

MYSTICISM, SPIRITUALISM AND RADICALISM IN THE THEOLOGIES
OF KARLSTADT AND MÜNTZER

BY

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

Recent literature concerning Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt has attempted to separate him from the late medieval mystical tradition and, therefore, from the mystical spiritualism of Thomas Müntzer. It is our contention, however, that during the period from 1523 - mid 1525, the thought of both Andreas von Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer stemmed mainly from the same source: the popularized late medieval mystical tradition of Johannes Tauler and the Theologia Germanica. This tradition inspired an anti-Lutheran soteriology based on an experienced faith. It helped to lead both reformers to reject the ceremonial and sacerdotal systems of the Wittenberg and Catholic churches. In turn, it formed an intellectual underpinning for their radical social positions. Mysticism tied Karlstadt and Müntzer together and separated them from Luther.

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Introduction

The early years of the Reformation were a time of political and theological upheaval and dissent. In the wake of his stand against the church's use of relics and indulgences Luther attracted strong support for his actions in Saxony. However, as early as 1520 political and theological differences among his Saxon followers began to appear. By 1523, these dissenters were not only opposing the established church, but rebelling against what they regarded as Luther's too slow moving reformation. Hans-Jürgen Goertz has recently described the sometimes chaotic political and theological atmosphere during the early Reformation period: "Das reformatorische Lager war ein Sammelbecken heterogener Gestalten und Bewegungen. Hier strömten vorsichtige Reformer und revolutionäre Enthusiasten, Bedächtige und Ungeduldige, Weitsichtige und Tiefgründige, Schlagfertige und Zauderer zusammen."¹ From this disorderly atmosphere sprang Thomas Müntzer (ca.1489-1525) and Andreas von Karlstadt (ca.1486-1541), both of whom spent several of the early years of the Reformation in Saxony opposing Luther's movement. The theological relationship between these two dissenting reformers is the subject of this thesis. By understanding the similarities and dissimilarities in their thought we can further define their place in the Reformation in general and in the Radical

Reformation in particular.

In his The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (1911), the sociologist Ernst Troeltsch identifies three categories of Christianity, which coincide with the way in which each relates to the society around it. The church-type is distinguished by the assertion that the institutional universal church is the only true Christian organ of grace and redemption. The church accepts the whole community and is able to compromise with worldly realities.² Luther's church and the Catholic church are included in this category. Uncompromising and visibly organized to separate itself from the evils of the world the sect-type limits its membership to the godly few. According to Troeltsch, the Anabaptists were sectarians because they attempted to form genuine communities of disciples, which were organized around the sacrament of adult baptism and divorced from worldly sin.³ Individualism and spiritualism are the distinguishing characteristics of the third type of Christianity, mysticism. For Troeltsch, Karlstadt and Müntzer were mystics because they maintained that the individual can communicate with the Holy Spirit without the mediation of the church or scripture.⁴ Having lost its purpose, the church was discarded in favour of an invisible group of those who accepted the Holy Spirit.⁵ Unlike the sect, the mystics do not form a visible community of believers which separates itself from the profane. Thus,

Troeltsch distinguishes Karlstadt and Müntzer from Luther and the Anabaptists.

George Williams combines Troeltsch's sectarians and mystics in his The Radical Reformation (1962). Müntzer, Karlstadt and the Anabaptists are categorized as radical reformers in contrast to the magisterial reformers Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. Williams asserts that the Radical Reformation should take its position along side the Magisterial Reformation and the Counter-Reformation as a distinctive movement.⁶ The Radical Reformation distinguished itself from its magisterial counterpart by espousing more than just the reform of the established Church. It encouraged "a radical rupture with the immediate past and all its institutions and was bent upon either the restoration of the primitive Church or the assembling of a new church, all in an eschatological mood far more intense than anything to be found in normative Protestantism or Catholicism."⁷ Anabaptists, Spiritualists, which included Karlstadt and Müntzer, and Evangelical Rationalists were a part of the Radical Reformation. Whereas the Spiritualists emphasized the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual and de-emphasized the written or spoken word, the Anabaptists attempted to recover the apostolic community of believers found in the New Testament.

Williams' spiritualism and Anabaptism coincide with Troeltsch's mysticism and sect-type. However, Williams

elaborates his view by splitting his three types each into three subgroups. He places Karlstadt and Müntzer in the subgroup of revolutionary spiritualists who, like all spiritualists, filled the void between humanity and God with the Holy Spirit, which worked in the soul of the individual. But, unlike other spiritualists, they "took seriously the structures of church and society" and felt called by the Spirit "to usher in the social righteousness of the millennium...."⁸

However, more recent studies have disputed this categorization. In his analysis of Karlstadt's thought from 1517-1525 Ronald Sider asserts that Karlstadt's Orlamünde theology (1523-1525) was too close to Luther's doctrines of sola scriptura and sola gratia to be considered mystical or spiritualistic. Although his Orlamünde theology did share the mystics' idea of sin as egocentrism and the terms "ground of the soul" and Gelassenheit, the process of self renunciation, Karlstadt's thought was substantially different from mystical theology.⁹ Sider explains that Karlstadt did not share the mystical premise that humanity had the ability to become deified through the process of self denial, Gelassenheit. The main theme of mysticism was, according to Sider, the essential or ontological union of human and God, a premise which did not coincide with Karlstadt's assertion of an imperfect union of the human will with God's will. Moral likeness rather than essential

union was Karlstadt's theme.¹⁰ He remained firm on Luther's denial of free will in the process of salvation; Gelassenheit was a gift from God not a human activity.¹¹

Sider notes that Karlstadt continued to accept the important Reformation doctrine of the complete sinfulness of humanity.¹² A complete renunciation of one's sins and, therefore, a complete regeneration of the soul was impossible when even so-called "good works" were sinful. Unlike the mystics, Karlstadt equated the heart with the "ground of the soul," which was not an un-created part of the soul, as the mystic Meister Eckhardt asserted. Nor was it separate from the powers of the soul, the reason and the will, as in the mystical writings of Johannes Tauler.¹³ According to Sider, Karlstadt's spiritualism was kept to a minimal level because he continued to use the scriptures not the Holy Spirit as his main theological authority. Despite affirming that the Spirit had a direct role in calling ministers and in the exegetical task, Karlstadt's spiritualism was minimized due to his insistence that a scriptural interpretation through the Spirit should not contradict other scriptural passages.¹⁴ In other words, the final authority on scriptural interpretations was not the Spirit, but the scriptures themselves. Sider notes that Karlstadt's spiritualism was further diminished because of his continued belief that the communication of grace from God to the soul was not mediated through the Holy Spirit

alone, but through the external word.¹⁵ Concluding, Sider asserts that even during his middle period Karlstadt was much more of a Lutheran-Augustinian than a mystic-spiritualist.

In his book Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements (1984) Calvin Pater, like Sider, attacks the notion that Karlstadt was a revolutionary spiritualist. Pater's thesis is that Karlstadt was a theological inspiration for the Baptist movements, and thus should be categorized with the Anabaptists, apart from the revolutionary influence of Müntzer. Pater asserts that Karlstadt was a pacifist who did not condone physical, only internal resistance to evil, an idea which might have influenced the Swiss Anabaptists' view of dissent.¹⁶ In his letters to Müntzer, Karlstadt refused to join Müntzer's revolutionary league on the grounds that it would be against God's will to fight with the sword rather than the Word.¹⁷

In 1523, Karlstadt stopped performing infant baptism in Orlamünde. According to Pater, his movement toward a more radical view of baptism was not due to a growing spiritualism, but to a strict biblicism. Karlstadt spiritualized the sacrament of baptism by separating the sign and significance, or the outer act and inner experience of baptism, which meant that the visible ceremony was not necessary, and the inner experience crucial for salvation.¹⁸ However, this spiritualization was derived not within the

open context of the free spirit, but from a limiting biblicism.¹⁹ Whereas, the spiritualist Müntzer could discredit infant baptism, while continuing pragmatically to baptize infants,²⁰ Karlstadt refused to baptize infants because the practice could not be found in the scriptures. Unlike Müntzer's, Karlstadt's spiritualization of baptism was limited by rigid biblical law. Although Karlstadt's theology moved in a more radical direction in 1522 and 1523, his theology remained consistently based on the written word, which was, in turn, the source for his radicalism. Pater notes that because of their rejection of infant baptism a line of influence might be drawn from the Zwickau Prophets to Müntzer, Karlstadt and the Zürich Baptists. Still, the differences between the first two and the latter two were more important than their similarities.²¹ For Pater, Karlstadt's Orlamünde theology was not spiritualist, but Baptist.

James Stayer in a recent article entitled "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism: The Return of the Repressed"²² agrees with Pater that the rejection of infant baptism by Karlstadt, Müntzer and the Zwickau Prophets influenced the adoption of adult baptism by the Anabaptists in 1525. However, Stayer does not denigrate the importance of Müntzer and the Zwickau Prophets in considering Swiss Anabaptist origins. In turn, he emphasizes the similarities between the Saxon radicals rather than their differences.

Despite their dissimilar attitudes concerning eschatology and violence, the Saxon radicals asserted an experienced faith based on spiritualist-mystical premises, which led to a common critique of infant baptism. Their concept of faith involved the Holy Spirit's incursion into the soul, which was filled by self renunciation and mortification. This process resulted in the regeneration of a new spirit-filled self.²³ Baptism was a sign of faith and an experienced faith was beyond the capacity of infants. Real baptism occurred only in the soul.²⁴ To Stayer, Karlstadt was in the same mystical-spiritualist tradition as Müntzer and the Zwickau Prophets: "However much of a biblicist he was, Karlstadt, no more than Müntzer, tied the work of the Holy Spirit to external means of grace".²⁵

The controversy over the intellectual relationship between Karlstadt and Müntzer hinges on the degree to which they were influenced by the late medieval mystical writings available to them. Both Troeltsch and Williams agree that Karlstadt and Müntzer were mystics or spiritualists. Sider asserts that Karlstadt was a Lutheran-Augustinian biblicist even during his most radical period. Likewise, Pater argues that Karlstadt was a biblicist during the period from 1523-1525, but a Baptist not a Lutheran. A recent work by James Stayer makes the case again for a closer theological kinship between Karlstadt and Müntzer, while acknowledging some important differences relating to Müntzer's call for

violence and his apocalypticism.²⁶ For Stayer, both Karlstadt and Müntzer were substantially influenced by the late medieval mystics.

We intend to make a similar argument to Stayer's in this thesis. It is our contention that both Karlstadt and Müntzer were spiritualists in the sense that they believed in the unbound Spirit which worked in the souls of humans without mediation. They shared the same mystical process of salvation: renunciation, mortification and moral regeneration. Both related this mystical procedure to the sphere of social reform; the process of moral regeneration which occurred in the individual should also occur within society. For Karlstadt and Müntzer the theological sphere and the social sphere were closely connected and, therefore, the imperfections of the one inevitably reacted negatively on the other. However, with Karlstadt these social and political changes came about through passive resistance, while Müntzer's urgent apocalypticism led him to a more radical position. Although both of their theologies called for radical social change, Karlstadt was a reformer and Müntzer a revolutionary.

Before continuing it is important that we define what we mean by our use of the terms mysticism, spiritualism and radicalism. All three terms are difficult to define because their definitions seem to change according to the theological and social contexts in which they are placed.

Therefore it is not our purpose to develop an all encompassing definition of each term, but to explain what the terms mean within the context in which we will examine them.

Heiko Oberman states that "mysticism was a form or degree of religious experience, and hence to some extent individually determined...."²⁷ He suggests that because a common definition of mysticism is elusive the historian might refer to medieval mystical theology, the attempted explanations and descriptions of the mystical experience, for agreement. However, as Oberman cautions, this leads again to ambiguity. There was no agreement in medieval mystical theology on the methods of the mystical process or union.²⁸ There is, in turn, no consensus on the most useful definition within the modern literature.

Ronald Sider supplies a concise definition of mysticism in his work on Karlstadt's thought. He writes that "Christian mysticism consists essentially of preoccupation with the soul's union with Absolute Reality in this life and with the process which prepares the soul for this unification (Einswerdung) with deity."²⁹ Sider further explains that the mystical union "generally involves the abandonment of all discursiveness, all mental imagery and all distinctions between ego and the non-ego."³⁰ According to him, mystical theology is in general focused on a mystical union in which the Christian unites with God

essentially. In other words, God and the Christian become one in essence. The central theme of mysticism is, therefore, an ontological union between God and the mystic.

Sider's definition is criticized in a recent article by James Stayer. In this work, Stayer explains that there was a less speculative and more democratic adoption of mysticism during the Late Middle Ages. According to this adoption, the unio mystica occurred more through the emotions, our desire and love for God, than the intellect, our knowledge of God. In this vein, some late medieval mystics emphasized the renunciation of sin (Gelassenheit) within the mystical process. The mystical way became more concerned with moral regeneration than deification. Humanity's sinfulness was the focus rather than its divinity. According to Stayer, these innovations led to a more practically oriented mystical piety that allowed for the popularization of mystical theology.³¹

Werner Packull focuses on this theme in the opening chapter of Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement (1977). His thesis is that "South German Anabaptists, . . . , took their theological starting point not from the Reformers but from a popularized medieval mystical tradition."³² Included in this tradition were the German mystics Johannes Tauler and the unknown author of the Theologia Germanica.³³ For Tauler, the pantheistic aspects of the mystical experience were tempered by a pervasive

belief in the sinfulness of humanity.³⁴ Tauler's theology was concerned with the purgation of sin through a painful cleansing of the soul. The Christian suffered to purge the inner-self from sin in the same way that the human Christ suffered on the cross. Packull writes that with Tauler the themes of "cross mysticism" and the imitation of Christ were merged with German mysticism.³⁵ Continuing Tauler's motifs the Theologia Germanica went further to popularize the mystical way by emphasizing obedience to God through a unification of human and divine wills, which allowed for the continuance of the God-human dichotomy.³⁶ Although Christ had a transhistorical role as the link between God and the inner soul, the historical Christ took on more significance as the perfect example of obedience to God. Like Tauler, the author of the Theologia Germanica was very concerned with the ethical conformity of the Christian to the life of Christ, the obedient follower of God's will.³⁷ Packull notes that by "adjusting mysticism to the common man, they [Tauler and the Theologia] watered down speculative aspects of Eckhardt's thought, thereby broadening the influence of mysticism."³⁸

It is apparent from our discussion that Sider's definition fails to allow for the popularization of mystical beliefs during the late medieval period. By putting a strong emphasis on an essential, or substantial union with God in his definition, he has inadvertently excluded the

Theologia Germanica from the ranks of the Christian mystics. Our understanding of mysticism is a more inclusive one which takes into account the mysticism of the populace as well as the aristocrats of the spirit.

Both Tauler's sermons and the Theologia Germanica played a vital role in passing on a democratized mysticism to the populace of the sixteenth century. Tauler's and the Theologia's de-emphasis of intellectual abilities within the mystical process opened the way for a less restricted mysticism. All Christians whether learned or not could share in the benefits of the Theologia mystica.³⁹ Coupled with a more democratic approach was a promotion of the mystical abilities of the commoner. D. Catherine Brown states that "Tauler, like Gerson, is of the opinion that simple people often progress much faster in the mystical way than people who try to get along by their great intellectual abilities."⁴⁰ The Theologia Germanica was written in the vernacular German for an audience of laity, and those without knowledge of Latin. German was the language of choice for Tauler's sermons. The popularity of Tauler's tracts and the Theologia during the sixteenth century is well established. Packull notes that the "many editions of the Theologia and of Tauler's works on the eve of the Reformation attest to their popularity".⁴¹ Thus, Tauler's works and the Theologia were readily available to both Andreas von Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer during their early

careers.

Mysticism not only spread a theological message, but, in some cases, a political one. Steven Ozment presents a convincing argument for the connection between the principles of mystical thought and those of political or social dissent during the Reformation period. It is his thesis that "the mystical enterprise is transrational and transinstitutional. And because it is such, it bears a potential anti-intellectual and anti-institutional stance, which can be adopted for the critical purposes of dissent, reform, and even revolution."⁴² Even in its tamest form of quietism and in its most learned followers, the transrational and transinstitutional nature of mysticism threatened the church's position as the medium between humanity and God. The quietist rejected the institutional church as much as the mystical dissenter, the difference was one of method not meaning.⁴³ Although unintentionally, the chancellor of the University of Paris, Jean Gerson, illustrated the potential nonconformist aspects of mysticism when he asserted that the way of the heart was closer to God than the way of the scholastics.⁴⁴ Under mysticism, the purpose of the church as a mediator was circumvented by the individual's direct access to God. As Ozment notes, mystical theology was the ultimate assertion of the individual over the institution.⁴⁵ Therefore, mysticism contained the seed of social revolt. In the religiously and

politically tumultuous years of the early Reformation the potential of mysticism for nonconformity formed a conceptual base for the dissenting actions of many of the radical reformers; two of whom were Karlstadt and Müntzer.

Another potentially anti-establishment concept that influenced both Karlstadt and Müntzer was spiritualism. Like mysticism, spiritualism was concerned with the relationship between the human and the divine. Walter Klaassen, in his article on Karlstadt (1963), constructs a useful definition of spiritualism. He explains that spiritualism was "a clearly defined point of view" which stated "that the Holy Spirit is absolutely free, and that He does not necessarily need media through which to work on and in the human heart, the media being the Scriptures, the sacraments and preaching. The positive corollary of this is that the Spirit can impart himself directly to the individual."⁴⁶ The principle was adopted by various reformers and radical reformers to different degrees depending on their position in relation to the connection between the Holy Spirit and scripture.⁴⁷ However, all those who adopted this outlook held that the Spirit was not bound by outer authorities. It is not difficult to perceive how such a doctrine was dangerous to church authority and why it found common theological ground with many of the reformers dissenting against Luther. Spiritualism, along with mysticism, established an ideological basis for social

radicalism.

We have used the term radical or radicalism throughout this chapter to denote ideas or actions that threatened the structural framework of a society, namely the institutions of church and state. It is important now that we refine this definition further. Radicalism might be placed into two related contexts: theological radicalism and social radicalism. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone was obviously a clean break from the theological norms of the period and should be termed radical.⁴⁸ On the other hand, during the revolts of 1525, the struggles of the peasants and townspeople for a change in the social order were politically and socially radical. However, these distinctions became less defined when we considered the closeness between church and state in the sixteenth century. When we examined the thought of Müntzer and Karlstadt during the period in question it was difficult, if not impossible, to make a distinction between social dissent and theological dissent. Their theologies called for a change in societal structures. Even Luther's doctrine of justification should not be separated from its social consequences. Thus, we agree with Hans-Jürgen Goertz when he wrote of the term "radical":

"Radikal" ist kein unproblematischer Begriff. Er beschreibt einen Vorsatz, der einen tiefgreifenden, an die Wurzel gehenden Wandel in Kirche und Gesellschaft nur durch einen Bruch mit der rechtlichen und gesellschaftlichen Ordnung der Gegenwart in Gang setzen konnte. In diesem Sinne

hatten die Grundgedanken der Reformatoren in Wittenberg und Zürich ihre radikale Konsequenz offenbart, in diesem Sinne war die "Revolution des gemeinen Mannes" radikal; radikal war das Werk Thomas Müntzers, radikal waren auch die verschiedenen Bewegungen der Täufer und der Nonkonformismus einiger Spiritualisten und Antitrinitarier. Radikalität war nicht nur ein Merkmal derjenigen, die einen anderen Reformkurs steuerten als Luther und Zwingli, sondern der Reformation, sofern sie zur Tat drängte, allgemein."⁴⁹

This definition would put into question William's concept "Radical Reformation". Luther could not be both a radical reformer and a magisterial reformer. Goertz salvages the term Radical Reformation, however, by finding some common ground in a diverse group of dissenters. He notes that the radical reformers were in the "tradition of late medieval reformation - models, according to which ecclesiastical and secular institutions should be reformed as a whole" in contrast to the major reformers who, at least after the first stages of the Reformation, "strove to keep religious and worldly reforms strictly separate."⁵⁰ Thus we will refer to the Radical Reformation within the context of the relationship between theological reform and social reform. In this sense Karlstadt and Müntzer were firmly within the confines of the Radical Reformation.

The origins and consequences of the mysticism, spiritualism and radicalism in the thought of Müntzer and Karlstadt may be illuminated through a discussion of their intellectual and personal biographies. Their relationship to the late medieval mystics, Martin Luther and the Zwickau

Prophets inspires important questions, the answers to which help us to understand their theologies. In turn, it is important to acknowledge that theology does not exist within an intellectual vacuum. Müntzer's and Karlstadt's ideas were naturally affected by the social and personal upheavals in which they participated. In an historical analysis, theology can not be separated from its social context.

Müntzer's early years are not well-known. He was born around 1490 in the Saxon town of Stolberg into a comparatively well off family and received his elementary education there or in Quedlinburg near Halle.⁵¹ His university career began in 1506 when he matriculated at the University of Leipzig. He attended Leipzig until 1512; then went to the University of Frankfurt on the Oder until 1516. During this period Müntzer learned Greek and Hebrew, earned a Baccalaureate of Holy Scripture, a Bachelor of Arts, a Masters of Liberal Arts, and was ordained into the secular priesthood.⁵²

From 1514-1517, Müntzer worked as a priest in Braunschweig and as provost in Frose near Aschersleben. After he left Frose he went to Wittenberg where he attended the University in 1518; and where he probably met and befriended Karlstadt and Luther. In 1519, he went to Joeterbog, where he debated the Franciscans. During the same year he travelled to Orlamünde and Leipzig. While in Leipzig he attended the disputation in which Karlstadt and

Luther debated John Eck. It is known that in December of 1519 he became father confessor at a nunnery in Beuditz near Frose and immersed himself in Tauler's and Suso's writings on mysticism. A letter sent to Müntzer in May of 1520 from a nun in Beuditz mentions his having read Tauler and Brother Suso.⁵³

In 1520, Luther recommended Müntzer to temporarily replace the humanist John Egranus as a priest of the St. Mary's Church in Zwickau until Egranus returned from visiting a fellow humanist. Zwickau was a city experiencing tensions between its municipal leadership and its artisans, who were ripe for dissent.⁵⁴ Müntzer became the pastor of St. Mary's in May of 1520 and immediately began a campaign against the Franciscans, which endeared him to the commoners and the city council.⁵⁵ When Egranus returned to St. Mary's in October of 1520 the city council awarded Müntzer the head pastorship of the artisan dominated church, St. Katherine's. However, Müntzer's relationship with the city council and the electoral officials was strained when he began to criticize Egranus for his reluctance to advocate the destruction of the Catholic Church.⁵⁶ By late 1520, Müntzer not only attacked the Catholic establishment but the secular authorities as well.⁵⁷ As pastor of St. Katherine's, Müntzer clearly established himself as a leader of both the underprivileged classes and those advocating religious and social renewal in Zwickau.

It is argued by Walter Elliger (1975) that Müntzer was a follower of Luther until 1520 when he was exposed to the Zwickau Prophets.⁵⁸ However, Abraham Friesen in two recent articles claims that Müntzer had developed an independent theological understanding before his arrival in Zwickau. Friesen states that "from May 1519, and centering around the Leipzig Disputation of July 1519, to Easter of 1520, Müntzer worked out his own theological response to the ecclesiastical problems of the sixteenth century."⁵⁹ Unlike the theologies of Luther and the Zwickau Prophets, Müntzer's theology was based on Tauler's mysticism and ethics combined with Eusebius' portrayal of the apostolic church.⁶⁰ Thus, Müntzer's pastorate in Zwickau from May of 1520 to April 1521, when he was forced out by the authorities, was not a time of theological development, but one of implementation.

From Zwickau Müntzer went south to Prague where he perceived that support for his ideas might be forthcoming. In Prague he distributed his Prague Manifesto (1521) in Latin, German and Czech. The Manifesto was a combination of mystical theology and apocalyptic predictions, themes that continued in his later works. He warned the Bohemians of God's plan to "separate out the tares from the wheat," or the Godless from the God-filled spirits.⁶¹ After a rousing welcome to the "Martinist", however, the authorities in Prague closed their ears to Müntzer's radical message. Disappointed, he left for Saxony after a stay of only five

months.

Between January 1521 and April 1523 Müntzer travelled to Erfurt, Halle and Nordhausen. It should be noted here that on 21 December 1522 Karlstadt wrote a letter to Müntzer in answer to a plea for employment. Karlstadt invited Müntzer to his farm in Worlitz just outside of Wittenberg.⁶² Müntzer's physical and financial condition was bleak. By 1523 he was both penniless and on the verge of starvation.⁶³ He described his condition in a letter to his followers in Halle on 19 March 1523: "I have two gulden from the lady (abbess) for the whole winter; one I gave for the lad, the other I already owe many times over. This lad is loyal to me. In the wretchedness of my expulsion,...in the year of Christ 1523."⁶⁴ However, in this same year he married Ottilie of Gerson, an apostate nun, and was offered a position as a pastor in Allstedt.

The period from April 1523 to Müntzer's death in May 1525 is the focus of this study. Müntzer's Allstedt years were his most productive and revealing. He produced four major treatises and one sermon, which was given to Duke John of Saxony and his son John Frederick. All of these writings expanded on his Prague Manifesto and revealed his major themes: a rejection of outward, as opposed to spiritual, religion and a firm belief in God's transformation of the world through the elect.

In Allstedt, Müntzer experienced the height of his

influence. He made alliances with the city council, translated the mass for the first time into German and formed a league encompassing those who desired to do the will of the Holy Spirit. However, Müntzer's participation in the destruction of the Mallerbach Chapel in March of 1524 and in the riots of 13 June led to some anxiety in the ranks of the Saxon princes. On 13 July Müntzer was allowed to preach to Duke John and his son. In The Sermon to the Princes Müntzer tried to convince the authorities to take up the sword against the Godless perverters of religion or, he warned, the sword would be taken by the people. His plea was, of course, ignored. In August he appeared in front of the Weimar Court where he stated his case against accusations of sedition. The Court ruled that all printing equipment be taken from Allstedt and that a further investigation take place. Under these pressures, Müntzer's support dwindled. He left quietly on 7 August.

Leaving Allstedt, he joined the radical Heinrich Pfeiffer in the free city of Mühlhausen on 15 August. There again he attempted to form a theocracy ruled by the Holy Spirit, but again he failed. The city council forced him to leave in September of 1524. From Mühlhausen Müntzer travelled to Nüremberg, where John Hut was responsible for getting his Vindication and Refutation printed. He went south to the Black Forest region, where he saw the Peasants' War first hand, and then to Basel. Travelling north back to

Mühlhausen he was arrested in Fulda, but was soon released and arrived back in Mühlhausen in February of 1525.

Through organized rebellion, Müntzer and Pfeiffer were able to gain control of the council. By the Spring, however, the Peasants' War had spread to Thuringia. Müntzer and three hundred of his followers went to Frankenhäusen to reinforce a group of six thousand armed peasants against the combined armies of Philip of Hesse and the Saxon princes. The peasants were defeated in a slaughter. Müntzer was captured and, along with Pfeiffer, beheaded in Mühlhausen on 27 May 1525.

As with Müntzer, little is known about Andreas Rudolfs-Bodenstein's early life. He was born around 1480 in Karlstadt, a small town in Franconia. Later, he adopted the name Andreas von Karlstadt. In 1499, he attended the University of Erfurt, noted for its nominalist and humanist teachings, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The Thomist dominated University of Cologne was Karlstadt's next place of study in 1503. However, in 1505 he matriculated at the University of Wittenberg and obtained the degree of Master of Liberal Arts, which allowed him to lecture on Thomist thought. In 1510, he received a doctorate of theology and became archdeacon of the Castle Church of All Saints in Wittenberg. By 1512 Karlstadt had become a distinguished scholar and served several terms as dean of the theological faculty. In fact, he was

instrumental in Luther's receiving his doctorate.⁶⁵ Later in 1515, his interest in law led him to Rome's City University (Sapienza) where he earned a dual doctorate in civil and canon law.

On his return to Wittenberg Karlstadt began, under the influence of Luther, to study Augustine's works. In 1517, he criticized the Church for its un-biblical practices of mendicancy and the veneration of the saints. His defence of Luther's sola gratia and sola scriptura in his 370 Conclusions against John Eck of Ingolstadt sparked the Disputation of Leipzig (1519), a debate which in the planning stages included only Karlstadt and Eck, but to which Luther was added.⁶⁶ Karlstadt's and Luther's names were on the Papal edict against Reformation thought in 1520.

As Karlstadt's theological relationship with Luther became closer his break with the Church became more evident. By 1521, Luther and Karlstadt shared the same basic theological premises. Karlstadt and Melanchthon became the leaders of Luther's movement when Luther escaped to the Wartburg Castle after an unsuccessful defence of himself before Charles V at Worms. In January of 1522, Karlstadt rescinded his vows and married Anna von Mochau. During this period (April 1521-March 1522) several important reforms were implemented at Wittenberg. On Christmas Day 1521, Karlstadt performed the first evangelical mass. The citizens were offered both bread and wine, the words of

institution were said to the congregation in German and there was no elevation of the host. "The Ordinance of the City of Wittenberg" (24 January 1522) established a common chest for welfare purposes, moved to remove all images from the churches and adopted Karlstadt's reformed version of the mass. All of these ordinances sharply diverged from the status quo and were not popular with the Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise.

On 27 December 1521, the Zwickau Prophets arrived in Wittenberg after being forced out of Zwickau by the authorities. The degree to which the prophets influenced Karlstadt's theology is not clear. However, like Müntzer's, Karlstadt's later mysticism had more in common with Tauler's ethics than the prophets' antinomianism. Although Gordon Rupp asserts that "Karlstadt's head was turned by the Zwickau prophets," substantial evidence is missing for this claim.⁶⁷ There is no reason to believe that the Zwickau Prophets were either a catalyst for Wittenberg's radical reforms or for Karlstadt's developing mystical piety.

Upon Luther's return all of the reforms, except the welfare ordinance, were abolished. Luther preached eight sermons against the abrupt manner in which the ordinances were implemented. Karlstadt was publicly humiliated. As his printing and preaching privileges were being curtailed in Wittenberg, Karlstadt established his position as pastor of Orlamünde. Karlstadt's break with Luther was complete by

1523.

The theological relationship between Luther and Karlstadt during 1521 and 1522 has become a source for controversy in modern scholarship. In his works entitled Karlstadt und Augustine (1952) and "Karlstadts Protest gegen die theologische Wissenschaft" (1952), Ernst Kähler argues that Karlstadt's split with Luther had its roots in his study of Augustine. Under the influence of Johannes von Staupitz, he embraced St. Augustine's tensional relationship between the letter and the Spirit rather than Luther's dualism between Law and Gospel.⁶⁸ Yet, from the time of Karlstadt's first anti-scholastic publication in 1517, he separated the Spirit and the external word more than did Augustine.⁶⁹ Kähler contends that Karlstadt's spiritualism led to a dualism between created things and the Spirit: he disparaged the written word because it was written.⁷⁰ Whereas Luther preached sola scriptura, Karlstadt's emphasis was on the Spirit. Thus, Kähler asserts that Karlstadt's spiritualism undergirded his rift with Luther.⁷¹

However, Sider denies that any theological differences played a role in the schism between the two reformers. Theologically Luther's and Karlstadt's differences were too minuscule to cause a break-up of such magnitude. Sider disputes Kähler's notion that Karlstadt moved in a spiritualist direction in 1517.⁷² According to Sider, Karlstadt's theology was basically Augustinian/Lutheran from

his break with the scholastics through his Orlamünde period.⁷³ Karlstadt's and Luther's significant disagreements were of a strategical-political origin. Sider wrote that the semi-radical Karlstadt wanted rapid change, albeit through the established structures, because of the corrupting influence of the old order. On the other hand, Luther argued for slow change to allow for the authorities and the congregation to realize the necessity for reform.⁷⁴ While Karlstadt refused to wait for the weak in Spirit, Luther believed it to be mandatory.

Sider is correct when he states that strategic concerns were the pre-eminant cause of the rift in the Wittenberg movement. However, as early as 1520 important theological differences between Karlstadt and Müntzer began to surface. In his Missiue vonn der gelassenheyt (1520), the influence of mysticism first appeared in Karlstadt's theology; he expressed the concept of internal regeneration.⁷⁵ Later in the same year, Karlstadt separated the sign from the significance of baptism. True baptism was not the external ceremony, but the experience of the Holy Spirit in the soul.⁷⁶ Although these theological insights were significant, they would not be fully developed until Karlstadt's tracts of 1523 and 1524. In turn, these differences were not the main reasons for Karlstadt's break with Luther in 1522. But they did foreshadow the theological struggle that would commence between the two men

as the significance of a popularized mysticism grew in Karlstadt's thought.

From early 1522 to the summer of 1523 Karlstadt remained at the University of Wittenberg without influence. During this period, he turned increasingly to late medieval mystical publications, especially Tauler and the Theologia Germanica. It is known that he read the mystics as early as 1518, but it was not until his Orlamünde period that a strong mystical influence was apparent.⁷⁷

After this period of silence, Karlstadt established himself in Orlamünde in the Summer of 1523. He instituted the reforms that were abolished by Luther in Wittenberg, discontinued infant baptism, disavowed all pretence to intellectual life and published several treatises. In September of 1524, however, he was exiled from Electoral Saxony, despite the overwhelming support of his congregation. Karlstadt travelled extensively until he wrote a recantation and was allowed to stay with Luther under agreement of silence in June of 1525.

The period from 1523 to his recantation in 1525 is the focus of our investigation. It was during these years that Karlstadt developed an independent theology based on a mystical understanding of the relationship between man and God. His treatises reflected this new understanding. We have selected several treatises that we feel reflect his Orlamünde theology. Each expressed a part of Karlstadt's

theology that warrants comparison with Müntzer.

Karlstadt was allowed to remain in the Wittenberg area under repressive conditions until 1529 when he refused to publish against Ulrich Zwingli. Forced to leave Wittenberg under threat of life imprisonment, Karlstadt travelled north to Holstein, staying with Melchior Hoffman, then to East Friesland, Strassburg and finally to Basel. His family almost starving, he arranged with Zwingli to move to Zürich where he eventually became vicar of Allstedt. In 1534, he was Chair in the theology of the Old Testament at the University of Basel. He died in Basel of plague in 1541.

In our discussion we have briefly sketched the lives of two dissenters. Their dissent from Catholic orthodoxy, and then from Luther, should be viewed in the context of the intellectual and social upheavals of the early Reformation. Luther's criticism of Catholic dogma was followed by an explosion of diverse theological views.⁷⁸ Karlstadt and Müntzer were two of the strongest purveyors of opposition against Luther's vision of reform. During the period from 1523 to 1525, their radicalism stemmed from several of the same sources. The mysticism of Tauler and the Theologia Germanica led both to a theology based on the possibility of moral regeneration through the work of the Holy Spirit in the depth of the soul. With both Karlstadt and Müntzer inner purification led to moral actions and social renewal. Luther's dichotomy between the theological sphere and the

sphere of the profane was contrary to their conception of the relationship between religious and secular change.

Notes

1. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Pfaffenhass und gross Geschrei: Die reformatorischen Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517-1529 (München: C.H. Beck, 1987), 184.
2. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960; reprint, German edition, 1911), 993.
3. Ibid., 694-696.
4. Ibid., 754-756.
5. Ibid., 993.
6. George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 846.
7. Ibid., 857.
8. Ibid., 855.
9. Ronald J. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt: The Development of His Thought 1517-1525, in Studies in Reformation Thought, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, no. 11 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 231.
10. Ibid., 226.
11. Ibid., 221.
12. Ibid., 302.
13. Ibid., 211.
14. Ibid., 300.
15. Ibid., 299.
16. Calvin Augustine Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements: The Emergence of Lay Protestantism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 145.
17. Ibid., 285.
18. Ibid., 101.

19. Ibid., 103. The scriptures were derived from the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they did not contradict one another.

20. Ibid., 107. Müntzer did not discontinue the practice of infant baptism even though he rejected it in theory. In his treatises Müntzer writes about baptizing younger children who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

21. Ibid., 107-108.

22. This article was sent to me by Dr. James Stayer, while a German version was being published. I am not aware of the state of its publication at the present time.

23. James M. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism: The Return of the Repressed," 11,16. Page 11 refers to Müntzer and page 16 to Karlstadt.

24. Ibid., 16-17.

25. Ibid., 17.

26. Ibid., 14.

27. Heiko Oberman, "Simul Gemitus et Raptus: Luther and Mysticism," in The Dawn of the Reformation. Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought, ed. Heiko Oberman (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark LTD., 1986), 127.

28. Ibid., 127.

29. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 206.

30. Ibid., 207.

31. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism: The Return of the Repressed," 9. Oberman writes of the democratization of mysticism in Gabriel Biel's thought. This mysticism emphasized the affections rather than the intellect and a union of wills rather than an essential union. Heiko Augustinus Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), 349. According to Oberman, there was a general theological movement in the late medieval period toward a democratization of mysticism. Oberman, "Simul Gemitus et Raptus: Luther and Mysticism," 140.

32. Werner O. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement 1525-1531, Studies in

Anabaptist and Mennonite History, no.19 (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania and Kitchener, Ontario, 1977), 34.

33. Ibid., 34.

34. Ibid., 23-24. Tauler's theology included both an ethical union and an ontological union.

35. Ibid., 24.

36. Ibid., 24.

37. Ibid., 24.

38. Ibid., 23.

39. D. Catherine Brown, Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 187.

40. Ibid., 187.

41. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement 1525-1531, 187 n.37.

42. Steven Ozment, Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 8.

43. Ibid., 12.

44. Ibid., 8-9.

45. Ibid., 6.

46. Walter Klaassen, "Spiritualization in the Reformation," Mennonite Quarterly Review 37 (1963): 71.

47. Ibid., 76.

48. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 29.

49. Goertz, Pfaffenhass und gross Geschrei: Die reformatorischen Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517-1529, 185.

50. Hans- Jürgen Goertz, Introduction to Profiles of Radical Reformers. Biographical Sketches from Thomas Müntzer to Paracelsus, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz and Walter Klaassen (English edition editor), (Kitchener, Ontario and Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Harold Press, 1982), 21.

51. Eric W. Gritsch, Reformer Without a Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 5.
52. Eric W. Gritsch, Thomas Müntzer. A Tragedy of Errors (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 4.
53. Thomas Müntzer, "The nun Ursula to Müntzer. After mid-May, 1520.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 17.
54. Susan C. Karant-Nunn, Zwickau in Transition, 1500-1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 119. The Zwickau craftsmen dissented in 1516 against the increasingly oligarchical powers of the city leadership by refusing to take an oath to the city's new council. Later they expressed their grievances in writing to the council. *Ibid.*, 35. Although this revolt was defused by the intervention of Duke Johann on the side of the leadership, the grievances of the craftsmen remained and were instrumental in Müntzer's popularity. Müntzer refused to accept responsibility for the revolt against the council in 1521, but Karant-Nunn notes that some of his followers participated in it. *Ibid.*, 119.
55. Karant-Nunn, Zwickau in Transition, 1500-1547, 97.
56. *Ibid.*, 99.
57. *Ibid.*, 104.
58. Walter Elliger, Thomas Müntzer: Leben und Werk (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 77-78 and 122. The woolweaver Niclas Storch, the smith Thomas Drechsel and Marcus Stübner were known as the Zwickau Prophets because of their claim to spiritual revelation. Karant-Nunn, Zwickau in Transition, 1500-1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change, 106-109.
59. Abraham Friesen, "Thomas Müntzer and the Anabaptists," Journal of Mennonite Studies 4 (1986): 145. Like Friesen, Karant-Nunn emphasizes the differences between the theologies of Müntzer and the Zwickau Prophets. Karant-Nunn, Zwickau in Transition, 1500-1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change, 104.
60. Abraham Friesen, "Thomas Müntzer and Martin Luther," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 79 (1988): 67. For further reading on this topic see Friesen, "Thomas Müntzer and the Anabaptists," 146.

61. Thomas Müntzer, Prague Manifesto, in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 370.
62. Andreas von Karlstadt, "Karlstadt to Müntzer, Wittenberg. 21 December 1522.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 52-53.
63. Gritsch, Reformer Without a Church, 70.
64. Thomas Müntzer, "Müntzer to unknown Followers in Halle. 19 March 1523.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 54.
65. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 9.
66. Ibid., 71.
67. Gordon Rupp, Patterns of Reformation (London: Epworth Press, 1969), 113.
68. Ernst Kähler, Karlstadt und Augustin. Der Kommentar des Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt zu Augustins Schrift De Spiritu Et Litera, in Hallische Monographien, ed. Otto Eissfeldt, no. 19 (Halle (Saale): Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1952), 7* and 29*.
69. Ibid., 41*.
70. Ibid., 28*-29*.
71. Ernst Kähler, "Karlstadts Protest gegen die theologische Wissenschaft," in 450 Jahre Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Vol. I. (Wittenberg: Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1952), 303.
72. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 25-30.
73. Ibid., 303.
74. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 167.
75. Sigrid Looss, "Radical Views of the Early Andreas Karlstadt (1520-1525)," in Radical Tendencies in the Reformation. Divergent Perspectives, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, no. 9 (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 49.

76. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism: The Return of the Repressed", 17. As was stated above, Pater notes that Karlstadt internalized the concept of baptism in 1520. However he does not regard mysticism as a source for this development.

77. Ibid., 180-81.

78. Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "What Was Preached in German Cities in the Early Years of the Reformation? Wildwuchs Versus Lutheran Unity," in The Process of Change in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Honor of Miriam Usher Chrisman, ed. Phillip N. Bebb and Sherrin Marshall (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988), 90-92. Karant-Nunn makes a convincing case for the diversity of thought during the early Reformation, especially in Saxony. She argues against Bernd Moeller's thesis that the vast majority of early reformers in Germany expressed complete uniformity with Luther on all significant theological points. For Moeller, the early Reformation was not a "Wildwuchs" but a "lutherische Engführung." Bernd Moeller, "Was wurde in der Frühzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 75 (1984): 176-193.

Mysticism in the Soteriologies of Karlstadt and Müntzer

In 1529, one of Karlstadt's successors in Orlamünde, Martin Glasser (d.1552), wrote in his collection of Tauler's sermons that both Müntzer and Karlstadt were led astray by a false understanding of Tauler's teachings on the Holy Spirit and the ground of the soul.¹ According to Glasser, they propagated these false views in Orlamünde. If Glasser was correct, Müntzer studied Tauler with the ex-cook of Konrad Glitzsch, Orlamünde's pastor.² The German historian Ulrich Bubenheimer surmises that Müntzer was in Orlamünde for as long as three months between January of 1519 and his first sermon in Jüterbog in April of the same year.³ It was during this period, or even earlier in Wittenberg (1517), that Müntzer was introduced to Tauler's sermons.⁴ Müntzer read Luther's 1518 edition of the Theologia Germanica (ca.1370) around this same period.⁵ The Theologia was on Müntzer's book list of 1520.⁶ A strong mystical influence was apparent in Müntzer's thought from his earliest known writings. On the other hand, Karlstadt's intellectual career was marked by successive transitions. Having begun his career as a Thomist, Karlstadt was encouraged by Luther and Johannes Staupitz to move toward a more Augustinian position (1517-1518). Karlstadt adopted Augustine's doctrines of double predestination and sola gratia.⁷ In turn, he shared Augustine's view of salvation as the reward

for divinely bestowed good works and his understanding of the external word as necessary but insufficient for the mediation of grace.⁸

By 1521, however, Karlstadt moved towards Luther. He adopted Luther's notions of sola scriptura, grace strictly through the external word, and justification by faith alone.⁹ Until 1522, Karlstadt remained theologically tied to his Wittenberg colleague.

Karlstadt bought and read Tauler's sermons around 1517.¹⁰ From 1517-1519 he made notes in his copy of Tauler's works which indicated a strong interest in Tauler's mystical union.¹¹ He probably read the Theologia not long after its publication in 1518.¹² His Missiue vonn der gelassenheytt (1520) revealed some of the fruits of this study, such as the concept of an experienced faith. However, mysticism remained on the periphery of his thought until 1522. In a recent article, Hans-Peter Hasse notes that a sermon preached by Karlstadt on 29 September, 1522 reflected a transition in Karlstadt's thought toward a more mystical viewpoint.¹³ This marked the beginning of the mystical period in Karlstadt's intellectual biography.

Whether one should describe Karlstadt's theology from 1523 - early 1525 as mystical, or even substantially influenced by mystical thought, is a hotly debated topic in recent scholarship. Ronald Sider claims that Karlstadt had a "terminological similarity to and substantive difference

from, the mystics."¹⁴ For Sider, Karlstadt was not a mystic because he did not call for an essential union, but an ethical bond, between God and man.¹⁵ Although Karlstadt emphasized self-mortification and inner regeneration during this period, Sider concludes that Karlstadt's soteriology continued to be anchored in the Lutheran school. According to Sider, Karlstadt denied free will in the realm of salvation, repudiated works-righteousness and sustained his belief that the ground of eternal salvation was not inward righteousness, but faith in Christ's atoning death.¹⁶ Sider argues that Karlstadt's emphasis on inner renewal was a return to his Augustinian period (1517-1518), while retaining Luther's understanding of man's complete reliance on forgiveness for salvation.¹⁷ Karlstadt's soteriology remained Augustinian/Lutheran in its basic premises.

On the other hand, Friedel Kriechbaum maintains in her Grundzüge der Theologie Karlstadts (1967) that the dominant factor in Karlstadt's theology (1523-1524) was mysticism. An essential union, as well as an ethical union, between God and man was the spiritual goal for Karlstadt during this period. The ultimate Christian experience was to return to original uncreatedness in union with God.¹⁸ In addition, Kriechbaum notes that Karlstadt diminished the importance of Christ's atoning death and elevated the importance of Christ as the example for all Christians to follow.¹⁹ Karlstadt's appeal to conform to Christ was coupled with an affirmation

of the Christian's free will and a return to medieval works-righteousness. The scholastic refrain "facere quod in se est" was applicable to Karlstadt's soteriology.²⁰ For Kriechbaum, Karlstadt's soteriology was Taulerean not Lutheran.

As with Karlstadt, scholars have debated the extent of Müntzer's mysticism. Eric Gritsch perceives in Müntzer's works mystical language but not substance. Gritsch, in his Reformer Without A Church (1967), notes that the fountain of Müntzer's theology was Nicholas Storch's spiritualism rather than the late medieval tradition. He writes that Müntzer sought a certainty in faith that he could not get from mysticism.²¹ On the other hand, he found in Storch "the bridge which enabled him to cross the abyss separating radical doubt from absolute certainty."²² Müntzer's contact with Storch in Zwickau was the source of his anti-Lutheran theology.

A different understanding of Müntzer's intellectual background is found in Hans-Jürgen Goertz's research. Goertz's Innere und Äussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Müntzers (1967), "The Mystic with the Hammer: Thomas Müntzer's Theological Basis for Revolution" (1974), and his more recent study, Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär (1989), all argue for the importance of Müntzer's early contact with the mystical tradition.²³ According to Goertz, the most significant concepts in

Müntzer's theology were rooted in medieval mysticism. Müntzer shared the mystic's notion of human-divine union after the mortification of all creatureliness (Kreatürlichkeit) in the soul.²⁴ Man had fallen from an elevated state with God into a creaturely, sinful state. To return to God man must allow himself to be separated from the creaturely by the Holy Spirit in the depths, or ground, of the soul. It was only after man turned away from the sinfulness of the self and all other creatures that the Spirit elevated him into union with the divine. Through God's grace man became like God.²⁵

Goertz contends, however, that Müntzer did not adopt the more speculative aspects of medieval mysticism.²⁶ Müntzer's main concern was to develop a practical piety which dealt with the theological problems of the early Reformation and justified its anti-clerical sentiment.²⁷ Mysticism with its emphasis on inner piety (God in us) established a theological basis for an attack on the institutional church. Müntzer's priorities were pastoral. He was concerned with the saving relationship between human and God rather than academic disputation and philosophical speculation.

It is our contention that both Karlstadt and Müntzer were significantly influenced by the less speculative aspects of the medieval mystical tradition. Our point is not that they were exclusively influenced by mysticism.

Certainly Augustinianism, humanism, apocalypticism (for Müntzer) and Luther's thought had their place. However, the mystical tradition substantially affected them at the very heart of their theologies, i.e. their doctrines of salvation. Mysticism linked Karlstadt and Müntzer together theologically just as it linked them both with many others in the radical movement. We assert that they were inspired to differing degrees by some of the most important concepts stemming from the medieval mystical tradition.

However, before we attempt a comparison of Müntzer's and Karlstadt's soteriologies we should first establish a general understanding of the late medieval mystical heritage they adopted. In his The Harvest of Medieval Theology (1963), Heiko Oberman makes use of a two-fold classification of medieval Christian mysticism. Speculative/intellective German mysticism, represented mainly by the German Dominicans Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler, is set in opposition to the penitential/affective Latin mysticism of Jean Gerson (1363-1429) and Gabriel Biel (ca. 1420-1495).²⁸ For speculative/intellective mystics the intellect was the center of God's work in the soul; and the God-human union was substantive. On the other hand, the penitential/affective mystics emphasized the affections, love and desire, as the way toward God and asserted a union of wills, allowing for a greater distinction between God and humanity. This typology should not be taken in a strict

sense, however. As D. Catherine Brown notes, a rigid application of this categorization does not hold up to specific scrutiny: "They all, even Eckhart, stress the importance of the will and love in the soul seeking union."²⁹ In turn, she dispels the notion of a necessary connection between those mystics emphasizing the intellect and those preaching an essential union.³⁰ Oberman's typology has been rightly criticized by Brown, but it does serve to illustrate that the mystical tradition was not homogenous in its outlook.

Eckhart was perhaps the purest example of Oberman's intellectual type. At the core of Eckhart's thought was the Neoplatonic emanation theory of creation. Creation commenced with the birth of the Son (transhistorical logos or divine word) in the image of the Father (Godhead) and continued with the creation of humanity in the likeness of the Son.³¹ Acting as God's intelligence, the Son occupied the un-created center of the human soul called the spark, or ground. The Holy Spirit was seen as the medium by which love flows from the Father to the Son.³²

Thus, humanity emanated from a position of unity with God and contained in its soul the essence of God. The human reason formed the bond between the inner logos and the lower senses. God's immanence in the soul gave humanity the ability to cooperate with God and return to an uncreated state in the Godhead. However, before the union could occur

the viator had to detach himself from the created world. For Eckhart, the creation process was on a par with the fall of man.³³ When the self turned inward toward the soul and away from the world, the human reason could comprehend the mind of God, thereby uniting the essence of man with the essence of God.³⁴

Whereas Eckhart's theme was the nobility of the soul, Tauler was more concerned with man's depravity. Tauler shared Eckhart's Neoplatonic theory and his understanding of Christ as logos. Like Eckhart, Tauler placed the divine logos in the ground of the soul, but for Tauler the ground was created. In contrast to Eckhart, Tauler emphasized the traditional concept of the fall of man, Adam's turn from God, rather than the act of creation as the source of man's corruption.³⁵ Adam's disobedience led to the formation of a false, selfishly oriented ground of the soul.³⁶ Due to his emphasis on obedience, the will became the focus rather than the reason. Before man could return to God there was a gruelling process whereby the will was gradually replaced by God's will. Tauler adopted the medieval concept of gradual sanctification: the more righteous the viator, the less of a sinner he was.³⁷ This process of sanctification and justification entailed the removal of all worldliness, and selfishness, along with the internalization of Christ's passion (cross mysticism). Through experiencing the agony of Christ's suffering the viator became Christ-like,

following the example of the obedient Christ rather than the disobedient Adam. An ethical strain was coupled with Tauler's inward piety: those who were inwardly conformed to Christ acted in a Christ-like manner.³⁸ Tauler introduced the themes of cross mysticism and the imitation of Christ into the German medieval mystical tradition.³⁹ When the viator reached the stage of the union of wills, then the return of the soul into the divine abyss could take place.⁴⁰

The author of the Theologia shared Tauler's less speculative motifs: Christ as the inner word, self-mortification and Christ-like suffering as preparation for union, and an ethical conformity to Christ's life.⁴¹ However the author opted for a more practical, volitional conformity rather than a Neoplatonic return to the Godhead.⁴² As with Tauler, obedience to God was paramount. The powers of the soul, both the will and the reason, had to be subordinated to the desires of God.⁴³ Like Tauler, the author accentuated the depravity of human nature, which was associated with Adam's disobedience.⁴⁴ The process by which the viator overcame his nature was the focal point. Thus, the Theologia domesticated mystical theology, alleviating some of its philosophical baggage, boiling it down to a practical piety and, thereby, making it more accessible to commoners and lay people.

As the Theologia and Tauler illustrate, there were medieval mystics who were less concerned with the intellect

than the emotions and more interested in obedience to God than comprehension of the divine intelligence. This allowed for a popularization of mystical motifs. The mystical way was made practical while remaining egalitarian and individualistic in its approach to salvation. Thus, many among the anti-intellectual and anti-clerical elements of the Radical Reformation saw mysticism as a theological basis for their views. Karlstadt and Müntzer shared in this tradition.

For both Karlstadt and Müntzer, the ultimate goal of the Christian was to conform his will to God's will. Müntzer wrote that "the elect would abound with the grace of God if they abandoned their own will...and left everything for the sake of God!"⁴⁵ Karlstadt emphasized the theme of the unity of wills throughout his Orlamünde theology. In his Von manigfeltigkeit... (1523) he wrote: "Wer nit mit Christo einen willen wil haben/ der muss gots willen annemenn. dan er spricht/ Ich byn nit kommen meynen willen zuthun/ sonder den willen meines vatters...."⁴⁶ To meet this aim the Christian's will had to be cleansed of its sinful nature and subdued through a process of self-renunciation, or Gelassenheit. Egotism, selfishness and creaturely desires were to be abandoned in favour of a life in the service of God.

A strong need to disentangle the soul from fleshly pleasures existed in the theologies of Karlstadt and

Müntzer. There was a struggle between worldliness and divine spirituality in the human soul. However, this dualism should not be confused with Eckhart's and Tauler's disparagement of creation. Worldliness was not createdness, as such, but loving and desiring temporal things at the expense of serving God. The more the Christian turned toward worldly things for enjoyment and nourishment the further away he was from the spirit of God. For Müntzer, creaturely desires distracted humanity from hearing the divine word spoken by the Holy Spirit in the depths of the soul: "no pleasure-loving man can accept [the guidance of God]...for the thorns and the thistles - which, as the Lord says, are the pleasures of this world...- crush any working of the word which God speaks in the soul."⁴⁷ The desires of the flesh were repeatedly castigated by Karlstadt during his Orlamünde period. A passage from his Von manigfeltigkeit... exemplified his thought. "Ein selicher mensch ist nicht auss fleisch vnnd blut/ sondern auss götlicher gnad vnd willen geboren."⁴⁸ To be saved, humanity had to turn away from fleshly sin.

Seeking worldly gratitude and titles was, for Karlstadt and Müntzer, serving creatures rather than the creator. A lack of obedience to God was shown by those who sought to please the world; the Christian could not give allegiance to both God and the temporal sphere. Several of Müntzer's and Karlstadt's criticisms of Luther were based on what they

considered to be his desire for temporal recognition and honour, while he claimed to be a man of God. Müntzer noted that "Christ renders all glory to his father.... But what you want from the people in Orlamünde is a great title. You go and steal...the name 'son of God' and expect the gratitude of your prince.... Why do you call the princes 'Your Eminences'? For the title does not belong to them but to Christ...."⁴⁹ Karlstadt stated that the Christian could not believe in God and still seek approval from the world.⁵⁰ When Luther ridiculed him for wearing the grey cloak of a peasant instead of the usual dress of a priest, Karlstadt reacted against Luther's official appearance: "Was schadt mir ein gemeyn kleyd/ geb ich doch durch einen grawen Rocke kein anzeyg verdecktlicher heyligkeit/ als D. Luther mit seyner heyligen Cappen thut."⁵¹

As well, any lust for worldly possessions was anathema. To Müntzer and Karlstadt an emphasis on accumulating material goods and on physical sustenance was a sign of an earthly, not a God-filled, spirit. The more one coveted worldly effects, the less one could concentrate on the inward self. Lamenting the trust of the common folk in the learned priests, Müntzer wrote that the priests "spend all their energies accumulating material goods."⁵² Common folk were being led astray because they followed the worldly rather than the spiritual. Karlstadt shared Müntzer's condemnation of temporal pleasures and believed that they

disrupted the inner-workings of the Spirit:

"Wölcher vertrauen/ trost/ lust/ sorg vnd forcht/
gelts oder narung halben tregt/ der südig im
glauben/ so vil vnd hart/ so vil er vmb gelts oder
narung willen sorgfeltig ist/ vrsach. Christus
spricht das wir alletzeyt klaynes trostes vnd
vertrauens zu seynem hymelischen vatter seind/
wann wir sorgsüchtig seind/ auff speyss/ tranck
oder klayder...."⁵³

Desiring the worldly life was tantamount to shunning the Holy Spirit; to accept one was to discard the other.

Mortification of the self had to take place before the human will could unite with the divine will. To be saved, the Christian had to endure the purging of all worldliness from the soul. This included the egotistical nature of the self. Adam was an example of someone who did not subordinate his will to God's, but chose the creaturely path. Both Karlstadt and Müntzer used Adam to illustrate the dangers of egotism. In his Von manigfeltigkeit..., Karlstadt noted that Adam "durch synen ungehorsamkeit auch hat gesundt/ das er/ die stym seines weibes mehr erhört/ dan gotis stym. Als auch alle sunde nach heutes tages in dem ungehorsam bescheen das ein mensch mehr seinem willen verbrenget/ dan Gotlichen."⁵⁴ This analogy was echoed by Müntzer:

"Christ was conceived by a pure virgin of the holy spirit, so that we should realize the harm caused by sin from the very beginning, for it came through our first parents, by the lust of the fruit of the forbidden tree.... This threw the human body into disorder, so that all the lusts of the body became obstacles to the working of the holy spirit...."⁵⁵

Müntzer's statement indicated that the counterpart to Adam's sin was Christ's obedience. Thus, Christ was the perfect model for the true believer.

For Müntzer, Christ was not only an inner and outward example, but the internal word. Like Eckhart and Tauler, Müntzer was prone to Trinitarian speculations. By internalizing the Holy Trinity, he asserted the omnipresence of God in the elect. During the process of salvation, God, the Father, gave birth to Christ, the Son or word, in the ground of the soul. He expressed this notion in his Order and Explanation of the German Church Service...(1523).⁵⁶

The transhistorical Christ was immanent to man and communicated the Word to those elect who had turned inward, away from the world. In Müntzer, the movement of the Holy Spirit was interchangeable with the transhistorical Christ.⁵⁷ This gave his soteriology a distinct spiritualist orientation. At the heart of this concept, however, was the agitating inner presence of the Trinity, waiting for a self-effacing response by the elect.

On the other hand, Karlstadt did not use the mystics' speculative language on the inner Trinity. He did, however, share Müntzer's concept of Christ as the inwardly communicated Word. The inner Christ brought moral regeneration to the human spirit. When writing of the regenerate Christian, Karlstadt noted that "seyen leben nit ain menschlich/ sonder ain götlich leben/ vnd er nitt lebet/

sonder Christus in yme Gala.2."⁵⁸ Christ's spirit acted in a similar manner to Müntzer's logos. The Word of God was spoken in the soul of the believer: "[Peter] Meyner person halben dorfftet ich des eüsserlichen zeugnüss nicht nits. Ich wil meyn zeugnüss vom geyst/ in meyner inwendigkeyt haben/ das Christus verheyssen hat."⁵⁹ In the guise of the Holy Spirit and the inner Christ, God was present in the soul whenever the Christian turned away from the fleshly world.

One of the main legacies of Tauler and the Theologia Germanica was the theme of "cross mysticism."⁶⁰ For Tauler and the author of the Theologia Germanica, the internal struggles of the soul were exemplified by an internalization of Christ's suffering and crucifixion, a theme which was passed on to Karlstadt and Müntzer. Karlstadt viewed "cross mysticism" as a way of conforming to Christ, in which all Christians had to experience the equivalent of the crucifixion in the depths of their souls. The cross to bear was the suffering that resulted from self-mortification, sometimes described by Karlstadt as the crucifixion of the self.⁶¹ The key to salvation was to become Christ's disciple; and, the path was through the school of Christ:

"Syhe nu wie bitter vnd herb die schuel Christi ist/ vnd ob vnser vernunffte/ willen vnd natur nitt ain grewlich jemerlich ding ist. Vnnd merke ob Christus recht gesagt hatt/ Wölcher nit sein Creütz tregt/ vnd geet nach mir/ der kan nitt mein leerjung seyn Luce 14. Das saget Christus ehe er disse gemayne schluss red setzet/ die ich obgehandelt hab/ damitt leeret Christus/ das

solliche gelassenheit/ die alle ding vbergibt/ ain
 teglich Creütz ist/ wölliches wir teglich tragen
 myessen vnnd nicht stillsteen/ sonder Christo
 nachuolgen...."⁶²

Müntzer described the internalization of Christ in a similar manner. To be a Christian, one must conform to the crucified Christ. "Only he who dies with CHRIST can rise with him."⁶³ Discipleship demanded the experience of the crucifixion as well as the resurrection.

Not only did "cross mysticism" require suffering the inner cross, but the outer cross as well.⁶⁴ Christ's life was to be imitated to the fullest extent possible by his apostles. If that meant being persecuted by the temporal powers, then the Christian had to endure this in the knowledge that God was being served. Following Christ was not a pleasant endeavor, but both Karlstadt and Müntzer called for a Christ-like ethic. Müntzer compared his treatment by Luther and the princes to Christ's in relation to the Romans and Jews. After he stated that the followers of Christ would not receive any different treatment than their master, Müntzer wrote that "if they were blasphemous enough to call you [Christ] Beelzebub... how much more will they do this to me, your tireless warrior, once I have shaken off that flattering rascal at Wittenberg and followed your voice...."⁶⁵ Karlstadt was less personal in his presentation of this theme. However, he shared the same ethical premise of conforming to the life of Christ: "welcher Christus ist/ welchen der hymelisch vater

eynpflantzet in seynen lieben son/ der verleuset synen aigen willen von poden vnd grund.vnnd nympf an sich das leben/ thun vnd lassen/ wachsen vnd frucht tragen nach der art vnnd eigenschafft Christi."⁶⁶ Thus, Christ's death was analogous to the death of the inner-self, while his life was an ethical example for all Christians.

However, this moralistic strain in Müntzer's and Karlstadt's thought did not mean that human activity brought righteousness. The depravity of fallen humanity did not allow it to save itself. Without God's contribution of regenerating faith man could only sin. In fact, Gelassenheit was a talent given to man by God. In his Protestation or Proposition (1524), Müntzer explained that "you will never have faith unless God himself gives it (to) you, and instructs you in it."⁶⁷ Karlstadt shared the same view of human ineptitude in the realm of salvation.

"Er [God] will das wir alles gelasen sollen das wir besitzen/ vnd das wir kain creaturisch ding in vnser seele lassen eingeen/ vnd das die seele alle ding vberwündt. Aber das ist aller vernunfft vnmöglich/ als Christus bekennt/ sagend. Das bey den menschen vnmöglich ist/ das ist möglich bey gott."⁶⁸

Sider's assertion was correct. Luther was erroneous when he accused Karlstadt of works-righteousness.⁶⁹

In consideration of human inabilities, God was the instigator of the salvation process. Both Karlstadt and Müntzer attested to the importance of God's initial movement toward the viator (the recipient of God's actions). The

"first step," noted Müntzer, "is the sprinkling...by which the waters of the divine wisdom are troubled.... Then in his sadness man will become aware that God is setting quite extraordinary things in motion in him."⁷⁰ Like Müntzer, Karlstadt asserted that God's initial action was needed to bolster the fallen nature of humanity.⁷¹

Although Karlstadt asserted that man relied on God's grace for righteousness, by 1523 he had rejected any notion of predestination. Karlstadt painted a completely positive portrait of God; he was not the purveyor of damnation, but the giver of salvation. Everything that resonated from God was a positive stimulus for humanity. God was not the cause of evil, but the only force against it. Therefore, the only source of evil and sin was fallen human nature. When Karlstadt wrote that everything that was good had its origins in God, it could easily have been seconded by Luther.⁷² However, combined with his mystical view of sin as disobedience to God, Karlstadt revealed an anti-Lutheran position on the cause of evil. If God was everything that was good and man was the origin of sin, then man's disobedience, not predestination, was the root of damnation.⁷³

For Karlstadt, God did not damn the sinner, the sinner damned himself. Since the initial movement of the Holy Spirit was universally experienced, all humans could choose between self-renunciation or worldliness.⁷⁴ If the

Christian wanted to accompany Christ in his suffering, then God would lead him along the path to eternal life. In Von den zweyen hochsten gebotten... (1524), Karlstadt noted that those who wanted to deny themselves and love God experienced the work of God in their souls.

"Drumb muss die sele vor allem beschnitten vnd gefeget werden/ vnnd in ire klarheit vnd inwendigkeit kommenn/ eher sie das edel werck entpfaht/ das hat Moses auch mit hellen worten geleret/ so er spricht. Gott wirt dir dein hertz beschneiden/ vff das du jn liebest/ von gantzen hertzen/ Sihestu/ gott muss dein hertz beschneyden/ darnach kanstu sein hoch werck an dich nemen. Seyntenmal Moses klärlich spricht. Gott wirt dein hertz beschneiden/ vff das du jn liebest von gantzem hertzen. Darauss so wirt volgen/ das keiner des tewren wercks vehig oder empfencklich ist/ der nit ist beschnitten."⁷⁵

It is important to note that, although this decision was made with the help of the Holy Spirit, it was truly a human choice rather than a divine mandate.

Müntzer shared Karlstadt's position on the cause of evil. In his Vindication and Refutation, Müntzer attacked Luther on this point:

"you [Luther] distort the text of Isaiah and make God the cause of evil. Surely that is God's most terrible punishment upon you? You remain blinded, and yet set yourself up as a guide for the world's blind and try to blame God for your being a poor sinner...."⁷⁶

However, Müntzer noted that there were two types of people: the chosen and the reprobate. It seems that God ordained some with the Holy Spirit, but not others. The reprobate were "condemned long ago" and had "no claim on God or men."⁷⁷ Indeed, in a letter to Melanchthon (1522), Müntzer

asserted that spouses should not reproduce unless the Holy Spirit had assured them of an elect offspring.⁷⁸ The reprobate were condemned from birth, while the elect had access to the Holy Spirit. Müntzer continued to make this elect-reprobate distinction throughout his corpus.⁷⁹

Within the population of the elect, however, the Holy Spirit was universally given and reliant on human acceptance. The elect came from "every sect and tribe and...every faith."⁸⁰ Müntzer limited human free will to the realm of the elect: "Some are chosen, but their minds cannot be opened Hence their works are the same as those of the reprobate, with the exception of the fear of God, which separates them from the latter. Two lie in one bed and pursue the same pleasures."⁸¹ Thus, Müntzer combined his understanding of election with an assertion of man's free will.

Karlstadt and Müntzer not only professed an active free will in the realm of salvation, but a continued cooperation between man and God during the preparation for union. Even though Gelassenheit was God's gift it had to be accepted and continually desired by humanity; the human will was involved in the process of self-mortification. Karlstadt stated that the more the human emptied himself of creation the more God filled the soul with the Spirit. This was reminiscent of the medieval/mystical notion of gradual sanctification. In a section of Von den zweyen hochsten gebotten..., Karlstadt

described the preparation of the Christian.

"Wenn denn der mensch die natur des weynstocks an sich gebracht hat/ vnnd in einem widerwillen vnd grawen der creaturischen wollusten steet/ so ist er etwas vffgethan/ vnd begert hymelische wasser/ als ein dürr erden/ welche von dürheit ist auffgekündt/ wenn er vffgekündt ist/ so ist der mensch auch etwas bereyt/ vnd ist lere vnd ledig/ vnd muss erfüllet werden mit Gott/ als er selber verheyssen. Ein helffer in nöten. Wenn einer bereyt ist zu entpfahen gottes gaben als glauben vnd lieb vnd andere gaben/ so gibt im gott so vil als er entpfahen mag/ ist seine leydlickeit gross/so gibt gott grosse gaben. Seytenmal Gott yeglichem gibt nach vermögenheynt des der entpfahen wil. Ist er vil vnd sehr vnd hochgeschickt zu nemen Gottes werck/ so gibts im Gott vil/ sehr vnd hoch."⁸²

Müntzer shared Karlstadt's vision of a cooperative God-human relationship. After God's first step, humanity should react with fear, humility and then with a yearning to unite with God.

"All his desires will reach out towards the first sprinkling, the gentle sighing breath of the holy spirit. But it demands the continued application of all his diligence, for the holy spirit never allows him to be complacent, but drives him on restlessly, pointing him to the eternal good."⁸³

Human resolve played a vital role in the bond between the divine and the human spirit.

One aspect of Karlstadt's thought that distinguished him from Müntzer and the mystics was his refusal to accept that humanity could be completely regenerated in this life. During his Orlamünde period, Karlstadt separated sin into two categories; intentional and unintentional. Pater argues that for a short interval in 1523 Karlstadt preached a kind of perfectionism.⁸⁴ In Ursachen das And: Carolstat ein zwyt

still geschwigen (1523), Karlstadt wrote that preachers should be sinless: "Gottes wort ist rein vnd lauther/ vnd die lauthere vnd reine soltens allein handeln/ vnnd kein vnsawbere."⁸⁵ However, as Pater points out, Karlstadt did not mean absolute sinlessness, but a complete avoidance of intentional sin. Unintentional sin was not considered sin from God's perspective.⁸⁶ Although Karlstadt did not preach perfectionism for long, he did retain a distinction between intentional and unintentional sin. While unintentional sin would be forgiven, intentionally disobeying God led to damnation.⁸⁷

Since the viator could not overcome sin, Christ's atoning death became vital. Karlstadt explained the significance of Christ's sacrifice in his Von manigfeltigkeit... "Gleuben wir an ynen [Christ]/ das er vns geschickt sy/ so seynd wir sicher vnd gewyss/ das er vnser sunde auff sich leget vnd bezalet. der halben er vom vatter gesant ist."⁸⁸ Thus, Christ was not only an example for Christians, but the absolver of their sins. As we have shown, however, Karlstadt called for an internalization of Christ's life and death, not simply a reliance on the forgiving power of Christ. To simply believe that Christ died for your sins would not lead to salvation; it was superficial faith. The Christian must experience Christ's suffering. Forgiveness came after the viator had decided to allow his old self to be destroyed by the cleansing work of

the Holy Spirit. For Karlstadt, justification and sanctification went hand in hand.

Since a greater degree of sanctification than could be obtained on earth was needed to reach heaven, Karlstadt allowed for a stage of continued purgation after death. John Kleiner discussed Karlstadt's perception of purgatory in his thesis on Karlstadt's eschatology (1966). Purgatory was a place where humans could experience the process of detachment without the burden of the flesh. Having failed to obtain purity in this life, the Christian endured a more successful mystical transformation in purgatory. A state of true perfection was not reached until the entrance into heaven.⁸⁹

Karlstadt's pessimistic outlook on the Christian's ability to overcome sin was not expressed by Müntzer. He was convinced of the ability of the human soul to experience a full ethical metamorphosis in this life.

"Just as happens to all of us when we come to faith: we must believe that we fleshly, earthly men are to become gods through Christ's becoming man, and thus become God's pupils with him - to be taught by Christ himself, and become divine, yes and far more to be totally transfigured into him, so that this earthly life swings up into heaven...."⁹⁰

Müntzer was considerably more in tune with the German mystical tradition in this regard.

This disparity between Müntzer and Karlstadt points to a deeper disagreement in their understanding of the human-God relationship. Müntzer had a concept of natural order

which was not shared by Karlstadt. Within the natural order, Ordnung Gottes, were the inner and outer orders. The inner order pertained to man's mystical relationship to God; while the outer order related to the structural connections between God, man and the creatures.

"To be honest, . . . , I cannot hide my preference for giving the most elementary instruction to heathens, Turks and Jews about God and his ordering of things: to give an account of the dominion given to us and that of God over us. . . . When I refer them courteously to what the Bible teaches in its first chapters about the creatures being our possession and we God's, they reject it all as wild fantasy. Hence I say that if you are not prepared to learn the proper interpretation of the beginning of the Bible, then you will understand neither God nor the creatures nor the relationship between them. . . ." ⁹¹

Before Adam's disobedience, humanity was at one with God's will and ruled over the creatures. However, because of Adam's sin man fell into the realm of the worldly, thereby allowing his creaturely lusts to obstruct his awareness of God's will.⁹² The whole of Müntzer's theology was centered around bringing humanity back to a position of ethical oneness with God. If the Christian cooperated with God, allowing God to purify the soul of all its worldliness, then he would again take his ordained position between the creatures and God. Thus, man's natural ontological stature could be restored to the elect through the mystical process.

Karlstadt and Müntzer perceived mystical experience in different contexts. Müntzer conceived of the unity of wills in the framework of the elect's return to their ordained

position as God's perfect servants. Like Müntzer, Karlstadt's ideal human was Adam in his pre-fallen state. However, even with God's help humanity could not completely overcome Adam's sin. The best the Christian could hope for was a partial, but substantive, ethical regeneration. Karlstadt assured his readers that all who honestly attempted to follow the path of Christ would not be condemned by God. Despite their differences, both Saxon radicals preached the need for an experienced, inward faith.

Karlstadt deviated significantly from Luther's soteriology during this period. For Luther, man's fate was predestined by God's judgement. Any allowance for human cooperation or free will in the realm of salvation was anathema to Luther's understanding of man's complete depravity. Sin was omnipresent and relentless in the human condition. Salvation could be obtained only by God-given faith. God's grace came to the Christian only by way of the external word. By hearing God's word, which was mediated through the Scriptures and the sacraments (baptism and the Eucharist), humanity developed an awareness of its unrighteousness and God's righteousness. This awareness encouraged the growth of faith in the promise of Christ's atoning death. Thus, faith was defined as a belief in God's promise to forgive the sins of his elect.

Like Luther, Karlstadt and Müntzer argued that God's grace, not human achievement, led to salvation. Neither one

preached works-righteousness. As we have seen, however, both radical reformers adopted an anti-Lutheran understanding of human cooperation and free will. Karlstadt retained Luther's premise that sin was prevalent and persistent in the human soul and only partially toned down Luther's stress on Christ's atonement. However, despite sin's predominance, Karlstadt demanded a partial inner regeneration. Intentional sin would not be tolerated. For Karlstadt, forgiveness only came to those who would endure the inner trials associated with cross mysticism. Müntzer diverged from both Karlstadt and Luther when he asserted that true perfection could be achieved. Unlike Luther, Karlstadt and Müntzer argued that God was immanent in the soul: grace was not bound to the external word, but came directly through the Spirit. The mystical influence that was prevalent in Karlstadt's and Müntzer's thought marked their separation from Luther.

From the discussion above, it is evident that Karlstadt and Müntzer had very similar soteriologies. At the root of their agreement was a common source: the late medieval mystical tradition. They shared several of the basic premises of this tradition. Both Karlstadt and Müntzer concluded that faith had to be experienced inwardly. A gradual process of self-denial led to the regeneration of the human soul; the Christian experienced a spiritual rebirth. Through this process the Christian became closer

to God and, for Müntzer, became one with God's will. If the viator turned inward, God would meet him in the core of the soul. Although Karlstadt's Augustinian/Lutheran view of sin's omnipresence did not allow him to preach a complete regeneration in this life, he did insist upon a certain amount of inner righteousness for salvation: knowingly disobeying God was tantamount to damnation. Like the Theologia and Tauler, both called for a unity of wills between God and the believer. Thus, like many of their colleagues during the early years of the Reformation, Karlstadt and Müntzer adopted the late medieval mystical model of inner faith. In short, they rejected Luther's innovative doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Notes

1. Ulrich Bubenheimer, "Thomas Müntzers Wittenberger Studienzeit," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 99 (1988): 202-203.
2. Ibid., 202-203.
3. Ibid., 202.
4. Ibid., 204. See also Abraham Friesen, "The Intellectual Development of Thomas Müntzer," in Reformation und Revolution. Beiträge zum Politischen Wandel und den Sozialen Kräften am Beginn der Neuzeit. Festschrift für Rainer Wohlfeil zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. Rainer Postel and Franklin Kopitzsch (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989), 123.
5. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär, (München: C.H. Beck, 1989), 48.
6. Thomas Müntzer, "List of Books (End of 1520)", in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 446.
7. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 38, 40-43.
8. Ibid., 36-38, 25-30.
9. Ibid., 146-147.
10. Bubenheimer, "Thomas Müntzers Wittenberger Studienzeit," 203.
11. Ibid., 204.
12. Gordon Rupp, Patterns of Reformation (London: Epworth Press, 1969), 57. See also Friedel Kriechbaum, Grundzüge der Theologie Karlstadts. Eine Systematische Studie zur Erhellung der Theologie Andreas von Karlstadts (eigentlich Andreas Bodenstein 1480-1541), aus seinen eigenen Schriften entwickelt (Hamburg and Bergstedt: Herbert Reich Evangelischer Verlag GmbH), 11.
13. Hans-Peter Hasse, "Karlstadts Predigt am 29. September 1522 in Joachimsthal. Ein unbekannter Text aus Stephan Roths Sammlung von Predigten des Johannes Sylvius Egranus," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 81 (1990): 105-106.

14. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 231.
15. Ibid, 301.
16. Ibid., 299, 254.
17. Ibid., 303.
18. Friedel Kriechbaum, Grundzüge der Theologie Karlstadts. Eine systematische Studie zur Erhellung der Theologie Andreas von Karlstadts (eigentlich Andreas Bodenstein 1480-1541), aus seinen eigenen Schriften entwickelt (Hamberg and Bergstedt: Herbert Reich Evangelischer Verlag GmbH, 1967), 88. "Wo aber Karlstadt von dem Sich-ersterben als dem Zurücklassen alles dessen, darin "ich und ichheit/ mich und meinheit" kleben mag, d.h. aber als dem In-sein-ungeschaffen-Nicht-kommen redet, da bekommt auch das In-Gottes-Willen-versunken-sein anderen Akzent, es ist das Einswerden mit dem ungeschaffenen Ursprung."
19. Ibid., 53.
20. Ibid., 134.
21. Gritsch, Reformer Without A Church, 16.
22. Ibid., 196.
23. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Müntzers, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, Vol. II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 26-27. Goertz, Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär, 162. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "The Mystic with the Hammer: Thomas Müntzer's Theological Basis for Revolution," in The Anabaptists and Thomas Müntzer, eds. James M. Stayer and Werner O. Packull (Dubuque, Iowa and Toronto: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1980), 120.
24. Goertz, Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär, 164. Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung, 126-128. Goertz, "The Mystic With the Hammer," 121-122.
25. Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung, 47.
26. Goertz, "The Mystic With the Hammer," 121.
27. Goertz, Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär, 164-165. Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung, 49. Goertz, "The Mystic With the Hammer," 121.

28. Heiko Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism, 323-340. Bernard and Bonaventura are frequently added to this list.

29. Brown, 176.

30. Ibid., 311 n.46. Brown notes that Eckhart's emphasis on the intellect was not linked to his assertion of an essential union. His understanding of union stemmed from his adoption of the Neoplatonic emanation theory.

31. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 21.

32. Ibid., 21.

33. Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology, 329.

34. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 21-22. Packull explains that Eckhart supported his view of the mystical experience with the medieval premise that to know is to be and to be is to know.

35. Steven Ozment, Homo Spiritualis. A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson and Martin Luther (1509-16) in the Context of their Theological Thought, in Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, Vol. VI, ed. Heiko Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 27.

36. Ibid., 27.

37. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 27. Packull contrasts gradual justification with Luther's axiom of simul justus et peccator.

38. Friesen, "Thomas Müntzer and the Anabaptists," 148. Friesen draws a line between Müntzer's puritanism and Storch's libertinism.

39. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 24.

40. Ozment, Homo Spiritualis, 46. Ozment notes that the union of wills was not the goal of Tauler's unio mystica but the last step toward a substantive union.

41. Bengt Hoffman, ed. and trans., The Theologia Germanica of Martin Luther (New York, Ramsey and Toronto: Paulist Press, 1980), 132, 127, 98.

42. Ibid., 136.
43. Ibid., 138.
44. Ibid., 77.
45. Thomas Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 320.
46. Andreas von Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, 1523, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, AiiV.
47. Thomas Müntzer, Sermon to the Princes, in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 241.
48. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, AiiiR.
49. Thomas Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 342.
50. Andreas von Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, 1523, The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., eiiiR.
51. Andreas von Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, in Karlstadts Schriften aus den Jahren 1523-1525, ed. Erich Hertzsch, Vol. II. (Halle (Salle): Max Niemeyer, 1956-1957), 94.
52. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 292.
53. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, civR.
54. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, BiiV.
55. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 306.
56. Thomas Müntzer, Order and Explanation of the German Church Service recently instituted at Allsteadt by the servants of God, 1523, in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 173. Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung, 87.
57. Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung, 86-87.

58. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, diiiV.
Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 254-255.

59. Andreas von Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein
gesprächbüchlin, in Karlstadts Schriften aus den Jahren
1523-1525, ed. Erich Hertzsch, Vol. II. (Halle (Salle): Max
Niemeyer, 1956-1957), 18.

60. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-
Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 24.

61. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 218.

62. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, bivR.

63. Thomas Müntzer, On Counterfeit Faith, in The
Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter
Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 221.

64. Tauler, the Theologia, Müntzer and Karlstadt
shared this point of view. For Tauler see Friesen, "Thomas
Müntzer and the Anabaptists," 146-148. For the Theologia
Germanica see The Theologia Germanica of Martin Luther, ed.
and trans. Bengt Hoffman (New York, Ramsey and Toronto:
Paulist Press, 1980), 132. "As much Christ life as there is
in a person, that much of Christ there is also in him; and
as little of the one, as little of the other. For where the
Christ life is, Christ is also present. Where this life is
not, Christ is not.

In the Christ life one speaks with Saint Paul, who
writes: I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. This is
life at its noblest and best. For where that life is, God
Himself is and lives, with all goodness. How could there be
a better life?"

65. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 329.

66. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen
eynigen willes gottes, cR.

67. Thomas Müntzer, Protestation or Proposition, in
The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter
Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 199.

68. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, biiV.

69. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 220.

70. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 302.

71. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist
Movements, 41.

72. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, eiiiR. "Alle gutte werck vnd alles das got will haben/ das schafft got in seinen knechten vnd ist alles das gut ist/ gottes/ vnd nit vnser...."

73. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 39-46. See Pater for Karlstadt's rejection of predestination and adoption of free will.

74. Müntzer, On Counterfeit Faith, 219. For Karlstadt see Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 42.

75. Karlstadt, Von den zweyen hochsten gebotten, in Karlstadts Schriften aus den Jahren 1523-1525, ed. Erich Hertzsch Vol. I. (Halle (Salle): Max Niemeyer, 1956-1957), 61.

76. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 345.

77. Müntzer, Prague Manifesto, 364-365.

78. Thomas Müntzer, "Müntzer to Melanchthon.(Erfurt), 29 March 1522.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 45.

79. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 290.

80. Ibid., 274.

81. Müntzer, "Müntzer to Melanchthon," 45.

82. Karlstadt, Von den zweyen hochsten gebotten, 63.

83. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 302.

84. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 44-45, 110, 137.

85. Andreas von Karlstadt, Ursachen das And: Carolstat ein zeyt still geschwigen, Vol. I., 14.

86. Ibid., 19. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Anabaptist Movements, 76.

87. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 45.

88. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, DR.

89. John Walter Kleiner, "Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt's Eschatology As Illustrated by Two Major Writings of 1523 and 1539" (Master's thesis, Harvard Divinity School, 1966), 27-28.

90. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 278.

91. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 316-318.

92. Thomas Müntzer, "Copies of Notes for Sermons" in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 387, 388.

Spiritualism in Karlstadt and Müntzer

As was noted in the introduction, a useful definition of spiritualism is found in Walter Klaassen's essay "Spiritualism in the Reformation."¹ Klaassen does not view spiritualism as the ideology of a single group, namely the spiritualists, but as a principle which had wide acceptance during the Reformation in both the radical and magisterial camps. To Klaassen, spiritualism is the precept that the Holy Spirit is not tied to any external means, i.e. the scriptures, the sacraments and preaching, and is therefore is free to come to the viator directly. In this sense both Karlstadt and Müntzer were, to differing degrees, spiritualists. We assert that the main source of their spiritualism was a popularized mysticism.

Traditionally, mysticism and spiritualism have been sharply contrasted. The mystic assumes an eternal unity between God and man, while the spiritualist perceives a gulf which can only be bridged by the Spirit.² However, in his Innere und Äussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Müntzers, Goertz sees no contradiction between Müntzer's perception of the Holy Spirit as a medium connecting man and God and his mysticism. Goertz explains that there is no conflict between spiritualism and the German mystical tradition. Both Eckhart and Tauler differentiated between the sphere of the created soul and the sphere of God. Goertz notes that

for Eckhart the soul of man "ist der Tempel Gottes und als dieser erschaffen; darin ist sie Gott ungleich, denn er ist ungeschaffen."³ Thus, Goertz concludes that Müntzer's spiritualism was in the context of a mystical framework.⁴

Recently, many scholars have confirmed Goertz's premise that Müntzer's spiritualism stemmed from the late medieval mystical tradition.⁵ However, simply labeling Karlstadt a spiritualist gives rise to disagreement among Karlstadt scholars. In fact, two of the most current works on Karlstadt attempt to remove him from the ranks of the spiritualists.

In his study of Karlstadt, Sider explains that spiritualism arises in two areas: one concerning the mediation of grace and the other the problem of authority.⁶ The Christian can demonstrate spiritualism in the area of authority by allowing for special revelations apart from scripture and by calling for direct spiritual illumination when interpreting the written word. Sider notes that during the years of Luther's strongest influence (1520-1521) Karlstadt tied the Holy Spirit, or grace, to the external word. Hearing the external word was the only avenue by which the Christian could receive grace.⁷ In other words, the Spirit was not free to move independently into the soul. During his Orlamünde period, however, Karlstadt exhibited a marginal spiritualism. According to Sider, Karlstadt asserted that the external word was essential, but not

sufficient, for the mediation of grace. Sider concludes that Karlstadt had returned to his earlier Augustinian position (1517-1518).⁸ For Sider, this marked a separation between the word and the Spirit in Karlstadt's thought, but only a very minimal turn toward spiritualism. The biblical word was still required for salvation.

Sider argues that Karlstadt answered the question of religious authority with the principle of sola scriptura: "Karlstadt clearly continued to affirm that scripture alone is the source and criterion of theological truth."⁹ Thus, the notion that spiritually inspired visions and dreams were a source of theological understanding was anathema to Karlstadt's biblicism. Although Sider admits that Karlstadt claimed direct spiritual help in the exegetical task, he argues that ordinarily Karlstadt displayed only a very moderate spiritualism. In Karlstadt's dialogue on the eucharist, the peasant Peter claimed that he did not need the scriptures to verify the Spirit's direct exegesis. Sider notes that this was an exception to the rule. Usually, Karlstadt required biblical confirmation of any directly inspired exegesis.¹⁰ Thus, in general, his exegetical principles were only marginally spiritualistic; the Bible remained the basis for all religious knowledge. Sider concludes that for Karlstadt "the spiritualist label is not really applicable."¹¹

Pater argues in his Karlstadt as the Father of the

Baptist Movements that spiritualism did not play an active role in Karlstadt's theology. Although Pater recognizes the independent work of the Spirit in Karlstadt's thought, he perceives this in the context of Karlstadt's strict biblicism.¹² This same concern for biblical authority led Karlstadt as early as 1520, to reject baptism as a means of grace.¹³ He separated the inward experience of baptism, which was the salvation process, from the ceremony of infant baptism, which was merely a sign. According to Pater, Karlstadt renounced infant baptism and expressed a positive view of adult baptism during the period from 1523-1525.¹⁴ Pater concludes that Karlstadt's development towards adult baptism was an attempt to reconcile biblical law with practice and sign with experience. Thus, Karlstadt was not concerned with a spiritualist dualism between createdness and Spirit, but with an integration of inward experience and ceremonial rite.¹⁵

Both Pater and Sider are correct when they label Karlstadt a biblicist. But Karlstadt was not merely a biblicist; he was a spiritualist as well. Like Müntzer, he did not tie the Spirit to any external means of grace. Sider recognizes the concept of spiritualism in Karlstadt's theology, but minimizes its importance. To Sider, Karlstadt's firm commitment to the authority and power of the biblical word dampened his spiritualistic tendencies to such an extent that the spiritualist label should not be

applied. On the other hand, Pater states that Karlstadt was not a spiritualist because he was not motivated by a dualism between createdness and the uncreated Spirit. On this note he separates Karlstadt from the spiritualism of Müntzer. We agree with Pater that a Neoplatonist dualism was not active in Karlstadt's thought, but neither was it active in Müntzer's.

Neither Karlstadt nor Müntzer argued for a philosophically driven disparagement of created things simply because they were created. However, part and parcel of their adoption of a popularized mysticism was a dualism between worldliness and spirituality. Reliance on created things for salvation was sinful. Seeking the Holy Spirit in worldly things was serving the creatures rather than God. To turn to God was to shift one's attention away from the temporal and inward to the spiritual. We contend that this dualism substantially influenced their understanding of the role played by the written word and the sacraments in the process of salvation.

Not far in the background of Karlstadt's and Müntzer's intellectual development was Luther's thought. For Luther, the Holy Spirit came to humanity only through the proclamation of the scriptural word and the sacraments. In other words, grace, or the Spirit, was bound by the external word of God. Hearing the word ultimately resulted in the salvation of the elect. On biblical grounds, Luther

supported the notion that the actual body and blood of Christ were in the bread and wine of the sacrament. However, from the same biblical viewpoint he rejected transubstantiation. Both sacraments contained an outward sign (water and the elements) and the word of God, which was the source of faith.¹⁶ The sign and significance of infant baptism were reconciled in Luther's thought through the doctrines of fides infantium and fides aliena.¹⁷ In one case (fides infantium) faith was actually bestowed on the infant and in another (fides aliena) the faith of the godparents made up for the infant's lack of faith. Either way sign and significance were united in the ceremony. Thus, preaching and the sacraments (eucharist and baptism) were the only means of grace for the elect.

Like Luther, Karlstadt argued that the proclaimed word was vital to the salvation process. It was a means by which God's spirit flowed into the believer. In Karlstadt's dialogue on the eucharist, the peasant, Peter, explained that the Bible was an avenue to the Spirit: "Hastu einen aussgestreckten lust in der gerechtigkeit/ als gerechtigkeit/ vnd ein brünstig hertz dartzu/ so ist dir die krichisch schrift/ welche du itzt hast [ü]berlesen/ eyn bescherdtes mittel."¹⁸

However, the external word was not enough to stimulate regeneration. Karlstadt described the scripture as a schoolmaster, leading the viator to the Spirit within. The

scriptures revealed God's will, but they did not cleanse the soul. They were a witness to the Spirit:

"Das gesetz offenbaret nit mer sünd/ denn die geschriff Christum offenbaret/ nemlich als ein gezeugnuss/ Also aber trett ich auss dem gesetz/ zu dem geyst Gottes/ vnnd sehe nitt vor allen dingen auffs gesetz/ Als D. Luthers teuffelische leer fürgibt/ bleyb auch nit auff dem gesetz sondern gee zu dem/ wölchen des gesetz anzeygt/ als Paulus sagt/ das gesetz ist ein knaben leydter zu Christo."¹⁹

As a creaturely thing, the external word could not provoke internal faith without the direct action of the Spirit. Simply relying on the scriptural word to deliver salvation was trusting in the creaturely rather than God.

"Vngelassenhait hatt lust vnd lieb/ in dem/ das geschaffen ist/ vnnd liebet diss oder jhenes gütt/ als jr aygen gütt. Ob sy auch gleych tausent mal von gott thet reden vnd prediget/ dannocht steet jr lust in dem/ das sy reden kan/ oder in jrer weysshait/ oder in dem büchstaben/ wölchen sy zu aygem rum/ lop/ gelust vnd schatz gefast vnd in sich gezogen hatt/ vnd nitt blosslich in gott.... Den buchstaben erkent ainer wol oder hatt lust in jme. Aber gott erkennt er nit/ wann er mit lieb vnd lust in dem buchstaben steet. Dann die gottes süne seind die werden von gott getryben/ nit von dem buchstaben."²⁰

Thus, Karlstadt severed Luther's link between the word and the Spirit.

It was a combination of hearing the external word and experiencing the direct actions of the Holy Spirit which resulted in regeneration.²¹ God moved indirectly through the external word and directly through the Spirit. Then, the viator could make an informed choice to accept or reject the movement.²² Sider is correct when he writes that

Karlstadt's understanding of the mediation of grace during this period was reminiscent of his earlier Augustinianism. However, Karlstadt was not simply returning to Augustine. He was, in fact, repudiating what he perceived to be Luther's externalization of religious practice.²³

Karlstadt was a strict biblicalist. He asserted that there should be no additions or subtractions to the written word.²⁴ Scripture was sufficient as a record of God's will and law.²⁵ In turn, the letter was a witness to the Holy Spirit, from which it derived its strength. "Die ware offenbarung der sünden ist des geystes/ der das eusserlich geben hat/ vnd nit des eusserlichen Buchstabens."²⁶ The written word was inspired by the direct spiritual revelations of the prophets and apostles.

For Karlstadt, believers shared in this spiritual heritage. Like the apostles and prophets, the true Christian was directly inspired by the Spirit. In Karlstadt's dialogue on the eucharist, his spokesperson objected to the priest's suggestion that direct contact with God was limited to biblical characters: "Sollen wir nit Apostel messig sein/ warumb saget Petrus von Cornelio/ das er den geyst entpfangen hatte wie sie? Warumb sprichet Paulus/ das wir seyne nachfolger sein sollen? hat vns Christus seinen geyst nit verheyssen als den Aposteln?"²⁷ Karlstadt noted that the Spirit-filled could write texts and preach sermons as authoritative as the Bible. He bragged

that his works were truly inspired, unlike Luther's:

"Dartzu hab ich anndere bücher geschriben/ der ich mich auss grosser nott rümen muss/ ob sy nit zierlich vnnd geschmuckt/ als D. Luthers bücher/ seynd sy doch warhafftig vnd Göttlich/ als der Propheten vnd Aposteln Bücher."²⁸ The Christian was directly called to preach; and his words flowed from God.²⁹ Likewise, the congregation was informed by God as to the best choice for a minister.³⁰ According to Karlstadt, direct contact with God was not extra-biblical, but was in conformity with the biblical text; the Spirit and the letter were in agreement.

The Spirit clarified the content of scripture. Difficult passages were illuminated by the Spirit in the soul of the believer. It allowed the uneducated to comprehend God's word without recourse to the biblical languages.³¹ In fact, many learned priests and scholars were distant from God, because they knew the letter but not the Spirit. A scholar of scripture could comprehend the meaning of the external word without the inner faith. In Karlstadt's eucharist dialogue, the priest correctly interpreted the text through his Greek Bible.³² However, true Christians were led by the scripture to the Spirit, while the defiant sinners remained with the creaturely text. For them, biblical learning was the means to worldly success, which they coveted at the expense of their souls. Karlstadt confessed that as a professor he was lost in

worldly concerns:

"ich wenet ich wer ain Christ gewest wann ich
tyeffe vnd schöne spruch auss Hiere. [Jeremiah]
geschriff klabet/ vnd behielte sy zu der
disputation/ lection/ predig/ oder ander reden....
Ich sach das der geschaffen büchstaben/ das war
das ich erkannt vnd liebet in dem selben rüwet
ich/ vnd der selbe was mein got...."³³

God's word was useless to anyone who did not accept the Spirit and deny the self.

Because the will of God was available to humanity through the spiritually illuminated biblical word there was no need for visions and dreams as a common source of revelation. Scripture was clearer.³⁴ However, Karlstadt never really objected to the notion of dreams and visions being a source for inspiration. At one point he vaguely endorsed them: "God is the master of my heart; I have learnt his power and his strong hand by experience. Hence I have said more about visions and dreams than any of the professors."³⁵ Even though Karlstadt did not expand on this concept it would be wrong to simply discount this statement.³⁶

Karlstadt argued for an inwardly experienced faith and against an externalized faith based solely on the external word. Only God's spirit could join humanity to God. As a creaturely thing, the scriptures played a necessary, but secondary, role in the salvation process. Karlstadt's dualism between outward-looking worldliness and inward-looking spirituality was a basis for his separation of the

letter and the word.

Like Karlstadt, Müntzer relied on the inner Spirit for salvation: "Even if you have already devoured all the books of the Bible you still must suffer the sharp edge of the plough-share."³⁷ He shared with Karlstadt the notion that God worked directly through the Spirit. However, he did not require the proclaimed word for faith. "If someone had never had sight or sound of the Bible at any time in his life he could still hold the one true Christian faith because of the true teaching of the Spirit...."³⁸ The true faith was learnt directly from God and not through listening to the external word.³⁹ Thus, the direct action of the Spirit was the only means of grace.

This did not mean that Müntzer held the scriptures in low esteem. On the contrary, he used copious scriptural examples to support his conception of an experienced faith. The scriptures were a testimony to the inward workings of God. They were a gift from the Spirit to educate and prepare the congregation for faith. Müntzer translated the Mass into German so that the poor could be shown the spiritual way.

"The main thing is that the psalms are sung and read properly for the poor layman, for it is in them that the working of the holy spirit can be clearly discerned: how one should walk before God and come to the beginnings of the true Christian faith. How faith should be maintained in the face of great temptation is also very clearly expounded by the spirit in the psalms."⁴⁰

As with Karlstadt, the proclamation of the external word led

the Christian to self-mortification through the Spirit. Müntzer wrote that the scriptures were there "in the first instance, to choke us to death, not to vivify us."⁴¹

In the same manner as Karlstadt, Müntzer ridiculed the scriptural scholars for their dependence on the creaturely letter. He compared the scholars of his day to the Pharisees, who "boast of their competence in holy scripture", but "deny the source of faith."⁴² Müntzer's argument with the "learned" was not that they studied scripture, but that they stayed with the written word and did not go where it led.

Unlike Karlstadt, Müntzer was not a strict biblicist. He did not disavow any additions to the biblical word. It was not a sin to add or subtract to the church service as long as it did not contradict God's commands.⁴³ Müntzer based his interpretation of scripture on spiritual inspiration. A true exegesis could not be achieved without the help of the inner word. The scriptural scholars had taken the external word away from the Spirit and interpreted it through their creaturely logic. Müntzer noted that "they want...to reserve to themselves the right to judge on matters of faith, using the Scriptures they have stolen, though they have no credibility at all, either in the eyes of God or of man."⁴⁴ Thus, the scholars were concerned with the letter, whereas Müntzer was interested in the Spirit, which was the source of the letter. Karlstadt believed that

the Christian needed the Spirit to make the literal interpretation of the letter useful for salvation. On the other hand, Müntzer argued that to correctly comprehend the meaning of the scriptures the Christian needed the inner voice.

Müntzer answered the problem of theological authority with God's directly communicated word and visions and dreams. A Christian became aware of God in his soul through unmediated correspondence. "At times he becomes aware of this in a partial way through visual imagery, at times in a complete way in the abyss of the heart...."⁴⁵ When the Christian did not understand the inner voice and became confused as to God's will, a figurative image would appear.⁴⁶ However, Müntzer prefaced his endorsement of visions and dreams with a warning that they should be in complete conformity with the written word, "lest the devil sneak in...."⁴⁷ Again, Müntzer did not reject the scriptures as an authority he merely saw the Spirit as their basis.

At the core of both Karlstadt's and Müntzer's separation of the Spirit from the written word was a repudiation of worldly concerns in favour of spirituality. The Christian must turn to the Spirit, not to any creaturely things, for redemption. The same concept was active in their sacramental theologies.

In the years 1520-1521, Karlstadt adopted the most

important aspects of Luther's doctrine on the Lord's Supper. Although significant, their differences were mainly due to different strategies rather than to divergent theologies. Late in 1521, Karlstadt called for a rapid move to conform the Mass to the biblical word. Luther was more willing to wait for the weak. Karlstadt performed the first evangelical worship service in December of 1521. He spoke the words of institution in German, did not elevate the elements in the manner of a sacrifice and distributed the host in both kinds. With the exception of the elevation of the host, which Luther did not condemn, Karlstadt's reforms were in tune with Luther's thought. He embraced Luther's assertion of the real presence, as well as his rejection of transubstantiation. Like Luther, he understood the sacrament to be both sign and promise. It was a sign of Christ's promise to forgive sins and a mediator of God's grace. Forgiveness was mediated through the sacrament.⁴⁸

This, however, was not the case in 1524 when Karlstadt wrote several tracts against Luther's eucharist theology. He objected to Luther's retention of the real presence and the sacramental mediation of grace. In his dissertation of 1973, Crerar Douglas argued that Karlstadt's rejection of Luther's doctrine was based on "his figural theology of history."⁴⁹ By sacrificing himself for our sins, Christ had completely fulfilled the Old Testament figurae.⁵⁰ In other words, the will of God which was prophesied in the Old

Testament but not fulfilled, was fulfilled once and for all with Christ's death. Thus, any fleshly return of Christ to earth would contradict God's plan of intervention in history.⁵¹ In accordance, Christ was not in the sacrament. And the sacrament had no power to forgive sins. Douglas concluded that Karlstadt based his eucharist theology on his figural interpretation of the Bible, not on any spiritualist considerations.⁵²

Christ's atonement was not Karlstadt's only concern, however. He expected the death of Christ to be experienced in the soul. The significance of the Lord's Supper was in the remembrance of Christ's passion. When Karlstadt called on Christians to remember the passion of Christ, he meant for them to inwardly experience Christ's sacrifice.

"Aber itzt ehe wir vnsern krefften genugsam absterben/ so oft wir des hern brodt essen/ vnd von seynem kelch trinken wöllen/ so oft müssen wir des hern todt bekennen mit hertzen vnnd muth/ das ist/ wir müssen auch vnsern todt Christi in unss enpfinden/ vnd die gerechtigkeit Christi/ nicht vnserere fülen."⁵³

The external eating of the sacramental ceremony was contrasted with the spiritual eating of the inner faith: "denn die gotkündigern/ reden mit Christus rede/ vnd sagen/ spiritualiter/ das ist/ geistlich müssen wir des hern fleisch essen. Sacramentaliter ist es nicht mehr nütz/ dann dz natürlich eüsserlich fleisch Christi."⁵⁴ Thus, Karlstadt internalized the meaning of the Lord's Supper and viewed the external ceremony as a sign of internal regeneration. An

emphasis on the importance of the external ceremony distracted the participant from concentrating on the true source of grace, i.e. the Spirit: "denn was wir dem eusserlichen brodt zuschieben/ das nemen wir dem todte Christi abe."⁵⁵ To rely on the external ceremony for salvation was to turn to worldly things and not God. Karlstadt's repudiation of external religion played an important part in his severance of sign and significance in the Lord's Supper.

The same can be argued for his baptismal theology. Karlstadt's disunion of the baptismal sign and significance in 1520 exemplified his growing desire to de-externalize the process of salvation. By 1523, Karlstadt explained this separation in the context of a dualism between worldliness and inner experience.

"Nym ein exempel der tauff/ vnd merck/ was ym vor gsagt wirt/ wan er sol getaufft werden. Christus spricht/ ir solt sye teuffen in dem namen des vatters vns sons vnd des heiligen geistes.... Welcher sich in dem namen lesst teuffen/ der nymbt die eusserlich tauff derhalben/ das ehr eusserlich vor yder menyglichen wil antzeygen/ das er den dryfeltigen got bekent/ vnd vor seinem schepper hymels vnd ertrichs helt der ym alles das geben kann vnd wil/ das ym von nöten vnd gut ist. vnd alles das er ym verheischt. Wu disse gerechtigkeit nit ym geyst ist/ do ist das tzeichen falsch/ vnd von got vngeacht. drumb können sich die alten ires tauffs nit getrösten/ wan sy denniderganck ires lebens nit fuelen. Derhalben ist der geistlich mensch an eusserliche ding nit gepundten/ oder von nöten/ das ynnerlich eynikeit mit dem eusserste tzeichen must bewert vnd bezeucht werden. oder das der geist on leiplich dinge sein leben vnd werk nit könt volbringen....sondern schlechthyn on trost vnn vertrauen in eusserlichen dingen."⁵⁶

The whole of the baptismal rite was internalized. Baptism by water was significant only in connection with spiritual baptism. Although as a command of God the ceremony was retained, it lacked all power to mediate grace.⁵⁷

In 1523, Karlstadt took the logical step and discontinued infant baptism. Since infants were ignorant of the Spirit, they were excluded from the ceremony. He criticized Luther for baptizing infants and, thus, treating the concept of inner faith with contempt.⁵⁸ At this point, Karlstadt advocated believers' baptism.⁵⁹ Pater assumes that Karlstadt favoured adult baptism. However, Karlstadt did not expand on this concept. In fact, Alejandro Zorzin's recent recovery of Karlstadt's baptismal tract (1524) reveals that Karlstadt was more interested in preserving the integrity of an experienced faith than in creating a new external rite. Without mention of adult baptism, he attacked Luther's fides aliena. Every Christian must have inner faith and not rely on external means.⁶⁰ Thus, Karlstadt asserted that the faith of the godparents could not replace the absence of faith in the infant.⁶¹ In the case of infant death, the Spirit would come in purgatory. A competent choice could then be made for or against God.⁶² In this way, Karlstadt repudiated infant baptism and retained his notion of experienced faith.

In the same vein as Karlstadt, Müntzer criticized pedobaptism and separated its sign and significance. Real

baptism was spiritual not temporal. To Müntzer, the fall of the Church coincided with its replacement of the Spirit with the rite of baptism. The anchor of the Church had become a trivial ceremony without any basis in true, internal faith. "It is because we have no understanding of baptism that our sole preoccupation is with ceremonies and church rituals."⁶³ This led to a Church of ignorant children, not experienced believers.⁶⁴ Thus, both Karlstadt and Müntzer objected to infant baptism on the grounds that it disparaged the central theme of Christianity: salvation through an experienced faith.

However, whereas Karlstadt abolished the rite, Müntzer continued to baptize infants throughout his career.⁶⁵ It was not the actual ceremony which was harmful, but the dependence on the ceremony for grace. Müntzer's main concern was to educate the participants in the true meaning of the ritual. In 1523, Müntzer counseled the godparents to teach the spiritual significance of the ceremony to the child.⁶⁶ However, in a note on baptism (1524), Müntzer proposed to baptize only children old enough to understand.⁶⁷ Experience had taught him that godparents were not reliable. "I know for a fact...that at no time in his life has any godparent or sponsor dreamt of worrying whether his godchildren would adhere to what he had pledged."⁶⁸ This was not a clear programme for believers' baptism. Yet, Müntzer did argue that the Spirit came to

children of six or seven years of age.⁶⁹ Although this proposed reform probably did not come to fruition, it does reveal an important point. Müntzer's first priority was not to coordinate sign and significance, but to simply convey the meaning of the sign. Thus, while Karlstadt attempted to save the substance of baptism with believers' baptism, Müntzer retained the substance by using the ceremony as a pedagogical tool to promote the Spirit. Their goals were the same, but their means were different.

Müntzer understood the Lord's Supper in the same manner as he did baptism. It was a symbol of the inner reality of the Spirit. Like Karlstadt, Müntzer insisted that only people who have experienced faith should partake of the ceremony. Otherwise the sacrament would be an affront to God:

"Sixth the Sanctus is sung, to explain what a man must be like if he is to handle the sacrament without damage to his soul: namely, that he should, and must know that God is in him, not imagining or conjecturing that God is, as it were, a thousand miles away, but that the heavens and the earth are full, full of God...."⁷⁰

During his Allstedt period, Müntzer translated the Mass into German. This would ensure that the commoners had a complete understanding of the symbolic nature of the ceremony. In the same manner as Karlstadt, Müntzer strove to conform the sacrament to the biblical word. However, he was more willing to wean, rather than pry, the weak from their superstitions. "This constant hearing of the divine word

will also make the superstitious ceremonies or rites in the service redundant. All this, however, is a gradual process, gently easing away from such ceremonies, and guiding the people in their own language, and in the singing to which they are accustomed...."⁷¹ Still, Müntzer's Mass was not a document of compromise. Simply translating the Mass into German was an affront to the status quo. In turn, the Mass emphasized the Spirit within as opposed to the Spirit in the external sacrament. Müntzer's goal was to de-ceremonialize religious practice.

Unlike Karlstadt, Müntzer rejected all external means of grace and completely spiritualized the exegesis process. For Karlstadt, the external word was needed, although not sufficient for salvation. It was a means of grace. Whereas Müntzer believed that the Spirit was needed for a correct exegesis, Karlstadt asserted that a spiritually illuminated and a rationally obtained interpretation generated the same content. However, God's word was fruitless to the sinner, who did not reject the world for the sake of the Spirit. Müntzer separated the Spirit from the written word more than did Karlstadt.

Despite these differences, however, Karlstadt and Müntzer had more in common with one another than they did with Luther. Both reacted negatively to what they perceived to be Luther's externalization of faith. His faith was superficial because it relied purely on creaturely things,

such as the scriptures and the sacraments. A spiritual/mystical orientation dominated the thought of Karlstadt and Müntzer. At the core of their theologies was an internalized faith.

Notes

1. Klaassen, "Spiritualization in the Reformation," 67-75.
2. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement 1525-1531, 30.
3. Goertz, Innere und Äussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Müntzers, 47. Goertz questions the pantheistic label that is frequently given to the German mystics.
4. Ibid., 49.
5. Two notable exceptions have already been mentioned. In his 1967 biography, Gritsch downplays the role of mysticism in Müntzer's theology. He credits Müntzer's spiritualism to Storch's influence. Walter Elliger, in his 1975 biography, makes the same argument. In his latest biography (1990), however, Gritsch writes that "German medieval mysticism played a decisive role in his theological reflections." Eric Gritsch, Thomas Müntzer: A Tragedy of Errors (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 17.
6. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 205. Sider used Klaassen's definition of spiritualism.
7. Ibid., 118-122.
8. Ibid., 246.
9. Ibid., 261.
10. Ibid., 272.
11. Ibid., 300.
12. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 15-24.
13. Ibid., 101.
14. Ibid., 108.
15. Ibid., 151.
16. Alister McGrath, Reformation Thought. An Introduction (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 128.

17. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 99.
18. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 17.
19. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, 77.
20. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, bv.
21. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, 62-63. "Solt ich das nit wissen das Gottes gesetz geystlich ist/ gerecht/ heylig vnnd gutt/ das es den inwendigen menschen/ geystlich/ gerecht heylig vnd gutt mache/ wenn Gott seyn gesetz ins hertz schreybt/ vnd druckt? Wenn Gottes gyst in die warheit füret/ vnnd das ins hertz redet/ das die eusserliche stymm/ in die oren schreyet? also das die sünd denn recht erkannt/ gehabt vnnd geflohen werd/ als das bösse."
22. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 152.
23. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, 89. "Darumb muss D. Luther der eins nitt wissen/ Nemlich/ das die buss durchs gesetz nit rechtfertiget noch fruchtet zum leben/ Oder das die buss durch den namen Jhesus ein fruchtbare vnd Götliche buss ist/ Denn Luther setzet die zwen sprüch zusammen/ Büssen durchs bloss gesetz/ vnd büssen durch den namen Jhesus/ Also gibt der klugel/ dem gesetz mer vnd geleych das/ das im Moses/ David/ vnnd andere Propheten/ Christus vnd die Apostel nemen/ Oder nymbt der buss in dem namen Jhesus/ das jr die Aposteln vnd Jungern in den geschichten der Apostel geben. Das solt jr wissen/ Der namen Jhesus ist ein nam der sälligkeit/ In dem namen Jhesus buss thun/ heysset den namen Jhesus nit schlechts anruffen/ als jn die anruffen/ von wöllichen gesagt/ Nicht ein yegklicher der da sagt/ Herr/ Herr/ Sondern das heysset den namen Jesus anruffen/ oder drinn büssen/ den herren Jesum erkennen/ als Paulus sagt/ Nyemant kan sprechen/ Jhesus ist der herr oder Messiah/ denn im heyligen geist die also in dem erkannten namen Jesu buss wircken/ das ist die Jesum den heyland erkennen? die haben ein sällige buss ein götliche abker vom bössen/ vnd so bald sy büssen/ so kommen sy in die vergebung jrer sünden/ Darumb ist die buss in dem namen Jhesus vil ein ander vnd höher erkenntnuss/ der sünden/ denn ein Creatur durchs gesetz erlangen mag."
24. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 37.

25. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, DiiV-DiiiR. "Seynen willen hat got den propheten durch tzureden/ gesichte vnd dunckelheiten angetzeigt. vnd ist syn ewiger/ bestendiger vnd vnwandel barlicher will in heiliger schrifft yn solcher einhellikeit durch propheten/ Christum vnd aposteln angesacht oder tzu gheschryben/ das wir gots willen in. H. geschriff gnugsam erstudieren mogen...."
26. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, 63.
27. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 18-19.
28. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, 64.
29. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 18. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 20.
30. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 290.
31. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 19.
32. Ibid., 19-20.
33. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, bV.
34. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, DiiiV.
35. Karlstadt, "Karlstadt to Müntzer, Wittenberg. 21 December 1522.," 53.
36. Whereas Rupp exaggerates Karlstadt's concern for visions and dreams, Sider underestimates it.
37. Müntzer, Protestation or Proposition, 199.
38. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 274.
39. Ibid., 272.
40. Thomas Müntzer, German Evangelical Mass, in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 181-182.
41. Müntzer, On Counterfeit Faith, 215.
42. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 330.

43. Müntzer, German Evangelical Mass, 181.
44. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 264.
45. Müntzer, Sermon to the Princes, 241.
46. Ibid., 243.
47. Ibid., 241.
48. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 140-144.
49. Crerar Douglas, "The Coherence of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt's Early Evangelical Doctrine of the Lord's Supper: 1521-1525" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Seminary Foundation, 1973), 4.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., 265-266.
53. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 49.
54. Ibid., 25.
55. Ibid., 30-31.
56. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen eynigen willes gottes, GiiV.
57. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 112.
58. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln Christlicher leere, 91. "Ich meyn er [Luther] wiss auch nit was getaufft sey im namen Jesus. Das auch gibt jm villeycht vrsach/ die tauff Christi so leyhfertigklich zu handeln kinder zu Tauffen die jre lüste nit versteen/ ich geschweyg dz sy der lüsten todt/ durch Christum versteen."
59. Ibid., 70.
60. Alejandro Zorzin, "Karlstadts 'Dialogus vom Tauff der Kinder' in einem anonymen Wormser Druck aus dem Jahr 1527. Ein Beitrag zu Karlstadtbibliographie," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 79 (1988): 42-43.
61. Ibid., 44.
62. Ibid., 46.

63. Müntzer, Protestation or Proposition, 194.
64. Ibid., 193.
65. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism: The Return of the Repressed," 13.
66. Müntzer, Order and Explanation of the German Church Service, 177.
67. Thomas Müntzer, "On Baptism (1524, after 15 August)," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 395-396.
68. Ibid., 396.
69. Müntzer, Sermon to the Princes, 239-240.
70. Müntzer, Order and Explanation of the German Church Service, 173.
71. Ibid., 172.

Conclusion: Mysticism and Radicalism

In the last two chapters we have attempted to place Karlstadt and Müntzer in the tradition of late medieval mysticism. It is our contention that their popularized mysticism stemmed specifically from the Theologia Germanica and the writings of Johannes Tauler. Both sources led them to argue that an experienced, internalized faith was the only avenue to salvation. Like the mystics, Karlstadt and Müntzer believed that one achieved salvation through the abandonment of creaturely lusts and selfishness. However, instead of embracing Tauler's dualism between createdness and uncreatedness, they modified this concept to a dualism between worldliness and spirituality. This notion colored their view of the sacraments and the relationship between grace and the written word. They both spiritualized the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. An experienced faith was mediated through the Spirit, not the sacraments. Müntzer asserted that the proclamation of the external word was unnecessary for the process of internal regeneration. In contrast, Karlstadt argued that the proclaimed word was needed to experience faith. Yet, he asserted that a complete reliance on the external word was to trust in creaturely things rather than the Spirit. Essentially, Karlstadt and Müntzer endeavoured to spiritualize religious piety and practice.

The historical importance of Karlstadt's and Müntzer's espousal of mysticism lies in its opposition to the basic principles of Luther's theology. Luther did not espouse the concept of an experienced faith. He defined faith as a belief in the promise of God that salvation would come to the elect through Christ's atonement. Grace was mediated to the believer through preaching, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Thus, both Karlstadt and Müntzer perceived Luther's concept of faith as superficial and external. From their perspective, it was a dependence on worldly things rather than God.

Yet, their debate with Luther was not simply an argument over theological principles. Their mysticism had radical social implications which were anathema to Luther's social conservatism. In his Mysticism and Dissent (1973), Steven Ozment notes that the mystical tradition contains a latent anti-intellectualism and anti-institutionalism. Thus, it has the potential to form the ideological underpinning for dissent, reform and revolution.¹ His thesis is germane to the thought of Karlstadt and Müntzer. Mysticism was a source for their social radicalism.

Coupled with Karlstadt's mystical soteriology was a legalistic biblicism, which demanded that God's law be applied to church and state. He maintained that the only lawful government was a theocracy; the only legitimate role for a magistrate was to enforce the law, or will, of God.²

Karlstadt equated anti-Christian rule with tyranny.³ The authentic Christian magistrate was not concerned with earthly, but with Godly, law.

Karlstadt asserted that any governmental decree or law which contradicted the will of God should be resisted. Even though Karlstadt did not advocate violent dissent or revolution, he argued that Christians owed their allegiance to God, not to any earthly power. Those filled with the Spirit fought with the Word, not with the sword.⁴ In December 1521, Karlstadt translated his convictions into action. Violating an electoral proclamation forbidding innovations, he performed the first evangelical communion.⁵ Again, in 1524 Karlstadt refused to obey the elector and return to his archdeaconate in Wittenberg.⁶ By 1523, Karlstadt's doctrine of dissent was couched in the medieval mystical tradition. No one can serve an earthly as well as a spiritual master:

"Auch gibt gott da selbs/schöne ursachen sagend/Nyemand kan zwayen herren dienen. Kayner mag got vnd rechtumb dienen/dann auff das mynste muss das geschehen/das er ainem anhangt vnn den andern versaumpt/weil ye war ist/wa dein schatz ist/da ist dein aug vnd herz/vnd wann ainer fleyssig auff das ain sicht/so verlasset er das ander. Matthei 6."⁷

Since regeneration of the soul bore the fruit of moral action, God's will was obeyed by the Spirit-filled despite the laws of magistrates.

Although Karlstadt was not a social egalitarian, he promoted a democratized church. There was no need for an

intellectual or clerical elite when God's grace came directly to the soul of the believer. The institutional church ceased to be the mediator between God and man. With the Spirit, the peasant could interpret the scriptures with the same accuracy as the priest. The difference was that the true Christian turned away from worldly lusts and to the true faith. On the other hand, the clerics enjoyed their social status too much to accept the hardships of the inner cross. In Karlstadt's dialogue on the Lord's Supper, the priest proclaimed that it was not expedient to allow the commoners to learn about the flaws in the doctrine of the real presence. For then the peasants would have as much status as the priests.⁸ It was the church hierarchy, both Catholic and Lutheran, which was the target of Karlstadt's polemic.

Karlstadt's attack on the church hierarchy was not an indication that he devalued the role of the preacher. On the contrary, he stressed that the proclaimed word was necessary for salvation. Yet, in Orlamünde he democratized the ministry by allowing the laity to preach. The ministry was no longer exclusive to the educated classes. For Karlstadt, a minister should be called by the Spirit; and a congregation should choose its minister by the same spiritual means.

However, preaching was not restricted to ministers. All Christians were called to preach at home and in the

church.⁹ In turn, the laity could challenge the minister on theological matters.¹⁰ Essentially, this meant an autonomous, communally-run church without institutional supervision.

Not only did Karlstadt reject the institutional church, but the university as well. It was an institution of sinful egotism, because it promoted worldly titles at the expense of divine selflessness. In February 1523, Karlstadt began to sever his ties with the University of Wittenberg by refusing to bestow academic degrees.¹¹ This action was explained in a treatise of the same year:

"In den hohen schulen was suchet man anders dann eere von den andern. Derhalben wirt ainer Magister/der ander Doctor vnd dartzu Doctor der hayligen geschriff/geben anch gutt vnd gab vmb die eere die Christus seinen leeriungern verbotten hat...."¹²

For Karlstadt, seeking temporal prestige was a detriment to internal regeneration.

Like the clerics the intellectuals were deceivers of the poor. They led the commoners astray with their superficial faith. Karlstadt criticized the commoners for trusting in the learned rather than God.¹³ The truly spiritual shunned the worldly wise as they shunned their selfish desires:

"Secht hie/wie ir euch ein rohr seit dz ir meiden solt/also sollen euch alle gelerten ein weich rhor werden. Die blosse warheit aber/alein/sol ewr grund/vnd felss sein/wenn ir die selbe hat/bleibet ir vnbekommert/one wanckel/ob sich gleich alle gelerten verwandelten/vnnd die apostel abfielen/wens müglich were...."¹⁴

Karlstadt's mystical soteriology formed the ideological buttress for his anti-intellectualism.

Related to his anti-institutionalism and anti-intellectualism was an affinity for the common man. To Karlstadt, the ideal life of the Christian was that of the peasant. He asserted that physical labour was a form of Gelassenheit. Criticizing himself for living off the hard work of the lowly, he noted that everyone should earn his own keep.

"Gott hatt Adam ein gebott geben/das er arbeytten soll/vnd das gebott lauttet von der arbeyt/des felde/vnnd mir alle seynd zu gleych schuldig/vnser narung im kummer drauss zu haben/vnd ist keiner entschuldigt/wie hoch er ist oder seyn mag....Vnd solche arbeyt ist ein redliche tödtung des fleysches...."¹⁵

In this vein, he preferred peasant garb to the cap of the scholar and wanted to be called 'brother Andrew' rather than 'doctor'.¹⁶ He wrote his Von manigfeltigkeit... (1523) as "eyn newer Ley."¹⁷ Disappointed by what he perceived to be the parasitical and fleshly character of the elites, Karlstadt idealized the life of the commoner.

Despite his pacifism and support for good, i.e. Christian, government, Karlstadt was a real threat to the church and political elites. His Orlamünde theology entailed concepts that challenged the hierarchical structure of medieval society. He supported passive resistance and the empowerment of communal churches. Although Karlstadt did not call for an egalitarian state, he certainly thought

that a Christian government would mean more rights for the commoners. By emphasizing the direct relationship between God and the individual, Karlstadt undermined the power of the church to mediate salvation. Thus, the power of both church and state to control the populace was diminished. God's will was the master, not that of the rulers or clerics. In short, Karlstadt's thought was socially radical.

As with Karlstadt, Müntzer's mysticism undermined the legitimacy of the institutional church, the university and the ruling elite. Neither the clerics, the biblical scholars, nor the magistrates were willing to give up their social status to follow the path of Christ. Refusing to teach the common man, the church hierarchy and biblical scholars kept the written word for themselves, thereby attempting to preserve their position as the intermediary between God and the laity.¹⁸ This spiritual oppression was upheld by the temporal rulers, who knew little of faith and "flay[ed] and fleece[d]" the lower classes.¹⁹ With the same mystical language as Karlstadt, Müntzer contended that the elite feared a loss in prestige rather than God and served the creaturely rather than the spiritual.²⁰

However, Müntzer's concept of the elect made for a sharper division between the ruling classes and the commoners than Karlstadt was willing to acknowledge. He equated the scholars, priests and magistrates with the

godless and the commoners with the elect. Of course, this was not a strict construction. There were exceptions within the ranks of the church and intellectual hierarchies;²¹ and Müntzer did not entirely give up hope that there were elect among the magistrates.²² Yet, this motif was present throughout his body of works.²³ In his A Manifest Expose of False Faith, Müntzer clearly expressed a socio-political distinction between the elect and the reprobate: "God despised the big-wigs, like Herod and Caiphas and Annas, and took into his service the lowly, such as Mary, Zachariah and Elizabeth. For that is the way God works, and to this day he has not changed."²⁴

Müntzer's doctrine of the elect and his mystical spiritualism colored his understanding of church and social reform. Unlike Karlstadt, he took an apocalyptic view of church history. The apostolic church was a pure, spiritually-based community of the elect.²⁵ However, after the death of the apostles the elect allowed their church to be stolen by the godless.²⁶ The spiritual basis for the church was discarded for a ceremonialized and superstitious faith.²⁷ Without spiritual leadership, the elect became as ignorant as the godless.²⁸

Yet, for Müntzer the final reform of the church was at hand. His vision of the end of history was both violent and revolutionary. First must come the growth of experienced faith among the elect and then a holy war against the

godless. After enduring the trials of faith, the lowly could rise up to take back their church. Purification in the soul led to the purification of society:

"men must smash to pieces their stolen, counterfeit Christian faith.... Then a man becomes very small and contemptible in his own eyes; to give the godless the chance to puff themselves up and strut around the elect man must hit the depths. Then he can glorify and magnify God and ... can rejoice whole-heartedly in God, his savior. Then the great will have to give way to the lowly and be humiliated before the latter."²⁹

For Müntzer, mystical soteriology was a catalyst for revolution.

Initially, Müntzer hoped that some of the rulers would join the radical movement. In his Sermon to the Princes, he informed the Saxon magistrates of their duty to enforce God's law. Müntzer warned them that failing to carry out the will of God would result in their violent demise.³⁰

His sermon was not a renunciation of his revolutionary views. On the contrary, he demanded that the rulers participate in the destruction of the existing social order and in the commencement of the Kingdom of Christ.³¹ If the magistrates refused then the sword would be taken by the community.³²

Müntzer did not systematically lay out his notion of a new world order. However, a general understanding can be obtained through his writings. Certainly, he did not envision the normal Millennium or Second Coming. He wrote in his Prague Manifesto that "this world [would be given] to

[Christ's] elect for all time.³³ More specifically, Müntzer noted that the world would be governed in a Christian manner by the gemein, i.e. the community, congregation, or the commoners.³⁴ In a note to the people of Eisenach, he stressed "that power should be given to the common folk."³⁵ For Müntzer, the whole community should officiate on judicial, or spiritual matters³⁶ and elect its own ministers.³⁷ In short, he envisioned a democratic society in the framework of communal sovereignty.

Perhaps the most controversial issue in Müntzer literature is the question of the source for his revolutionary thought. In an article entitled "The Sixteenth Century's Apocalyptic Heritage and Thomas Müntzer" (1983), Richard Bailey argues that third-age, Joachimist, apocalypticism was the basis from which Müntzer developed his radicalism.³⁸ He notes that Müntzer came to the third-age tradition through a pseudo-Joachimist work, the Super Hieremian Prophetam.³⁹ By the summer of 1521, revolutionary apocalypticism was the central theme in Müntzer's thought.⁴⁰ After his exile from Zwickau, Müntzer searched for an inner motivation to compliment his external program. He found this in mysticism. Bailey concluded that Müntzer's mysticism was within the context of his apocalypticism.⁴¹ Yet, one of the main problems with Bailey's analysis is that Müntzer had already developed his mystical soteriology before his arrival in Zwickau in 1521. Thus, the notion

that Müntzer's soteriology stemmed from a yearning to justify his apocalypticism is fallacious.

Unlike Bailey, Goertz sees mysticism as the central motif in Müntzer's theology. In his Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär, Goertz contends that Müntzer's revolutionary thought was derived from his mysticism.⁴² For Müntzer, the inner sphere (the soul) and the outer sphere (the world) were inseparable.⁴³ His notion of revolution mirrored his concept of inner regeneration. Human souls were filled with creaturely lusts and fears. Only when these lusts and fears were eliminated could the Spirit fill the soul. In turn, the unholy rule of the worldly powers was propped up by the fear they instilled in the common folk. Only when this fear was eliminated, and the godless rulers disposed of, could the Kingdom of God come upon the earth. This, Goertz concludes, was Müntzer's rationale for revolution.⁴⁴

However, there was a purely revolutionary aspect to Müntzer's thought which is not explained by Goertz. Evidence suggests that Müntzer's justification for revolution went beyond his soteriology. Some of his statements indicate that he had a completely rational argument for revolution based mainly on his analysis of current social conditions. A passage from his Vindication and Refutation attests to this point.

"For while they [the princes] do violence to everyone, flay and fleece the poor worker,

tradesman and everything that breathes...yet should any of the latter commit the pettiest crime, he must hang.... It is the lords themselves who make the poor man their enemy. If they refuse to do away with the causes of insurrection how can trouble be avoided in the long run? If saying that makes me an inciter to insurrection, so be it!"⁴⁵

Socio-political motivations for Müntzer's revolutionary thought should not be overlooked.⁴⁶

Nonetheless, Müntzer's mysticism was the intellectual context into which his socio-political thought and his apocalypticism were placed. As James Stayer notes, "in the sixteenth century persons who wanted to change the world, not merely to understand it, started with theology...."⁴⁷ It is significant that Müntzer explained the defeat of the Thuringian peasants with soteriological concerns in mind.⁴⁸

For both Karlstadt and Müntzer, mysticism played a vital role in the development of their world view. The status quo had to be condemned because it served worldly, not spiritual, needs. This meant that the commoners were being deceived by the external rites and materialism of the higher-ups. With this in mind, both Saxon radicals advanced an understanding of reform which, although diverse, was similar in several important respects. Both argued that the only legitimate government was one that enforced God's will. They supported resistance against those rulers who were unfaithful. Although Karlstadt was not a social egalitarian, he, like Müntzer, envisaged a spiritually-generated, communally-run church, which gave the common man

sovereignty over his spiritual life. The legitimacy of the Wittenberg and Catholic churches as intermediaries between humanity and God crumbled under the weight of their mysticism.

It is useful to conceive of Müntzer's and Karlstadt's radicalism within the framework of the "Reformation of the Common Man." In his Gemeindereformation (1987), Peter Blickle perceives the early years of the Reformation as a broad social movement to reform both church and state. Beginning in the early 1520s, when Reformation thought was making its way to the countryside, and ending with the military defeat of the commoners by the princes in 1525, this movement sought to communalize societal structures.⁴⁹ According to Blickle, the common man had developed a limited tradition of communal rule in the late medieval period. Organizations with some autonomy were formed to regulate various local interests.⁵⁰ For instance, in the countryside they assisted in protecting the security of the village and the commons, and helped to organize the harvest and distribution of produce.⁵¹ This tradition was radicalized with the influx of Reformation biblicism. The commoners used biblical law, or godly law, to justify their socio-political aims.⁵² They demanded that godly law be the basis upon which society was structured: "Gemeindereformation heisst theologisch-ethisch, das Evangelium in reiner Form verkündet haben zu wollen und danach das Leben auszurichten;

organisatorisch, Kirche auf die Gemeinde zu gründen; politisch, die Legitimität von Obrigkeit an Evangelium und Gemeinde zu binden."⁵³ When these demands were stifled by the authorities, then godly law became the rationale for the "Revolution of the Common Man," i.e. the Peasants' War of 1525.⁵⁴ Like Karlstadt and Müntzer, the commoners saw the Reformation as a movement to reform the whole of society, not just the church.

In contrast, Luther attempted to dampen the social impact of his theology. His doctrine of the priesthood of all believers had potentially radical implications. All Christians were clerics; the difference between priest and layman was only in calling.⁵⁵ In the early 1520s, Luther asserted that the congregation had the right to appoint its ministers and assess their doctrine.⁵⁶ Thus, in theory anyone could preach as long as they were elected by the community. However, he backed away from this principle when faced with a threat to his reformation. After Karlstadt was elected by the congregation in Orlamünde, Luther requested that he be removed by the Elector.⁵⁷ It seems that Luther was more concerned about social order than communal rights.

By 1523, Luther had developed a doctrine against social change. He attempted to separate the secular realm from the sacred.⁵⁸ Within the realm of salvation, the Christian was transformed by the grace of God. Yet, no such renewal was applied to the temporal sphere. Here, God ordained the

status quo. To be a peasant or a magistrate was by God's will; thus, to disturb the social order was an egregious sin.⁵⁹ If a ruler was repressing the faith, that is, encroaching on the realm of salvation, then the Christian could object, but only in a non-resistant fashion.⁶⁰ Luther's doctrine meant ordained legitimacy for the political hierarchy.

Again we see Müntzer and Karlstadt in opposition to Luther. Although to differing degrees, both Saxon radicals were in tune with the yearnings of the common man. Karlstadt idealized the life of the peasant, believed that the people should be governed by godly law, and argued for the communalization of the church. But he broke with the commoners when their cause became revolutionary and violent. Perhaps more than Karlstadt, Müntzer personified the revolutionary spirit of the underclasses in 1525. He equated the elect with the common folk, called for the annihilation of the godless elites, and fought for an egalitarian society. Whereas Luther sided with the status quo, Karlstadt and Müntzer demanded radical change. This probably accounts for their popularity among the masses.

In Zwickau, Müntzer filled the artisan-dominated St. Katherine's Church with mesmerized parishioners. On one occasion he was successful in inciting a violent attack on a visiting cleric who had earlier criticized his sermons.⁶¹ This same enthusiasm was apparent in Allstedt where

commoners travelled from outlying areas to hear him preach. The magistrate of the territory adjoining Allstedt, Count von Mansfeld, banned his citizens from attending Müntzer's services.⁶² It appears the Count was worried about the effect of such a radical message on his subjects.

Like Müntzer, Karlstadt aroused enthusiasm within the population of the Saxon countryside. Over the objections of Luther and the princes, the Orlamünde congregation elected Karlstadt minister and supported his radical reforms: in 1527 there were still unbaptized babies in Orlamünde.⁶³

Both Karlstadt and Müntzer received most of their support from the commoners. But neither man's influence was limited to a few Saxon towns or to a certain class. They were the founders of a mystically influenced, anti-Lutheran movement during the early 1520s, which had repercussions in Saxony and beyond. Several of their adherents were ministers or preached independently. A follower of Karlstadt, Martin Reinhard, preached in Jena.⁶⁴ Another of Karlstadt's cohorts, George Amandus, was a minister in Schneeberg where he advocated the concept of Gelassenheit and won support among the miners.⁶⁵ Most important was Karlstadt's brother-in-law, Gerhard Westerborg, who became his representative to the Swiss Anabaptists.⁶⁶

As with that of Karlstadt, Müntzer's influence was widened by his followers. Although their theologies were in some respects divergent, it would be correct to understand

the Zwickau Prophets as a product of Müntzer's ministry in Zwickau.⁶⁷ In December of 1521, they were in Wittenberg terrorizing the learned and preaching an experienced faith and anti-pedobaptism.⁶⁸ More vital to the spread of Müntzer's ideas were Simon Haferitz, his comrade in Allstedt, and Heinrich Pfeiffer, his counterpart in Mühlhausen. Both were helpful in transporting Müntzer's views to Nürnberg where a Karlstadt/Müntzer circle was formed in 1524.⁶⁹

Werner Packull argues that the early South German and Austrian Anabaptist movement had its theological roots in late medieval mysticism. This tradition came to them directly through Tauler and the Theologia Germanica and indirectly through Müntzer.⁷⁰ The foremost South German Anabaptists, Hans Hut and Hans Denck, both had ample access to Müntzer's thought. Along with Heinrich Pfeiffer, Hut was instrumental in getting Müntzer's A Manifest Expose of False Faith printed in Nürnberg.⁷¹ Later, Hut was with Müntzer in Frankenhausen before the fighting commenced.⁷² In 1524, while in Nürnberg, Müntzer might have met Denck.⁷³ But whether they encountered each other or not, Denck's thought showed signs of Müntzer's influence. Having been charged with propagating Karlstadtian and Müntzerian theology, Denck was exiled from Nürnberg in 1525.⁷⁴ Both Anabaptists shared many of Müntzer's most important themes: the immanence of God in the soul, the imitation of Christ, and the inner

Word.⁷⁵ Like Müntzer and Karlstadt, they answered the theological questions of the Reformation by turning to an experienced faith.

Karlstadt's and Müntzer's influence moved as far south as Switzerland. In his monograph on Karlstadt, Pater contends that he was a fountainhead for the Swiss Anabaptist movement. His contacts with the Swiss radicals were extensive. Gerhard Westerburg read several of Karlstadt's works to an approving Conrad Gabel and his colleagues, Andreas Castleberger and Felix Manz in October of 1524. Later, they were instrumental in getting the tracts printed in Basel.⁷⁶ Included in these works was Karlstadt's dialogue on baptism. Pater argues that Manz's discussion of baptism in his Protestation was plagiarized from Karlstadt's dialogue.⁷⁷ Late in 1524, Karlstadt visited Basel and Zürich, where he discussed his baptismal theology.⁷⁸ Within a few months of his departure from Zürich, the first adult baptism occurred (January, 1525).⁷⁹ Thus, Pater concludes that Karlstadt was the father of Swiss Anabaptism.

In turn, Pater de-emphasizes the significance of Müntzer's anti-pedobaptism to Swiss Anabaptist origins. He suggests that Müntzer's baptismal thought had its roots in a spiritualism, which led him to reject the validity of ceremonial rites.⁸⁰ In contrast, Karlstadt and the Swiss radicals based their theologies on a strict biblicism. Unlike Müntzer, their aim was to conform religious practice

to biblical law.⁸¹

Pater's stress on the significance of Karlstadt's anti-pedobaptism to the Zürich radicals has some validity. However, he overstates their dependence on Karlstadt. As we have seen, Karlstadt's dialogue on baptism was basically an anti-Lutheran promotion of experienced faith. Unlike the Swiss Anabaptists, he based his baptismal thought on a mystical-spiritualist soteriology. Because Pater underestimates the influence of mysticism on Karlstadt, he overemphasizes Karlstadt's importance to the Anabaptists' adoption of adult baptism.

By drawing a false distinction between Karlstadt's and Müntzer's criticisms of infant baptism, Pater might have underestimated Müntzer's significance. The Swiss radicals read Müntzer's On Counterfeit Faith and Protestation or Proposition. Grebel was impressed enough to write to Müntzer in September of 1524 to enquire about his baptismal thought.⁸² In 1525, after the first adult baptism, Müntzer probably contacted the radicals from Griessen.⁸³ There were fluid lines between both Saxon radicals and Swiss Anabaptism.

Nevertheless, mysticism was the tie that bound Karlstadt and Müntzer and separated them from Luther and the Swiss Anabaptists. Calvin Pater and Ronald Sider have attempted to differentiate between Müntzer and Karlstadt on the grounds that the former was a mystical spiritualist and

the latter a biblicist. We contend, however, that both were substantially influenced by a mystical tradition running from Eckhardt, through Tauler and the unknown author of the Theologia Germanica. Luther published the Theologia in 1516 and 1518 and highly recommended Tauler's sermons. But while Luther used the mystics to support his already developed anti-Catholic theology, mystical influence played a major role in the development of Karlstadt's and Müntzer's thought. Both espoused an experienced faith and rejected the sacramental and sacerdotal systems of the Catholic and Wittenberg churches.

Consequently, their mystical soteriologies helped to lead them to a radical social position. They radicalized Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers: all the Spirit-filled were called to preach. The worldly, materialistic magistrates and clerics were damned and the lowly commoners elevated. Communalization of the church, and for Müntzer of both church and government, was their aim. This was the rallying cry of the common man. It is no wonder Karlstadt and Müntzer were popular among the commoners and condemned by Luther and the prince.

Notes

1. Ozment, Mysticism and Dissent, 8.
2. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 83.
3. Ibid., 84.
4. Andreas von Karlstadt, "The statement of the people of Orlamünde to those of Allstedt on the Christian way to fight," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 93. Karlstadt noted his position on the use of violence in his church's answer to Müntzer's request to join the league of the elect. "Since we are bound to you like brothers we must be quite frank and say that we can have no resort to worldly weapons in this matter. This is not what we are commanded to do.... But if you want to be armed against your enemy, then put on the strong breast-plate and invincible armour of faith...."
5. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 157-60.
6. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 85-86.
7. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, civ.
8. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 14. "Es ist nit gut/das wir diese ding den leyen offenbaren. Denn aller erst werden die pawren/so viel gelten/als die priester." The priest's deception allows him to live with the hierarchy above the common man. Peter complains of Gemser's inconsistency on the issue of the real presence. "Gems. Auss grosser subtiligkeyt bin ich also behend. Es ist mir auch nütz/denn also flihe ich das Kreütz/vnd hab gute tag bey den hohen." Ibid., 31.
9. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 66-67.
10. Ibid., 67-68.
11. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 176.
12. Karlstadt, Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen, eiiiiv.

13. Karlstadt, Dialogus oder ein gesprechbüchlin, 7.
 "Die weyl diese meine arbeyt/sich wider so viel tausent
 schrifftgelerten setzet. Sonderlich/dieweyl/die fürsten der
 hochgelerten vnd schrifftweisen/den alten papistischen
 missbrauch handthaben/welchen der gemeyn mann
 nochlauffet/vnd nach jrem pfeüffen vff vnd nider
 dantzet/vnnd alles für eynen grundt helt/der
 gerechtigkeit/das sie von schrifftweisen hören. Vnd dz sie
 allenthalben recht thun/wenn sie den selben hochgelerten
 fürsingern nachsingen/oder nach springen/oder
 nachlallen/vnnd zu allem irem rathe/iha sagen/vnd amen.
 Wenn aber die gepundten gewissen sich etlicher stricken
 entledigten/vnnd liessen die personen vnd weltgeachten
 fürüber traben/vnd hielten sich an die lautere worheynt/vnnd
 gedächten/dass das vnzimlich vnd freuelich ist/die worheynt
 nach menschen laruen zu lencken/oder die schrifft nach dem
 ansehen der menschen zu richten/würden sie sich hinfürt
 nicht mehr auff eynes menschen arm verlassen/sondern auff
 die vnbetriegliche gründe der warheynt legen/vnnd eynen
 ewigen frid erlangen/vnd einen drunck von dem wasser das
 Christus gibt/drincken/der sie gantzlich settiget/vnnd zu
 dem ewigen leben springt."
14. Andreas von Karlstadt, Ob man gemach faren, in
Karlstadts Schriften aus den Jahren 1523-1525, ed. Erich
 Hertzsch, Vol. I. (Halle (Salle): Max Niemeyer, 1956-1957),
 75.
15. Karlstadt, Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartickeln
 Christlicher leere, 95.
16. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 177.
17. Karlstadt, Von manigfeltigkeit des eynfeltigen
 eynigen willes gottes, A.
18. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 330.
 Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 292.
19. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 335.
 Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 294.
20. Müntzer, Sermon to the Princes, 235.
21. Ibid., 235-236. "For the profligate biblical
 scholars seduce the poor, coarse people with their endless
 chatter.... This seems to be the way of all but a few of
 the biblical scholars today. With very few exceptions they
 teach that God no longer reveals his divine mysteries to his
 dear friends through genuine visions or direct words, etc.
 So they adhere to their bookish ways...and make a laughing-

stock of those who have experience of the revelation of God...."

22. Ibid., 245-246. Here Müntzer asked the Saxon princes to join the cause of the elect.

23. Baylor, Michael, "Theology and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Müntzer: The Case of the Elect," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 79 (1988): 91. Baylor refutes the common conception that Müntzer's revolutionary ideas were only apparent after his Sermon to the Princes (July, 1524).

24. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 298.

25. Müntzer, Sermon to the Princes, 231.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 233-234.

28. Müntzer, A Manifest Expose of False Faith, 294.

29. Ibid., 298.

30. Müntzer, Sermon to the Princes, 250.

31. Ibid., 244-245.

32. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 334.

33. Müntzer, Prague Manifesto, 371. Baylor, "Theology and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Müntzer", 94. Baylor sarcastically comments that an eternity is longer than a millennium. This puts into question Norman Cohn's assessment that Müntzer adopted a "militant and bloodthirsty millenarianism." Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium. Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 235-236.

34. Peter Matheson, ed. and trans., The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 150, n.1153. Matheson makes the comment that in Müntzer's German the word gemein, or gemeyne, means congregation, community or commoners.

35. Thomas Müntzer, "Müntzer to the people of Eisenach. Mühlhausen, 9 May 1525.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 150.

36. Thomas Müntzer, "Müntzer to the Mühlhausen Council. Mühlhausen, 8 May 1525.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 149.
37. Müntzer, Prague Manifesto, 370. Here Müntzer stated that the fall of the church was partially caused by the community's right to choose priests having fallen into disuse.
38. Richard Bailey, "The Sixteenth Century's Apocalyptic Heritage and Thomas Müntzer," Mennonite Quarterly Review 57 (1983): 43.
39. Ibid., 32.
40. Ibid., 36.
41. Ibid., 43.
42. Goertz, Thomas Müntzer: Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär, 167.
43. Ibid., 168.
44. Ibid., 168-169.
45. Müntzer, Vindication and Refutation, 335.
46. Baylor, "Theology and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Müntzer", 81-101. I owe my conclusions about Müntzer's socio-political thought to Michael Baylor. His thesis is that Müntzer's revolutionary sentiment was derived from a purely revolutionary understanding of the social situation rather than from his soteriology or apocalypticism.
47. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism," 31-32.
48. Thomas Müntzer, "Müntzer to the people of Mühlhausen. Heldrungen, 17 May 1525.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 160-161.
49. Peter Blickle, Gemeindereformation: Die Menschen des 16. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Heil (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1987), 112. In an earlier work, Blickle defines the common man as peasant or townsman without political status. Peter Blickle, The Revolution of 1525, trans. Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and H. C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 124.

50. Blickle, Gemeindereformation, 165-166.
51. Ibid., 168.
52. Ibid., 215.
53. Ibid., 112.
54. Ibid., 212.
55. Siegfried Hoyer, "Lay Preaching and Radicalism in the Early Reformation," in Radical Tendencies in the Reformation. Divergent Perspectives, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, no. 9 (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 88.
56. Ibid.
57. Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, 192-196.
58. Paul P. Kuening, "Luther and Müntzer: Contrasting Theologies in Regard to Secular Authority Within the Context of the German Peasant Revolt," Journal of Church and State 29 (1987): 311.
59. Ibid., 312.
60. Ibid.
61. Karant-Nunn, Zwickau in Transition, 1500-1547, 98.
62. Thomas Müntzer, "Müntzer to Count Ernest von Mansfeld. Allstedt 22 September 1523.," in The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer, ed. and trans. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 66.
63. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 111.
64. Karant-Nunn, "What Was Preached in German Cities in the Early Years of The Reformation? Wildwuchs Versus Lutheran Unity," 87.
65. Ibid., 87-88.
66. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 159-162.
67. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism,"

68. Ibid., 6-8.
69. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement 1525-1531, 37-39. Packull notes that the Lutheran faction complained about the positive reception in Nürnberg of Karlstadt's understanding of the sacraments.
70. Ibid., 177.
71. Ibid., 38.
72. Ibid., 63.
73. Ibid., 39.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., 177-180.
76. Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Baptist Movements, 159-160.
77. Ibid., 163-167.
78. Ibid., 160, 167.
79. Ibid., 167.
80. Ibid., 107-108.
81. Ibid., 165-166.
82. Stayer, "Saxon Radicalism and Swiss Anabaptism," 24-25.
83. Ibid., 28.

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