

## The Reformation Continues

By Mike Rodewald

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### Martin Luther's Goal

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Luther's fellow priests could read the Latin translation of Scripture, but it was not understandable to the uneducated, common German-speaking people. Luther thought this was unacceptable.

Pastoral care was his goal: how could church leaders better care for the souls in their parish who could not access the Bible?

Historical theologian Dr. Erik Herrmann said:

“Luther decided pretty early on when he discovered the Gospel that the thing that was going to reform the Church was not him. Not a university. Not any church figure. But it was going to be the Word of God itself.”



*1883 Statue of Martin Luther in Eisleben, Germany*

Luther labored over the translation of the New Testament while hidden away at Wartburg castle. His translation method was less literal (word-for-word) than other translations of the time. Rather, he translated so that it would be meaningful and authentic to Germans.



*Wartburg Castle, Eisenach, Germany*

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## Technological advancement helped the German translation

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The printing press allowed for quicker production and distribution of Scripture portions at lower costs. Less affluent classes could afford to buy portions of Scripture. God's Word became accessible beyond the elite.

Luther's translation of Scripture ushered in a new era for education. Instructors encouraged both boys *and* girls to attend school. They became literate in their own language. An increased literacy rate meant more people could read and understand the Bible. God's Word became accessible beyond the university.

Martin Luther recognized access to the Bible would transform the Church. He relied on God to work through the power of the Word to transform people's hearts.

"The most important point of Scripture is not just having Scripture – but grasping it and being grasped by it. And hearing clearly the central message of it," reflects Dr. Herrmann.

To catch the whole story on an **Essentially Translatable** podcast, go to:

<https://lbt.org/luthers-translation/>

Discover how you can continue the Reformation by making God's Word accessible to people in the language they know best.



For more information, contact:

[communications@lbt.org](mailto:communications@lbt.org)