

Martin Luther (der 10. November 1483—der 2. Februar 1546)

MARTIN LUTHER'S LEGACY

How Martin Luther became the first Christian pop star



Martin Luther's "Achtliederbuch" was a collection of eight songs

Poetic serial production

Highly motivated, Luther started to translate Latin hymns into German. He also wrote songs to the psalms of the Old Testament, and incorporated basic reformist principles in new songs. Over the next 12 months, he composed 24 new such songs.

Among them is one song that has encouraged many Christians over the past centuries. "My favorite choral is 'Out of the depths I cry to Thee.' Here, Luther seems to be crying out from the depths of his soul, and these are the songs that give me goosebumps," musician Dieter Falk told DW.

"On my instrumental CD, which I devoted Luther, I felt most comfortable at the piano with that particular song because it enabled me to put myself in his psychological state." The chorale clearly proved that Luther wasn't just a poet, but also a composer.

German songs during worship

Luther's next objective was to establish singing in religious services that had been held in Latin up until that point. As Burkhard Weitz explained, "In his writing 'Formula missae' from 1523, Luther lamented that 'only a choir of clergymen and pupils sing and respond when the bishop blesses the bread and performs his service.' That's why he called for 'German songs to be sung by the people during holy mass.'"

To Luther, it was important for people to understand what was going on during the service. "That's why he wanted to preach in German, to introduce German liturgy and to sing German songs." The reformer managed to do that in Wittenberg, where he was most active.