

## A TRIBUTE TO MARTIN LUTHER

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE ABOUT THIS ISSUE OF AUSS

The past year, 1983, was a rich and memorable one for events and publications giving widespread recognition and honor to the pioneer Protestant Reformer and great religious leader of the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, whose life and achievements, probably more than those of any other individual since the apostolic era, have influenced the course of subsequent Christianity. The occasion for this celebration, which was virtually world-wide, was the quincentennial of Luther's birth in 1483.

The present year marks another important anniversary pertaining to Luther. It was 450 years ago that the first edition of Luther's complete German Bible translation appeared from the press. This Bible translation was undoubtedly the Reformer's greatest single achievement, both from the standpoint of its dissemination of Scriptural knowledge throughout the German lands and with respect to its significant influence in molding the subsequent written German language.

In recognition of these two important Luther anniversary years, the present issue of *AUSS* is devoted to materials that relate directly to the Reformer and his achievements. These materials are:

1. A general introduction to Luther through (a) a captioned pictorial review of fifteen portraits of the Reformer selected and presented by William H. Brunie, and (b) a biographical sketch, plus a chronological table listing some of the more notable events in Luther's own career and in the contemporary world during his lifetime.
2. Six general articles dealing with various aspects of Luther's life and work.
3. A review of current issues in Luther studies, with special notice of some highlights of the Luther Jubilee Year.

Further general comments about the material in each section are provided immediately before the section itself.

It should be added that the Heritage Room of the James White Library of Andrews University has certain materials of special interest in connection with Luther studies. Among these is the "Trefz Collection" of a number of sixteenth-century pamphlets, most of which were produced by Luther. Mary Jane Mitchell, Director Emeritus of the James White Library, is currently preparing a catalog of this collection; and it is our plan to add this catalog in a Supplement to a later issue of *AUSS*. We also plan to include a number of photographic reproductions of some of the more striking woodcuts (usually on the title-pages) from pamphlets in the collection.

The Heritage Room also has a number of other valuable and useful special collections, as well as numerous individual research items; and its Curator, Louise Dederen, will provide for our same Supplement some information on several of these collections. In addition, we will make reference to, and include a few photographic reproductions from, some early Luther Bibles on loan to the Heritage Room by Chester J. Gibson, a prominent dentist in Oregon, who has kindly made a portion of his significant Bible collection available for display and research at Andrews University.

Finally, I wish here to express gratitude to all who have worked so faithfully to make this Luther issue of *AUSS* possible. This includes, of course, the *AUSS* staff itself, members of whom at the initial stages also made helpful suggestions as to the projected contents. In addition, our Andrews University Seminary colleague Daniel A. Augsburg, Program Secretary of the American Society for Reformation Research, deserves special mention for his helpfulness concerning contacts to be made, as well as for general suggestions for the project. And last, but not least, grateful acknowledgement is expressed to Andrews University for some special funding that has made this project manageable from a fiscal standpoint.

To all who have participated as authors and in all other capacities, I express herewith my deepest appreciation and thanks. And we of the *AUSS* staff trust that the contents of this Luther issue of our journal may be especially enjoyable and helpful to all of you, our cherished readers.

Kenneth A. Strand  
Editor