ibid.*, 105.

tragedy for the Lutherans as well. To Dürr, these Protestants did not deserve to die. Persecution was not judgment but rather the testing of God's people. Through these descriptions of persecution, Dürr showed his congregation the importance of remaining together through crises, turmoil, and persecution.

Conclusion

Damasus Dürr had many strategies to draw his congregation together with the larger Christian community. Dürr used stories of sadness and persecution that came from current events, the Bible, and history in order to show that suffering united them. Dürr criticized tyranny in an abstract way and he allowed the readers to come to their own conclusions about whom he wrote. He directed his congregation to focus on their heavenly future rather than on their dismal reality. In addition, Dürr discussed political events with his congregation. He criticized Unitarian Franz David and Johann Sigismund Zapolya for having allowed Unitarianism and ergo (so he would argue) false teaching to rise. Lastly, Dürr intended the stories of suffering throughout Europe to draw compassion and sympathy from the congregation. Dürr sought to create a common link between the Christians suffering through religious persecution who were suffering as Kleinpolders were. In these ways, Dürr built a congregation united through their common suffering with Christians throughout Europe and through history.

Conclusion

Damasus Dürr responded to the religious changes by closing the door of his church to outsiders. For him, Luther and the Saxon churches created the boundaries that he was content with defending. However, Dürr's sermons are not just about the exclusion of others. He responded to situations that were frightening and reassured his congregation that there was hope. They could find hope in their common Christian brethren who suffered in elsewhere in Europe. They could know that their congregation would not fall to pieces so long as there was a strong pastor to guide them. While Dürr fought other confessional groups, he seemed to be an ardent defender of his congregation.

Honterus wrote texts that guided the Reformation but the process of implementation took place with pastors like Dürr. As a well-educated pastor, he tried to show the laity the importance of theology. Making sermons relevant to the laity is not just a subject for today's congregation but one that had special salience to Dürr. Theological disputations happened in all parts of Europe concerning subjects like adiaphora, infant baptism, communion, that were complicated theological conversations. While some theologians debated, pastors in villages and the countryside had to teach the laity. They could not give every single detail to them so they had to convey important messages through simplified and polemical language. While Honterus tried to make reform practical, the inclusive attitudes Honterus had could not anticipate increasing confessional diversification. Calvinists and Antitrinitarians were not just confined influenced Lutherans. As a result, Dürr used his sermons as a weapon to fight back against this encroachment. He preached to a small village of only one hundred and fifty people. He experienced and endured the trials that many ministers went through: an apathetic

laity, the difficulties of keeping the community together, and properly counseling his congregation.

Dürr wrote on a plethora of subjects that I could not begin to cover. His opinions ranged beyond theological matters to socio-economic issues and education. However, his sermons do not go as far as one would imagine and historians could potentially complicate our understanding through evaluating Dürr's impact in Kleinpold. These sermons offer an insight into how Dürr and other Lutheran pastors responded to the political and social changes that took place in Transylvania. This region, which was at the very edges of Western Europe, sheds light on how inclusion and exclusion worked. While religious tolerance is praised as an evolution of modernity, tolerance did not mean acceptance. Overwhelmingly, historians studying the Reformation are inclined to study large figures – Luther, Melancthon, maybe Honterus- yet Dürr offers a special view into how a “reformation” could be implemented. Another connection that I had not been able to cover was Dürr's connections to other pastors outside of Kleinpold and particularly with various bishops. Historians could study the influences of Dürr's sermons and they could study how the laity received these messages. As sermons only show the pastor's side of the work, more research needs to be done on how other Saxon pastors implemented the ideas of Luther into their own churches.

Creating a Lutheran church in Transylvania came through the work of pastors like Damasus Dürr. They needed to convince their congregation that the reforms taking place were not too disruptive and that they were for their betterment. Otherwise, their flock would flee to other religious groups. Dürr's sermons serve as a testimony for how pastors sought to win back their churches. In Christianity, where there were “many brothers but few friends,” Dürr argued that it was their brothers and not the Lutherans who created trouble. In the end,

Honterus opened the church doors to create an inclusive community; Dürr closed those doors to protect his congregation.

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