Reconceiving the Clerical Corps

How Heinrich Bullinger Resists the Expectations of Confessionalization

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Introduction

Diplomacy characterizes much of Bullinger's career. Examples abound. Scholars commonly note how Bullinger's calming canniness was especially apposite for leadership in just such a context. Precarious circumstances following Zwingli's demise had lately forced the Zurich magistracy to impose new regulations upon clerical function.[1] Leo Jud – Bullinger's fellow minister and Zwingli's erstwhile close associate – feared a loss of church integrity. Following Bullinger's initial appeal to calm, Jud wrote a fervent retort. He argued that human authority must not trump the unambiguous authority of Scripture; and caution must never mitigate the Christian's unflinching pursuit of perfection.[2] The letter suggests a dogmatic (perhaps even apocalyptic) urgency that may go hand in glove with potentially Anabaptist concepts of church-state separation. In any case, it does seem that injudicious zeal at such a

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[1] Bullinger himself was well aware of the political issues involved. He transcribed copies of the new regulations of the inner-Zurich "Meilen Agreement" and inner-Swiss "Second Peace of Kappel." See: Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, ed. J. J. Hottinger and H. H. Vögeli, vol. 3, Frauenfeld 1840, 247–253 and 284–291.

[2] Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel, vol. 2: Briefe des Jahres 1532, ed. Ulrich Gäbler et al., Zurich 1982, letter 75.

moment in 1532 could well have run the Zwinglian church aground. Bullinger's success in allaying Jud's distress is a triumphant testimony of the steady hand of Zwingli's successor.

While not minimizing Bullinger's genuinely diplomatic leadership qualities, I want to argue that there is much more to observe here. A rather flexible or "prudent" approach to ministry was not just a character trait of institutional realism. Bullinger systematically appropriated the humanist rhetorical agenda and adapted it to a new vision for church integrity in coordination with the state.

The Complications of Reviving "Priesthood"

Huldrych Zwingli and his colleagues (erstwhile priests themselves) went about demolishing traditional priesthood. The spiritual estate with its essentially separate "indelible character" actually did, so to speak, get "erased" in Zurich. The evangelical agenda stipulated that *all* baptized persons must be construed to share in a common priesthood. Zwingli made the point quite dramatically when he likened the traditional notion of indelible character to the apocalyptic "mark of the beast."[3] Nevertheless, it was a matter of urgency for Zurichers to defend some institutional subset of ministry.[4] Democratizing priesthood came with the horrifying potential for atomizing the church, maybe even disintegrating society altogether.

Zwingli formed a distinctively Reformed answer to this threat when he recast church ministers now as "prophets" rather than "priests." The prophetic emphasis of his agenda is clear in countless ways. One may note, for example, the fact that the first Re-

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[3] See especially Zwingli's comments on article 61 in "Ußlegen und gründ der schlußreden oder articklen durch Huldrychen Zuingli, Zürich uff den 29. tag jenners im 1523. jar ußgangen," in: Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke [Z], vol. 2, Leipzig 1908, 440.
[4] This urgency was clearly understood already at the earliest expressions of the principle of "priesthood of all the baptized." Luther, for example, hastened to defend institutional ministry at the same moment that he challenged the concept of a "spiritual estate" in his 1520 *Address to the German Nobility*. The concern to secure a clerical corps of evangelical leadership was in no wise a sudden, surprising realization *after* (and still less a mere backlash *against*) the peasant uprisings of 1525.

formed Bible printed in Zurich (1529) was actually a collection of Old Testament books of the *prophets*. The hallmark of prophecy was exegetical expertise, deploying the humanist's emphasis on arts of language. Knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and vernacular German allowed for informed interpretation of Scripture – in this way, communicating God's words to the community. This re-worked concept of "prophecy" re-secured the institutional corps of ministry from disintegrative possibilities implicit in democratized priesthood; it also crystallized a Reformed identity over against competing, Anabaptist notions of Christian community, wherein prophecy was associated with charismatic empowerment to predict the future.

Following Zwingli, Bullinger continued to be sensitive to Anabaptist counter-claims.[5] Certain Anabaptists argued that intellectualist ministry (i.e., prophet as professional exegete) amounts to a new guise for the same old problem of a clerical caste. Bullinger believed that the way forward involved addressing pastoral authentication. Specifically, the root problem of any errant concept of ministry lay in *self*-authentication. The old spiritual estate was fallacious, in his mind, precisely because of their proprietary understanding of indelible character radiating from the priesthood of the bishop of Rome. Reformed clerical identity must be more clearly differentiated from any hint of self-authentication in order to refute the Anabaptist opposition to Zwinglian "prophecy." To this end, Bullinger increasingly characterized Reformed clergy not only as prophetic, but also – in some modified ways, *especially* – as a cohort of episcopacy/priesthood.

Bullinger's concern to guard against the danger of self-authentication meant that the "prophet" must not *only* be able to validate divine authority by dint of exegetical fidelity to Scripture. The minister must *also* exercise a broader array of duties in and for the community. Daniël Timmerman has argued that this lies at the root of Bullinger's transition toward increasingly priestly rhetoric of ministry.[6] Peter Opitz has also discussed Bullinger's expansion

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[5] One may note, e.g., his 1531 defense of Reformed clerical identity over against Anabaptist objections in *Von dem unverschampten fraefel*.

[6] Daniël *Timmerman*, Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy and the Prophetic Office (1523–1538), Göttingen 2015 (Reformed Historical Theology 33), 151–155.

of the concept of ministry beyond the Zwinglian hallmark of scholarly expertise to encompass a second focus of practical application.[7] Opitz acknowledges that Bullinger turned from rather uniform identification of ministers as "prophets" toward more episcopal/priestly rhetoric, but Opitz also concludes that this is a distinction without much difference. I think there is rather more significance to the transition than Opitz concedes. Bullinger elaborated a view of Reformed priesthood – whether in its exegetical expertise or in its broader, moral function – in order to secure the Zurich clergy from any taint of self-referential, proprietary, self-authentication.

The Significance of Reviving Priesthood

Ministry required a delicate balance of legitimation through exegesis and application within the community; it *also* required authentication by God's rule of Christian society via magistracy. Unless the magistracy is, in fact, some sort of 'other' within a shared Christian whole, ministry would fall prey to the equal and opposite problems of Anabaptist Spiritualism and papal institutionalism – namely, self-authentication. Bullinger's turn toward more explicitly "priestly" rhetoric of ministry must be seen in continuity with his efforts to mitigate potential pitfalls of the "prophetic" designation in conjunction with clarification of church-state relations.

Gerard Roussel's concept of an *école rhénane* – a cultural religious zone from Zurich to Strasbourg – further helps illuminate this trend.[8] The Strasbourg reformer, Martin Bucer, notoriously became a *persona non grata* (to put it mildly) in Zurich. Nevertheless, his influence may have been especially great in areas of warning against Anabaptist tendencies toward apocalypticism un-

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[7] Peter *Opitz*, Von prophetischer Existenz zur Prophetie als Pädagogik: Zu Bullingers Lehre vom munus propheticum, in: Heinrich Bullinger: Life – Thought – Influence, ed. Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz, vol. 2, Zurich 2007 (Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte 24), 493–513.

[8] See comments on this subject by Daniel *Bollinger*, Bullinger on Church Authority: The Transformation of the Prophetic Role in Christian Ministry, in: Architect of Reformation: An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575, ed. Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, Grand Rapids, MI 2004, 168.

leashed by the concept of prophecy. Bucer quickly and clearly relegated the office of "prophet" – incidentally, here associated more with predictive than exegetical expertise – to the distant, unrepeatable past.[9] Bullinger would never go quite that far, inasmuch as he always insisted on an exegetical function of prophecy, but it is striking that his writings follow a similar trajectory. The Second Helvetic Confession asserts that prophets were extraordinary spokesmen of the past, and that "even today (*etiam hodie*)" some people of this sort may yet be found.[10] This is worlds apart from Zwingli's (or even young Bullinger's) enthusiastic identification of all ministers as prophets.

Conveniently, there are good semantic grounds for a transition between biblical concepts of "priest" (in conjunction with episcopacy) and "prophet." Zwingli had already noted the connection between the prophet as "seer" and the bishop as "over-seer."[11] If the entire notion of episcopacy could thereby be considered as prophetic, there is no necessary reason why Bullinger would find it conceptually impossible to reverse the equation – that is, to re-emphasize what is specifically "priestly" about an office once touted for its "prophetic" function. Bullinger softened the potentially awkward transition by commenting upon the essential equality between prophecy and priesthood within rightly exercised ministry of the word.[12] Negatively underscoring this same priest/prophet identity is the fact that whenever Bullinger refers to antichristian ministry in, say, the *Sermones Synodales*, the "ministers of Baal" are sometimes called "prophets" and sometimes "priests."[13]

Once the Council of Trent had got underway, Bullinger found it necessary yet again to defend institutional ministry from any sense of self-authentication. The impetus shifted from confronting Anabaptist counter-claims back toward defense of Reformed ministry

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[9] Martin *Bucer*, Von der waren Seelsorge, Strasbourg: Rihel, 1538, 13r.

[10] Confessio Helvetica posterior, article 18. See, e.g., Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften [RB], vol. 2/2: 1562–1569, ed. Mihály Bucsay et al., Neukirchen-Vluyn 2009, 318.

[11] Huldrych *Zwingli*, Von dem predigamt, in Z 4, 394–398.

[12] Heinrich Bullinger: De scripturae sanctae authoritate deque episcoporum institutione et functione (1538), ed. Emidio Campi and Philipp Wälchli, Zurich 2009 (Heinrich Bullinger Theologische Schriften 4) [HBTS 4], 106–109 (i.e., Book 2, chapter 1).

[13] Cf. *Sermones Synodales* entries for May 1559 and October 1568. Zurich Zentralbibliothek, Ms. D 220.

against resurgent Catholicism. Bullinger noted that the papal clergy highlighted their institutional credibility in terms of apostolic succession derived from a papal "highpriest." Bullinger utilized the Zwinglian tradition of juxtaposing (true) Old Testament prophets with (corrupt, if institutionally valid) Old Testament priests. And yet: unlike Zwingli's contrast of Catholic priesthood versus Reformed prophethood, Bullinger identified ministry – whether in terms of Old Testament prophets or any true minister of any time – with the specific *priesthood* of Melchisedek whose authority derives from the unique high-*priesthood* of Christ.[14] Why would the old Zwinglian notion of minister-as-prophet have not sufficed in polemic against Trent? – unless, indeed, Bullinger had developed a vested interest in some Reformed concept of institutional "priesthood."

Caveats to Bullinger's Concept of Reformed Priesthood

When addressing Bullinger's nascent "priestly" preference for Zurich ministry, one must keep certain things firmly in mind. Most importantly, the concept of indelible character remained an object of Protestant loathing. The commencement of Trent merely reinforced Bullinger's conviction on this point. Bullinger sought to differentiate Reformed ministry from the papal institution which relied upon indelible character of its priests channeled through "apostolic succession" of the Roman pope. Bullinger systematically eschewed anything approximating a proprietary claim on clerical validity. In precisely this light, the Second Helvetic Confession unambiguously reaffirms the shared priesthood of all believers, and it even avers that "we do not give the name of priest to any minister." Someone could be excused for reading this and disputing any "priestly" turn in Bullinger's view of Reformed ministry.

To understand how the Second Helvetic Confession is nevertheless consistent with a new idea of ministerial priesthood, one

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[14] Heinrich Bullinger: Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis Christianae religionis capitibus (1552), 2 vols, ed. Peter Opitz, Zurich 2008 (Heinrich Bullinger Theologische Schriften 3/1–2) [HBTS 3/1–2], 756 (Decas quinta, sermo I), cf. also 729 (Decas quinta, epistola dedicatoria).

must carefully observe Bullinger's telling qualifications within this notorious 18th article. The notion of priesthood of all believers does not obviate an institutional ministry, and the odiousness of the designation of "priest" for any minister lies, *specifically*, in the ways in which it could be perceived to derive from a (papal) sacramental prerogative. Bullinger is here opposing any sense of priesthood that would purport to validate itself on any basis other than the unique high-priesthood of Christ alone.[15] In other words, it seems that Bullinger was more concerned to avoid any sacramental/sacrificial implications of a self-authenticated ministry than he was to reject "priesthood" per se – be it priesthood of all the believers or even, in some guarded sense, the priesthood of an institutional ministry. Bullinger consistently considered the *only* priest to be Christ, *through* whom all Christians together participate in priesthood. Vocational ministry is a particular manifestation of this one priesthood which functions for the community and whose validity cannot be construed as proprietary.

Ministry is, for Bullinger, a particular service 'set apart' and 'devoted to God,' and it is positively necessary for the benefit of society. Already in his 1538 *Institution of Episcopacy*, Bullinger unambiguously asserts that God has always – not just in the Old Testament era or since the New Testament, but *always* – organized human communities by means of the two principles of civil and priestly function.[16] Priesthood is systematically fundamental, beyond even the scope of historical Judaism or present Christianity. Both in his 1538 treatise dedicated to King Henry VIII and in his semi-annual sermons before the gathered clergy of Zurich, Bullinger explicitly refers to ancient Persian, Egyptian, and Indian societies as good examples of this proper organization of society—even though he makes no soteriological claim beyond Christianity.[17] "Kingship" thus represents rather broadly all legitimate civil authority, deriving from the unique kingship of Christ. This extension of kingship evidently includes Zurich's republican councils. "Levites" analogously represent all sacred ministry, including the

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[15] Confessio Helvetica posterior, article 18. See, e.g., RB 2/2, 319.

[16] HBTS 4, 113–115 (i.e., Book 2, chapter 3).

[17] Cf. *Sermones Synodales* entry for October 1556 and HBTS 4, 117 (i.e., Book 2, chapter 4).

Reformed clergy of Zurich. The integrity of each relies on the other, and both are obliged to serve the collective good. This remains fully compatible with Bullinger's efforts to preclude proprietary, self-authentication. The magistracy is a necessary "other" to the priestly ministry, and *vice versa*. Furthermore, both have no intrinsic authority apart from the unique King-Priesthood of Christ. With care as to caveats, it even seems appropriate to speak of Bullinger's attempt to re-sacralize the clergy.[18]

Variety of Expressions for the Two Foci
of Reformed Priesthood

The Zurich synod supplied Bullinger with an ideal setting for clarifying Zurich's clerical institution. From his notes for these semi-annual sessions, one notices his ideal of ministry conceived as a composite of Matthew 24:45–51 and Malachi 2:1–9. The fact that this occurs as an elaboration of *doctrina et vita* itself conforms to the pattern (discussed by Opitz and others) of Bullinger's development of twin foci of ministry – namely, exegesis and application. The "faithful and prudent servant" in Matthew easily corresponds with these two foci. This Matthew passage clearly applies in its context to all the faithful, and yet Bullinger applies it particularly to the clergy through the lens of Malachi's discourse on God's "covenant with Levi" (i.e., priesthood). Rhetoric involving terms such as *covenant* and *priesthood* fundamentally concerns Christ and therefore encompasses the entire baptized community; Bullinger, however, employs such terms for his uniquely clerical audience. The Malachi-Matthew composite allowed Bullinger to high-

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[18] I largely agree with the sacralizing thesis argued by Pamela *Biel*, Doorkeepers at the House of Righteousness: Heinrich Bullinger and the Zurich Clergy 1535–1575, Bern 1991 (Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte 15). To my mind, the prevalence of priestly models throughout the manuscripts of *Sermones Synodales* and formal publications such as the 1538 *Institution of Episcopacy* supply just some of the corroborating evidence. I appreciate the careful work of Daniël Timmerman regarding the specific developments of Bullinger's views regarding prophethood and priesthood, but I do not agree with his dismissal of Biel's basic argument of re-sacralized clergy. Cf. *Timmerman*, Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy, 28–29.

light the particular, clerical corps in Zurich before God and for the people.

The eschatological aspect is crucial. Like other concepts discussed above, eschatology is fundamentally about Christ, and as such it pertains to the entire community of all the baptized. Bullinger would never dispute that, and yet he also assigns special relevance of eschatology to clerical identity. In the Matthew passage, the Lord finally returns whereupon the drunken servant is cut to pieces and cast out. In Malachi, the Levitical priest in breach of covenant is told at last that he "will be put out of God's presence." The eschatological key appears in many other contexts as well. One may look, for example, to Bullinger's 1557 Basel publication of *De fine seculi*. Here again Bullinger remarks that hastening signs of End Times are more and more fulfilled whenever criteria of clerical *faithfulness* and *prudence* are violated – that is, the same eschatological attributes of ministry employed throughout his *Sermones Synodales*.[19] In his much more influential and widespread publication of *The Decades*, Bullinger similarly refers to the importance of establishing proper ministry for the "public weal" in a time otherwise noted for hastening Judgment.[20] Out of this eschatological matrix, the first sermon of the fifth Decade itself goes on to establish a pattern of analogous paired hallmarks of Christian priesthood: administering Word and Sacrament; faith and love; doctrine and reverence.

Eschatologized Humanism and the Reformed Priesthood

Erasmus had highlighted much the same two categories of ministry in his own 1535/36 handbook for priests (*Ecclesiastes*). He added great weight to this discussion by personally asserting that he con-

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[19] Heinrich *Bullinger*, De fine seculi et iudicio venturo Domini nostri Iesu Christi, deque periculis nostri huius seculi corruptissimi gravissimis, et qua ratione fiant innoxia piis, Orationes duae, habitae in coetu cleri, per Heinrychum Bullingerum, Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1557, 11.

[20] Decas quinta, epistola dedicatoria, in: HBTS 3/2, 739. Of course, the eschatological hue is ever present, if sometimes implicit, in many of Bullinger's public and private writings already in the ways in which Bullinger elaborated on priestly "vigilance" as a corollary of the very term *episcopus* (or, "over-seer").

sidered this work to be the most painstaking and important of his entire career.[21] He consistently expounds on the need for a priest to comport with the model of the faithful, prudent servant of Matthew 24. He also connects this image to Christ's words of Matthew 10, whereby the disciples are sent out and told to be at once "simple" as doves and "prudent" as serpents. Prudence, of course, is precisely the complex, relational, contextual – even, canny – side of ministry. "Prudentiae partes sunt, ex temporum, locorum ac personarum circumstantiis dispicere, quid, quibus, quando, qua moderatione sit adhibendum."[22]

Bullinger, for his part, refers quite often and warmly to Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes* throughout his 1538 *Institution of Episcopacy*. Erasmus and Bullinger share the emphatic argument that a priest must bear always in mind the two aspects of prudence and faithfulness à la Matthew 24. There is a striking harmony between both men on the subject of the two main aspects of authentic "priesthood." Bullinger's rubric of *doctrina* throughout his synodal memoranda corresponds with the term "prudence" of Matthew 24. *Doctrina* (as "prudence") encompasses exegetical teaching, as well as correction of sins (by contextual, rhetorical power, not by force), catechism, sacraments, and care of poor and sick. *Vita*, then, corresponds with "faithfulness," and it usually includes keywords of consistent integrity, holy lifestyle, disciplined study, and unwavering words and deeds.[23]

Susanna Hausamman overstated in some respects the systematic influence of Quintilian on Bullinger; nevertheless, her point in favor of Bullinger's essential humanism remains valid.[24] Instead of the threefold task of the orator described by Quintilian (*docere,*

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[21] Frederick J. *McGinness*, Introductory Note, in: Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 67: Spiritualia and Pastoralia: Exomologesis and Ecclesiastes 1, Toronto 2015, 82.

[22] Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi, vol. V–4, Leiden 1991, 64.

[23] The occasional inclusion of sacraments within *Doctrina* should cause caution in assuming too close an identification between pairings of *doctrina-vita* on the one hand and Word-Sacrament on the other. In a complete parallel, one could expect the element of sacrament to be included under the heading of *Vita*. Nevertheless, Bullinger himself does leave some wiggle room in this matter, inasmuch as the synodal charts of *doctrina-vita* sometimes include "sacraments" in a middle space between the two – as if ministerial duties of sacraments could be construed in some respects as indeed part of *doctrina* and in other respects as *vita*.

[24] Cf. *Timmerman*, Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy, 154.

delectare, movere), it is the twofold office of priestly ministry articulated by Erasmus and also by Bullinger that seems most fundamental. These two categories correspond in turn to the humanist rhetorical principles of *aptum* and *ethos*. I take my clue in this matter from the work of Erika Rummel, who has presented a convenient demonstration of both terms' technical standing among humanists.[25] The term *ethos* served humanists as a way to indicate any speaker's due diligence in moral consideration of the "worth" of speaker and of audience. The adept speaker should be vigilant of his own moral standing while also supporting the moral standing of his audience. This overlaps with Bullinger's emphasis on holy lifestyle of faithfulness in the category of *Vita*. The other word of the pair – *aptum* – involves humanist considerations of contextuality, or, indeed, "prudence." Prudence as a technical term of humanistic rhetoric implies nuance and appropriateness, whereby a speaker does not say everything, in the same way, to everyone, but instead wisely communicates by considering audience and setting. This concept of prudence appears to function much the same as Bullinger's episcopal heading of *doctrina*. So, again, we have a nexus of synonymous terms constituting an overall set of pairs: prudence, *aptum*, and *doctrina* on the one hand and faithfulness, *ethos*, and *vita* on the other.[26]

The humanist legacy of prudence/*aptum* constitutes more than a superficial parallel to Bullinger's thinking on the clerical office. It is systematically important. That fact helps explain some of the ways in which the concept of Reformed "priesthood" became important for Bullinger – indeed, for Bullinger in ways that were *not* true of many of his contemporaries. Bullinger would have been quite familiar with how prudence rendered humanists liable to various accusations of protean inconsistency in matters of church teaching. Vociferous commentators of various theological leanings left no ambiguity in their perception of humanistic "prudence" as a dangerous character flaw. Ulrich von Hutten rebuked anyone for at-

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[25] Erika *Rummel*, The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany, Oxford 2000, 121 ff.

[26] The technical connotations of *ethos* may well present the weakest connection to Bullinger, inasmuch as he does not quite replicate the full humanist implications of "civility," or, the speaker's task of accounting for the "worth" of his interlocutors.

tempting to sidestep the stark light/dark alternatives of his apocalypticism; Otto Brunfels criticized temporizers; and Johannes Fabri, the bishop of Vienna, upbraided the moderate overtures of Bishop Jacopo Sadoleto. I scarcely need to add Calvin's vehement opposition to disembling "nicodemites," or Luther's dismissal of Erasmus as an ever-shifting skeptic. But for Bullinger, the humanist function of prudence served his purpose excellently in redefining Reformed priesthood. Contextual flexibility precluded proprietary (even, self-authenticating) standing of the clerical class.[27] Throughout his synodal elaborations on *doctrina* (informed as they are by the model of the "*prudent* servant" of Matthew 24), Bullinger reiterates the rhetorical principle of communicating as appropriate to context.[28] Rhetorical rigidity (even, dogmatism) would amount to an assertion of group identity defined by itself rather than by its relationships.

It is already noteworthy that Bullinger positively embraced this contested legacy of humanism. That he further yoked nimble discourse to End-Times rhetoric is perhaps truly unique in the Reformation. Humanists had reacted with allergic aversion to apocalypticism. Bullinger distilled a remedy out of eschatology itself. His references to "timeliness" include the typical humanistic notions of contextuality, yet they invariably also connote vigilance as to the Lord's imminent return. Zurich ministry has its distinctly sacred profile as a kind of "priesthood" in light of its unique vocation to speak beyond itself, moored to an eschatological reality.

This again presupposes a special relationship with civil authority, who, for their part, similarly "participate" in the eschatological kingship of Christ. Without the tandem of kingship and priesthood, the rhetorical power of clerical "prudence" would not function properly. All disciplinary coercive power belongs to the Christian magistracy alone. Neither civil nor clerical function can subsume the other, because both operate in a relationship *with* one another *for* the community; their spiritual validity is non-proprie-

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[27] Erasmus had lampooned theological dogmatism in his infamous *Praise of Folly*, where Folly herself once admonishes that 'there is nothing so *imprudent* as misplaced wisdom.'

[28] There are numerous variations on: "Applicanda semper et recte secanda pro personis loco et tempore."

tary. Bullinger has transformed a humanist agenda through an es-
chatological lens for the purpose of clarifying priestly identity in a
Reformed state.

Conclusion: Clergy, Confessionalization,
and a Reprise of the Exchange with Jud

All of the above leads to some interesting upshots for confessio-
nalization. It is a contested thesis in certain respects, but most
historians broadly agree with the view that political jurisdictions
did increasingly effectively regulate religious mechanisms of social
discipline and clerical bureaucratization.[29] Scholars who have com-
mented upon Bullinger's development of ministry from a prophetic
model toward a more episcopal or even priestly model have tended
to view this as evidence of something along these lines. Daniel
Bolliger, for example, has noted rather starkly that "the ministers
were institutionalised communally and became officials of the sta-
te."[30] And yet, to say so amounts to conceding validity to Jud's
frantic objections back in 1532. It also seems unlikely that so
strong an objection could have been – as all accounts indicate – so
readily resolved in Jud's mind if Bullinger's developing view of
ministry had amounted to statist officialdom.

In order to understand the nuance of Bullinger's exchange with
Jud, one must note the ways in which he fully recognized: a) le-
gitimate concerns in Jud's objections, and b) the problematics im-
plicit in Jud's own, initial vote for church-state separation. As to
the former, Bullinger agreed that the church must indeed retain its
unique sacredness. This is precisely the point of his insistence on
the concept of Christ's high-priesthood. The state functions
alongside the church in order to authenticate the conferral of this
status, lest the ministry be self-authenticated in the ways Bullinger

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[29] I share Ute Lotz-Heumann's view that so long as one avoids overestimating its
explanatory capacity, confessionalization still helps illuminate macro-historical trends.
Ute *Lotz-Heumann*, Confessionalization, in: The Ashgate Research Companion to the
Counter-Reformation, ed. Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen, and Mary Laven, Farn-
ham 2013, 33–53. Pages 40–42 are especially relevant to the notion of modified ap-
plicability of the confessionalization thesis.

[30] *Bolliger*, Bullinger on Church Authority, 176.

deplored among both Anabaptists and Catholics. Even so, the sacredness of ministry is not strictly the state's possession to confer. Bullinger could therefore demonstrate some agreement with Jud. I think it is even more interesting, however, to note how Bullinger perceived the pitfalls implicit in Jud's own propositions. It appears that Bullinger anticipated the less obvious ways in which Jud was contributing to what historians would later come to associate with confessionalization. This is ironic because Jud was, after all, arguing for more robust church-state *separation*; confessionalization notoriously implies increasing domestication of church *within* the state. Jud's connection to confessionalization turns up in his unwitting complicity in the confessionalized trend toward theological "purity," or, dogmatism.

Erika Rummel has presented the story of confessionalization as a tragic denouement. Renaissance humanists' initial approach of "prudence" had posed a systematic critique of what they perceived as arrogance and inflexibility of "schoolmen" – that is, the theological professionals. The process of confessionalization turned that critique into the polemics of new partisans. Polemicists coopted the language-skills of humanism and pressed them to service in an increasingly dogmatized agenda of various (Protestant or Catholic) state-churches. Confessionalization invariably involved flattening, or ossifying, of erstwhile rhetorical nuance. Humanism thus became, pitifully, the very monster from whose grip early humanists had sought to liberate Christendom.[31] In 1532, Jud was not arguing for a state-church, but he *was* arguing for just the sort of dogmatic intransigence that states inevitably required for the domestication of their clergy in line with shibboleths of their own religious polity.[32]

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[31] *Rummel*, Confessionalization of Humanism, passim, esp. 150–152.

[32] The case of Geneva is instructive. Under Calvin, Geneva developed a system of church-state distinction that seems to have met many of Jud's own 1532 preferences. It also became notorious – again, owing much to Calvin's leadership – for its increasing theological inflexibility. The opposition to dissembling "Nicodemites" is illustrative of a broader emphasis on doctrinal rigor. Calvin's efforts to distinguish church and state notwithstanding, the church noted for its theological precision – or, its decontextualized hardening of propositional truth – fairly quickly fell under the unambiguous control of the state shortly after Calvin's death. On this transition, see: Scott *Manetsch*, Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536–1609, Oxford 2013, 212–214.

Bullinger stands especially indebted to humanism in the way in which he retained "prudence" in his model of Zurich clergy. Yes, Bullinger's Reformed priesthood necessarily functioned with, and in some senses under, the authority of magistracy. Bullinger contributed to the overt confessionalizing agenda of the state in composing uniform, state-supported theological statements. No one could dispute Bullinger's *bona fides* as a theologian with specifically Reformed doctrinal convictions. It is in this light that one must see his emphasis on *Vita* (or, "faithfulness") at synod gatherings – where *Vita* implied just the type of consistency involved in uniform, confessional statements. On the other hand, it is equally true and necessary for him that the Reformed priestly office must retain contextual flexibility. The sheer open-endedness of "prudence" would be impossible for any state institution to appropriate. Prudent ministers must dispense appropriate spiritual food as fitted to various circumstances within an ongoing End-Time. By securing the unique rhetorical persuasive power of a new kind of priesthood, Bullinger meant to preserve the church's own integrity vis-à-vis the disciplinary/coercive otherness of magistracy. It appears that Bullinger recognized the threat of inflexible dogmatism and systematically went about developing an institutional priestly identity designed to mitigate this trend.[33] This stands in contrast to the thesis that clericalization for Bullinger played the simple part of confessionalization. I think it may also help to clarify just how it was that that Bullinger allayed Jud's qualms of 1532.

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Abstract: The traditional concept of priesthood aroused much interest and animosity in the Reformation. Huldrych Zwingli led efforts to expand priesthood beyond a sacramental subset of Christendom to encompass instead the sum of all the baptized. He redefined clerical identity as a humanistic/linguistic corps of "prophets." Heinrich Bul-

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[33] If so, this means that Bullinger anticipated many of the religious conflicts not only between Catholic and Protestant jurisdictions, but also, and perhaps especially, among various broadly denominated Protestants. I am especially reminded of Katharina Schütz Zell's poignant defense of integrity with flexibility. Against the party of Ludwig Rabus, she asserted that dogmatism threatened an essential quality of the initial movement of reform. See, for example: Katharina Schütz Zell: Church Mother. The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany, ed. Elsie McKee, Chicago 2006.

linger shared in Zwingli's mission to preserve a ministerial corps, and yet he found it increasingly necessary to modify the mold of "minister-as-prophet." Bullinger carefully re-appropriated some aspects of a "priestly" identity for the clerical corps. In the process, he created a fruitful – perhaps even unique – hybrid of humanism with eschatology. The upshot was a model for church-state relations that cannot be reduced to the expectations of propositional dogmatism commonly associated with the theory of confessionalization.