

The following article briefly introduces the development of the lectionary as a type of book and deals with the texts collected in the lectionaries, why they are chosen, and how the practice of church readings in Europe and North America has changed in the modern era. This contribution focuses on the readings for Sunday and holiday services; it will not address weekday or prayer services.

2. The Tridentine Lectionary and its Revision after the Second Vatican Council. The Council of Trent (1545–63) addressed the matter of Bible reading (Decree “*Super lectione et praedicatione*”) in its fifth session (1545–47). In 1570, in his *Missale Romanum*, Pius V standardized a lectionary that had developed by tradition. This lectionary would remain in force for the next 400 years. In this tradition, a set of texts from the Gospels and Epistles is read each year. Old Testament texts are only read for Epiphany, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil.

The liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council addressed the objectives of both the Bible Movement and the Liturgical Movement. The first decree of the council, “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*,” emphasizes the necessity of incorporating the Bible into services to a greater extent than before. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 51 reads, “The treasures of the bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word. In this way a more representative portion of the holy scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years.” This goal is to be achieved through regular preaching as well as by means of a fully revised lectionary (cf. *Sacr. Conc.* 35.1). The revision of the lectionary (*Ordo Lectionum Missae*) began in 1969 and the new lectionary itself was presented for the first time in 1975. Thereafter, it was translated into various local languages. The lectionary includes three reading cycles (A, B, and C) based on the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). These Gospels are read semi-continuously through the year. (see “*Lectio Continua II. Reformation Era and Modern Christianity*”). During the festal seasons, texts from the Gospel of John are read instead. Each Sunday and holiday is assigned four readings. Besides the Gospel reading, a pertinent OT text is chosen as well as a Psalm and a reading from the Epistles. The Epistle reading, chosen from among the most important NT letters, is carried out in lectio semi-continua, and thus does not necessarily correspond thematically with the Gospel and OT readings. The selection of the OT readings has come under criticism for being one-sided, since the reading is chosen based on the Gospel text and often stands in typological relationship with its NT counterpart (cf. Sloyan).

3. Post-Reformation Diversity and Attempts at Standardization from the 16th to the 20th Century. During the Reformation, paths diverged be-

C. Modern Europe and America

1. Terminology. In a broader sense, “lectionary” (from Lat. *lectio*, reading) means a list of biblical texts used for reading and preaching in the church. In the narrow sense of the word, the term “lectionary” describes a liturgical book containing biblical texts. The texts are chosen by a particular church for reading either on Sundays, holidays and festal days, or for every day of the ecclesial year. Thus, describing the history of the lectionary requires tracing the history of the lectionary as a type of book. During the Reformation lectionaries were often replaced by complete Bibles. This was done in part – and in contrast to the Catholic tradition – to express the commitment of the Protestant churches to the entire Bible. Even today, altar Bibles play an important role alongside lectionaries for liturgical readings in Protestant churches.

tween the Lutheran churches and the churches of the Swiss Reformation. The Lutherans maintained the traditional lectionary in continuity with the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformed churches, however, broke away from the Catholic tradition and introduced primarily lectio continua reading models. The Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* likewise organized lectio continua readings. In the latter case, the OT would be read once a year and the NT three times a year spread over various services on Sundays, holidays, and weekdays.

During the Enlightenment, pastors in Lutheran regions strongly criticized the constraints imposed on them by the lectionary. Thus, in the 18th and 19th centuries numerous custom lectionaries were developed by individual pastors and in some cases by order of regional churches. Many of the orders of worship that were being widely disseminated in the 18th century (for example that of the churches in Schleswig-Holstein, 1798) recommended additional sermon texts. The relative unity of the lectionary at the beginning of the modern age was starting to disappear. For this reason, in the 19th century churches in German-speaking regions sought to reexamine the various traditions that had sprung up and to reestablish a unified lectionary (cf. Raschzok). This led to the Eisenach Conference in 1896, which restored the earlier series of Gospel and Epistle readings. These readings were supplemented with an additional series of Gospel and Epistle texts as well as a series of OT readings.

The lectionary received renewed attention with the Liturgical Movement (cf. Asmussen; Stählin/Knolle). The movement led to a new Lutheran lectionary after the Second World War in 1949 and then to new recommended sermon texts in 1951 and 1958. In addition to a Gospel cycle and an Epistle cycle, which have their origins in the Middle Ages, the new order added four cycles of recommended preaching texts, also including OT texts. This gave rise to a system of six liturgical years. On average one OT text occurs per Sunday and holiday, and these OT texts can be used for regular readings, not just for sermons. This lectionary was thoroughly revised in 1977 and 1978, with further revisions made in 1999 (cf. *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch*).

4. Ecumenical Developments in the Second Half of the 20th Century. The changes to the lectionary in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council created a challenge for Protestant churches. While Luther saw in the lectionary an element of continuity between the churches that should not simply be abandoned, the Catholic Church had now produced a completely new lectionary model. Consequently, Protestant churches in France and Spain adopted the *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, but most churches reformed their lectionaries based on the *Ordo*. In 1983 the North American Consultation on

Common Texts developed the *Common Lectionary*, which was intended as a trial and would follow the three-year reading plan of the *Ordo Lectionum Missae*. It abandoned the consonant OT and Gospel readings. Instead, it offered both continuous OT readings as well as individual OT texts. In 1994 the *Revised Common Lectionary* was published, offering continuous OT readings and OT readings related to the Gospel reading. It is used by numerous Protestant churches in the USA and Canada but is prevalent worldwide, including in the Church of England, the United Reformed Church, and most Methodist churches. In 1990 the Anglican churches in Great Britain introduced the *Four Year Lectionary*. It devotes one year to each Gospel and complements each Gospel text with a pertinent Epistle and OT reading.

In Europe, the German-speaking Lutheran churches and the Evangelical Church of the Union retained the traditional lectionary system. They are the last churches worldwide that maintain, albeit with some modifications, a tradition that reaches back to the early Middle Ages. The same applies to the Lutheran churches in Eastern Europe (including Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary). In Scandinavia (Denmark, Finland, and Norway), lectionaries have recently been newly revised or fully redeveloped based on the so-called "old church" lectionaries. In 2008, a well-financed project in Germany initiated a moderate revision of the lectionary. Its publication and implementation are expected for 2018.

5. The Current Debate Surrounding Lectionaries and their Hermeneutics. Three primary questions have arisen in the last several decades concerning lectionaries in connection with the larger topics of theology and hermeneutics.

(1) The question of the fundamental relevance and necessity of the lectionary for today: Just as in the Reformation and the Enlightenment, the question has been posed anew whether the existence of the lectionary does not unduly limit the freedom of those responsible for designing church services (cf. Grethlein). Empirical studies, however, have shown that users of the lectionary are quite satisfied with it (cf. Pickel/Ratzmann). Moreover, individuals are currently providing practical-theological considerations, challenging the church's canon itself (cf. Jörns 2006: 154–87) or are recommending readings from other religious traditions or from the surrounding cultural heritage, though this is without the express approval from the churches (cf. Jörns 2007).

(2) The question of the Old or First Testament in the lectionary of the Christian Church: Together with the development of Jewish-Christian dialogue in Europe and North America, fresh sensitivity has arisen concerning the Christian handling of the so-called Old or First Testament since the Shoah. It

has been recognized that the churches frequently take very little of the OT into account. However, when they do, the NT is placed hermeneutically prior, with the result that the OT texts are overshadowed (cf. Schöttler). They are instead selected on the basis of the dominant NT texts (primarily from the Gospels) and often interpreted according to a hermeneutic of promise (OT) and fulfillment (NT). This criticism pertains to Protestant and Catholic lectionaries (cf. Ramshaw; Wansbrough; et al.). Numerous alternative models have thus been developed. For example, in the Netherlands a three-year cycle of Torah readings was developed (cf. Monshouwer; on the suggestion of a one-year Torah cycle see Wachowski: 213–30). In 1997 Hansjakob Becker produced the “Patmos” lectionary, which includes a continuous reading from the OT in the period between Pentecost and the end of the ecclesial year. It also suggests determining Gospel and Epistle readings during that period on the basis of the OT rather than the reverse. However, in the festal seasons of the ecclesial year, the Gospel sets the tone for the Propers.

In 1995 the Viennese theologian Georg Braulik designed a lectionary proceeding from the premise of the centrality of the Torah in the OT and the Gospels in the NT. He suggests a three-year continuous reading of the Torah as well as a continuous reading from the Gospels. The second reading for the liturgy should then be taken from the other parts of the OT or NT (for a further development of this model, see Schöttler). The German “Konferenz Landeskirchlicher Arbeitskreise Christen und Juden,” which works toward improved Jewish-Christian relations in the Evangelical Church in Germany, developed a lectionary model in 2009 that offers three OT texts (from the Torah, prophets, and writings) and two NT texts (Gospel and Epistle) for every Sunday and holiday. The current revision being undertaken in the Evangelical Churches in Germany doubles the number of OT texts and offers a qualitatively different selection of OT readings.

(3) The question of gender hermeneutics and the adoption of biblical texts in the lectionary: Lectionaries have undergone critical review in light of developments in feminist theologies and other gender-based theologies. Theologians have recognized that from a gender perspective lectionaries depict only one side of reality. Numerous suggestions for new and modified lectionaries have thus been proposed in this context (cf. Ahrens et al.; Korenhof; Korenhof/Stuhlmann; Janetzy). Lectionaries using inclusive language have also recently been published (cf. *An Inclusive Language Lectionary*).

6. The Lectionary and Scripture Reading in the Church: The Interplay between Liturgy and Biblical Hermeneutics. Lectionaries offer insight into the interrelationship between liturgy and bib-

lical hermeneutics. For one, lectionaries embody the fact that besides the official canon of the church, there also exists a de facto canon (Deeg) encompassing only the sampling of canonical texts that is actually in use.

By compiling certain texts, lectionaries also determine how those taking part in the liturgy understand the Bible. The same applies in the opposite direction: the understanding of the Bible on the part of theologians and ecclesial authorities influences the life of the church by means of the lectionary and its design. Christian churches in the modern era, particularly since the mid-20th century, no doubt face the following crucial questions: How should the church and theology handle the Old/First Testament? And, how should Jewish-Christian dialog take shape in terms of the intellectual understanding and liturgical use of biblical texts? Yet the question of how the lectionary as a book should be put to use, is itself an expression of the church's positive regard for the Bible and ultimately determines how the Bible is received (cf. Kranemann).

Bibliography: ■ Ahrens, S. et al. (eds.), *Und schuf sie als Mann und Frau: Eine Perikopenreihe zu den Lebenswirklichkeiten von Frauen und Männern für die Sonn- und Feiertage des Kirchenjahres* (Gütersloh ²1996). ■ Allen Jr., H. T., “Lectionaries: Principles and Problems,” *StLi* 22 (1992) 68–83. ■ Allen Jr., H. T., “Lectionaries,” *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (ed. P. Bradshaw; Louisville, Ky. /London 2002) 274–77. ■ Allen Jr., H. T./J. Russell, *On Common Ground: The Story of the Revised Common Lectionary* (Norwich 1998). ■ Asmussen, H., *Das Kirchenjahr* (Munich ²1937). ■ Becker, H., “Die Bibel Jesu im Gottesdienst der Kirche,” in *Christologie der Liturgie* (ed. K. Richter/B. Kranemann; QD 159; Freiburg i.Br. 1995) 112–13. ■ Bieritz, K.-H., “Die Ordnung der Lese- und Predigtperikopen in den deutschen evangelischen Landeskirchen,” *LJ* 41 (1991) 119–32. ■ Bloth, P. C., “Schriftlesungen I. Christentum,” *TRE* 30 (Berlin/New York 1999) 520–58. ■ Bloth, P. C., “Die Perikopen,” in *Handbuch der Liturgik* (ed. H.-C. Schmidt-Lauber et al.; Göttingen ³2003) 720–30. ■ Braulik, G., “Die Tora als Bahnlesung: Zur Hermeneutik einer zukünftigen Auswahl der Sonntagsperikopen,” in *Bewahren und Erneuern: Studien zur Mesliturgie*, FS H. B. Meyer (ed. R. Messner et al.; IThS 42, Innsbruck/Vienna 1995) 50–76. ■ Braulik, G./N. Lohfink, *Liturgie und Bibel* (ÖBS 28; Frankfurt a.M. 2005). ■ Consultation on Common Texts (ed.), *The Revised Common Lectionary* (Nashville, Tenn. 1992). ■ *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch* (Berlin 1999). ■ Franz, A., “Das Alte Testament und die gottesdienstlichen Lesungen,” in “... dass er euch auch erwählet hat”: *Liturgie feiern im Horizont des Judentums* (ed. A. Deeg/I. Mildenerger; BLSp 16; Leipzig 2006) 227–57. ■ Franz, A. (ed.), *Streit am Tisch des Wortes: Zur Bedeutung des Alten Testaments und seiner Verwendung in der Liturgie* (PiLi 8; St. Ottilien 1997). ■ Graff, P., *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands*, 2 vols. (Göttingen 1921/1939). ■ Graham, M. P. et al. (eds.), *Worship and the Hebrew Bible*, FS J. T. Willis (JSOT.S 284; Sheffield 1999). ■ Grethlein, C., *Was gilt in der Kirche? Perikopenrevision als Beitrag zur Kirchenreform* (ThLZF 27; Leipzig 2013). ■ Herrmann, F., “Lectionaries in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe” (Available at www.leuenberger.net). ■ Janetzy, B., “Die Lesung für die Frauen befreien: Alttestamentliche Frauenperikopen im er-

neuernten Lektionar aus der Sicht feministischer Befreiungshermeneutik,” in *Streit am Tisch des Wortes? Zur Deutung und Bedeutung des Alten Testaments und seiner Verwendung in der Liturgie* (ed. A. Franz; PiLi 8; St. Ottilien 1997) 725–49.

■ Jörns, K. P., *Notwendige Abschiede: Auf dem Weg zu einem glaubwürdigen Christentum* (Gütersloh³2006).

■ Jörns, K.-P., *Lebensgaben Gottes feiern: Abschied vom Sühnopfermahl: Eine neue Liturgie* (Gütersloh 2007).

■ Knolle, T./W. Stählin (eds.), *Das Kirchenjahr* (Kassel 1934).

■ Konferenz Landeskirchlicher Arbeitskreise Christen und Juden (ed.), *Die ganze Bibel zu Wort kommen lassen: Ein neues Perikopenmodell* (2009, available at www.perikopenmodell.de).

■ Korenhof, M. (ed.), *Mit Eva predigen: Ein anderes Perikopenbuch* (Düsseldorf 1996).

■ Korenhof, M./R. Stuhlmann (eds.), *Wenn Eva und Adam predigen: Ein anderes Perikopenbuch*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf 1998–99).

■ Kunze, G., “Die Lesungen,” in *Leiturgia*, vol. 2 (Kassel 1955) 87–180.

■ Liturgische Konferenz (ed.), *Liturgie und Kultur*, issue 2 (2015): *Die Perikopenrevision in der Diskussion*.

■ Monshouwer, D., “Der dreijährige Torazyklus im christlichen Gemeindegottesdienst,” in *Christologie der Liturgie* (ed. K. Richter/B. Kranemann; QD 159; Freiburg i.Br. 1995) 131–37.

■ National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America (ed.), *An Inclusive Language Lectionary* (Atlanta, Ga. 1983/84).

■ Pickel, G./W. Ratzmann, “Gesagt wird: Eine empirische Studie zur Rezeption der gottesdienstlichen Lesungen,” in *Auf dem Weg zur Perikopenrevision* (ed. Kirchenamt der EKD et al.; Hanover 2010) 95–109.

■ Ramshaw, G., “The First Testament in Christian Lectionaries,” *Worship* 64 (1990) 484–510.

■ Raschzok, K., “Zur Hermeneutik ausgewählter historischer Perikopensysteme des Protestantismus im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert,” *JLH* (2013) 32–67.

■ *Sacrosanctum Concilium/Constitution on the Sacred Liturg* (4.12.1963; available at www.vatican.va).

■ Schade, H. v./F. Schulz (eds.), *Perikopen: Gestalt und Wandel des gottesdienstlichen Bibelgebrauchs* (RGD 11; Hamburg 1978).

■ Schöttler, H.-G., “Die Bibel kanonisch lesen – auch in der liturgischen Leseordnung,” *BiLi* 84 (2011) 112–27.

■ Sloyan, G. S., “What kind of Canon do the Lectionaries Constitute?” *BTB* 30 (2000) 27–35.

■ Steins, G. (ed.), *Leseordnung: Altes und Neues Testament in der Liturgie* (Stuttgart 1997).

■ Wachowski, J., *Die Leviten lesen: Untersuchungen zur liturgischen Präsenz des Buches Leviticus im Judentum und im Christentum* (APrTh 36; Leipzig 2008).

■ Wansbrough, H., “The Sunday Lectionary,” *CleR* 72 (1987) 68–70.

Alexander Deeg