

ORTHODOXY IS NOT DEAD:  
THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ERDMANN NEUMEISTER AS A REBUTTAL TO THE  
CHARGE OF “DEAD ORTHODOXY”

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## ABSTRACT

One of the critiques of Pietism against Lutheran Orthodoxy can be found in the epithet “dead Orthodoxy,” the idea that an emphasis on doctrine necessarily means a weak Christian life. There is a degree of merit to this charge historically, but it is not unequivocally true. One way to answer a blanket accusation is to provide a counter example to prove the rule is not universal. If one is considering the charge of Pietism against Orthodoxy, who could be a better representative than a champion of Orthodoxy and a sharp critic of Pietism? Among possible candidates, Erdmann Neumeister has not received much scholarly attention in English, and therefore, an examination of his life and works can provide a fresh perspective.

For this reason, this paper will be examining the life and works of Erdmann Neumeister, an opponent of Pietism. This paper will limit itself to considering the man in this kind of spiritual evaluation. The man is not perfect, but he does not need to be. The growth of his Christian faith and its sincere activity testify against the charge of a dead faith.

## INTRODUCTION

Pietism is a notoriously difficult subject to cover.<sup>1</sup> The movement is wide and varied enough that it is quite difficult to say anything authoritatively. Heinrich Schmid consulted over 100,000 volumes to write his *History of Pietism*.<sup>2</sup> There are endless questions concerning its origin, definition, and consequences. While intimidating, Pietism remains a fruitful object of study for Confessional Lutherans. The difficulties that faced the Lutheran Church of the 17th and 18th centuries are not uniquely tied to that era. Lutherans today can learn and apply lessons from both sides of that conflict.

According to Johannes Professor Wallman, four men stand most prominent as champions of Lutheran Orthodoxy in response to Pietism. These four men are Valentin Loescher (1673-1749), Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Ernst Cyprian (1673-1745), and Erdmann Neumeister (1671-1756).<sup>3</sup> Of those four, Bach has received the most extensive study. For English speakers, Loescher would be the next most studied. His “*Timotheus Verinus*” has been translated into English and is considered the most thorough orthodox Lutheran critique and

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1. Robert J. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 2013), 7.

2. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism*, 8.

3. Johannes Wallmann, “Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus,” in *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter der evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, ed. Henrike Rucker, Weisfenfeler Kulturtraditionen (Ruldolstadt: Hain, 2000), 27.

evaluation of Pietism.<sup>4</sup> Despite his contributions as a pastor and writer, he was not succeeded by any significant voice. His death in 1749 has been cited more than once as the end of the era of Orthodox Lutheranism.<sup>5</sup> In the context of English-speaking Lutheranism, the last two men mentioned, Cyprian and Neumeister, have been scarcely treated.

This paper will focus its attention on one of those four men, Erdmann Neumeister. Neumeister was a polemical opponent of Pietism and champion of Orthodoxy. He published many works critiquing Pietism, and he often wrote against specific individuals. He was also a gifted poet who penned many hymns and provided the texts for several Lutheran composers, including Johan Sebastian Bach, Johan Beer, and Johann Philip Krieger. It is beyond the scope of a thesis to offer a comprehensive analysis of his varied works. Moreover, nearly every writing I read about Neumeister laments how little has been written about this man's life and legacy.<sup>6</sup> This paper will be no different, and it is by no means a definitive treatment of this gifted man. This paper will focus on Neumeister's personal character.

My contention is that the life and works of Erdmann Neumeister serve as a rebuttal to the derogatory label of "dead orthodoxy." That term implies a faith that is truly devoid of the Holy Spirit. This cannot be objectively determined, but there are telltale signs. Is there repentance? Is there love? Does the love of God's Word go beyond a merely academic understanding, an intellectual grasping of dogma?

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4. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism*, 285.

5. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism*, 97; Carl Meusel, Ernst Haack, and Bernard Lehmann, *Kirchliches Handlexikon* (Leipzig: Justus Naumann, 1894), 4:774; Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 27.

6. Uwe Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister: 1671-1756: Biografisches Mosaik* (Bienstädt: Selbstverlag [Uwe Riedel], 2010), 7; Meusel, Haack, and Lehmann, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, 4:774; Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 27.

When examining this man's life and writings, it becomes indefensible to suggest that this man was a cold or apathetic Christian. His faith was not merely limited to a scholarly study of doctrine. His whole life is a testament to the living faith of Lutheran Orthodoxy. This is not to say that Erdmann Neumeister was faultless, nor that he was an exemplar Christian in every regard. Rather, the course of his life tells a story of a Christian who grew in his faith and piety. This paper will acknowledge the man's faults and weaknesses; however, it will also highlight the vivacity with which he lived out his Christian faith.

My argumentation to defend this contention will consist in two parts. First, I will tell the story of Neumeister's life, especially focusing on his spiritual character. Then, I will briefly give an overview of Erdmann Neumeister's writings with these personal considerations in mind.

## PART ONE: A BIOGRAPHY OF ERDMANN NEUMEISTER

### Early Life and Education (1671–1696)

Erdmann Neumeister was born on May 12, 1671, in the small town of Uichteritz.<sup>7</sup> He had one older sister and two younger sisters. Erdmann was the fourth child born to Johann and Margaretha, but he was the first and only son to survive infancy. For this reason, it is supposed that his name Erdmann “Earthman” refers back to the biblical Adam as a kind of *memento mori*.<sup>8</sup>

Not much is known about Neumeister’s early years. His father, Johann, ran the school in Uichteritz, so it is fair to presume that his father played a leading role in his early education.<sup>9</sup> According to Neumeister himself, he was a rather typical young lad who preferred play and resisted the discipline required for education. In the introduction to a collection of sermons, he wrote the following as part of a dedication to his parents.

Concerning my own person, I must commend that you sent me into education against my will and inclination. In other words, you forced me. For the most, part I grew up among nobility<sup>10</sup> and became accustomed to a certain degree of freedom, which made study loathsome. But you thought carefully about my well being, more than an unreasoning child could have considered at the time.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Uichteritz is found in the modern German state or *Bundesland* of Saxony-Anhalt, about twenty miles southwest of Leipzig.

<sup>8</sup> Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 10. Uwe Riedel’s biography is a treasure trove of information on Erdmann Neumeister. It often presents a series of quotations from primary sources for the reader to interpret without much comment. He compiled this work after digging in the church and university archives of the different places that Neumeister lived throughout his life. His work remains the only monograph biography of Erdmann Neumeister.

<sup>9</sup> Henrike Rucker, ed., *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, Weißenfeler Kulturtraditionen (Ruldolstadt: Hain, 2000), 20; Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 11.

<sup>10</sup> The court of Ducal Saxony, then known as the Duchy of Saxe-Weißenfels, was moved to Weißenfels in 1680, just shy of three miles away from Uichteritz.

<sup>11</sup> Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 12. This translation and all subsequent translations are my own unless otherwise noted. The reason this is cited from Riedel and not *Priesterliche Lippen* is that I only have access to the

Neumeister's *Gymnasium*<sup>12</sup> education was in Pforta<sup>13</sup> from May of 1686 to January of 1691. From this point forward, there is much more information about his life. For example, his Latin entrance exam is still preserved in Pforta, and from the school register, we know his student identification number was 4286.<sup>14</sup> While at Pforta, his attitude about his education changed. He became rather diligent as a student, which Neumeister later attributed to the steadfast prayers of his parents. His academic excellence led to the development of mutual respect between Neumeister and his teachers at Pforta. Already during these years, both peers and educators acknowledged him as a gifted poet.<sup>15</sup>

Neumeister greatly enjoyed his time at Pforta, but that time was cut short. Normally, the program of study lasted six years in Pforta, culminating in a *Valedictionsarbeit*, a final written project either about literature or history. Neumeister requested release in early January of 1691 due to health problems. After completing his project, Neumeister was granted an early graduation and release. Neumeister had become rather sickly and was also suffering from eye problems. His eyes would continue to deteriorate throughout his life.<sup>16</sup>

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1730 edition, which replaces the original dedication and introduction with one of Neumeister's polemical writings against Pietism.

12. The German word *Gymnasium* indicates a stage of education that is most similar to high school in America.

13. Pforta, now the *Landesschule Pforta*, refers to a former monastery in Saxony-Anhalt which was converted into a university preparatory school by Duke Moritz of Saxony (1521 – 1553). It is near the city of Naumburg, about 6 miles southwest of Neumeister's hometown Uichteritz.

14. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 15, 19. I mention these granular details in part to indicate the kind of deep diving research required to put together a coherent picture of this man's life. Once again, I am greatly indebted to the scholarship of Uwe Riedel.

15. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 20.

16. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 23-26, 120. Neumeister chose history as his subject for his *Valediktionsarbeit*. According to Riedel, it has not been translated from Latin. He wrote about the life of Johann Georg Carlowitz, a counselor to the Duke of Saxony. Riedel mentions neither this man's dates, nor which Duke of Saxony he served.



After three months of recovery, he began studying at the University of Leipzig in May of 1691. Several of his fellow students and friends from Pforta also went to Leipzig. Riedel suggests that perhaps these friends influenced Neumeister to pursue poetry and theology in his studies. By February of 1694, he had obtained a Master of Arts degree. Not even a full year later, in January of 1695, he acquired his Doctorate in Poetry.<sup>17</sup>

For his doctoral dissertation, he wrote “*De poetis germanicis hujus seculi praecipuis*,” “Concerning the Notable German Poets of our Time,” a compendium of contemporary German poetry. This work remains useful for researchers of 17th-century German literature to this day.<sup>18</sup> He extensively researched about 400 German poets from the 1600s up to the time of writing. He provides names, places of origin, and evaluation of each poet’s writings. According to Uwe Riedel, his evaluations vary in tone between professional, witty, and rather harsh criticism.<sup>19</sup> His comments and critiques in “*De poetis germanicis hujus seculi praecipuis*” offended some poets enough that they were moved to write against Neumeister, either returning his insults in kind or requesting removal from his dissertation.<sup>20</sup>

Neumeister was never one to take criticism sitting down, so he escalated conflict with voluminous responses. According to Riedel, his responses tended to be meandering and self-aggrandizing. In particular, Neumeister got into a rather fierce debate with Johann Georg Albinus, a pastor in Naumburg who had provided his library for Neumeister’s research in the first place. Albinus began with a three-page response to Neumeister, who then countered with

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17. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 26-29. It has been lost to history when exactly Neumeister got his Bachelor of Arts. His disputation for his master’s degree has also been lost.

18. Rucker, *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, 20.

19. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 30.

20. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 32–34.

thirty pages. The war of words escalated so much that the council of Leipzig considered it necessary to intervene.<sup>21</sup>

Poetry defined this period of Neumeister's life. He busied himself with writing his own poetry, critiquing the poems of others, and after acquiring his doctorate he lectured on the subject at the University in Leipzig. The poetry from this period is not recognizable compared to what he penned later in life. This difference is not so much due to a lesser artistic quality as a difference in subject matter. Even though theology was on his mind as an object of study in Leipzig, his poetry from this period has almost nothing to do with God. These poems<sup>22</sup> cover a variety of subjects, including high-minded philosophical musings on the true nature and power of love, reflections on the stress and angst of choosing the path of one's life, and, most prominently, sexual desire.<sup>23</sup> It seems clear that Neumeister later regretted his poetry on that last subject, as some of this poetry was published against his will in 1706 while serving as pastor and superintendent in Sorau.<sup>24</sup>

It bears repeating that Neumeister was also studying theology alongside these endeavors in poetry. Riedel puts it well when he writes, "In this connection, it must not be forgotten that Neumeister studied theology in addition [to poetry]. His remarkable academic achievements at this time can hardly be overestimated."<sup>25</sup>

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21. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 30–33.

22. The website for Neumeister's hometown, [uichteritz.de](http://uichteritz.de) preserves 10 of the poems from this period.

23. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 34–37.

24. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1886), 23:544.

25 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 29.

Theologically speaking, Neumeister was caught in the struggle between Pietism and Orthodoxy at Leipzig. Neumeister reflected later in life that he nearly fell into the ditch of Pietism.<sup>26</sup> August Hermann Francke, Pietism's great organizer and promoter, was one of his teachers. For a time, Neumeister found himself strongly persuaded by Pietism through Francke's enrapturing lectures on scripture.<sup>27</sup> His Hebrew professor, Johann Benedikt Carpzov (1639-1699), and his theology professor, Valentin Alberti (1635-1697), won him over to orthodoxy. Alberti and Neumeister developed an incredibly close bond during these years, which led to a deep mutual respect.<sup>28</sup> In the Leipzig section of Riedel's Neumeister biography, he spends several paragraphs characterizing his polemical writings. I am unsure whether Riedel means that Neumeister was already writing polemics against Pietism or whether he is referring to feuds with poets.<sup>29</sup>

So, what do we make of Erdmann Neumeister's faith thus far? It is hard to say anything until his time at Leipzig. His repeated attacks against the poetry of others reveal a rather prideful attitude. His poetry shows Neumeister to be a rather lustful young man as well. One may wonder how much he acted on that characteristic as a university student. It is fair to say that Neumeister had "sins of his youth." If this were the extent of Neumeister's character, the charge of "dead orthodoxy" would fit well. His behavior clearly contradicted his Christianity. He formed a strong friendship with Professor Alberti that influenced his evaluation of Pietism for the rest of his

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26 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 27.

27. Rucker, *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, 20.

28. Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 28.

29 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 30–34. It can be said with certainty that Neumeister began writing many pamphlets against Pietism during his time in Sorau.

life.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps that Professor challenged his young friend to fight his sinful flesh; that may have motivated Neumeister's move into the countryside. The formation of Neumeister's character doesn't end here. The next chapter of his life would give him formative crosses to bear.

### **Move away from Leipzig and Pastorate in Bibra (1696 – 1704)**

Erdmann Neumeister decided to move from metropolitan Leipzig to the rural town of Bibra<sup>31</sup> in 1696, and he would stay there until 1704. It is unclear what exactly brought Neumeister to Bibra in the first place. Uwe Riedel suggests three possibilities. Was the young theology student looking for a possible post in a rural area? Was he hoping to make a living through poetry in connection with the nearby Weißenfels court? A third possibility is that he came hoping to mend his eyesight. Bibra had springs which supposedly possessed healing properties.<sup>32</sup> The springs often attracted tourists, at whose expense Neumeister once penned a lengthy derisive poem.<sup>33</sup> Beyond these three possibilities, perhaps Neumeister's conscience motivated him to get away from his worldly way of living in Leipzig; he was good friends with a theology professor, after all.

Another possible motivation connected to Neumeister's move is one of the relationships he had formed in Leipzig. Neumeister had bonded with a young man named Christian Friedrich

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30 Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 28–29.

31. Also known as Bad Bibra for its natural springs. Neumeister's service there would also include modern day Eckartsberga. Bibra is about 40 miles southwest of Leipzig.

32. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 43–44.

33. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 58.

Hunold.<sup>34</sup> Riedel suggests they may have been rivals since both ended up in Bibra, tried to find work, and sought the hand of Johanna Elisabeth Meister, the daughter of the ducal cook. If they were rivals, it would seem Neumeister won the battle quite decisively. He became Pastor in Bibra, wrote poetry for the Duke of Saxony, and married Johanna Elisabeth. As for Hunold, he had at one point been engaged to Johanna Elisabeth, but for a reason that has been lost to history, the young man lost both his job and his life's savings. As a result, he fled in disgrace without saying any goodbyes.<sup>35</sup> Hunold later got revenge. It was Hunold who published Neumeister's poetry from his college days against his will under the pseudonym "Menantes." The title page of that collection says explicitly, "without his knowledge and against his will."<sup>36</sup>

I find it most likely that Neumeister moved to Bibra seeking to mend his eyesight. It does not make sense that the young poet, who had been accustomed to the company of nobility, would go to the countryside to find work. He was able to make money by lecturing on poetry in Leipzig. If he sought a "promotion" in a poetry career, that would be better served directly in the Weißenfels court. Here, I must also admit to ignorance concerning how exactly theology students entered into the ministry. It is possible that Neumeister simply could not find advancement in a career in poetry and thus came after studying theology in order to seek an open ministry position.

Whatever the case may be, Erdmann Neumeister arrived in 1696 and supported himself in some manner during his first year there before he entered into ministry. He soon became

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34. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 40–42. Riedel suggests that it is hard to tell what exactly the nature of their relationship was.

35. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 38–41.

36. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 23:544. The work is attributed by "Menantes" to E.N. whose identity should be obvious. This seems to be a collection of his personal poetry as well as public lectures on poetry at the University of Leipzig.

acquainted with the local pastor, Johann Büttner. The following year Neumeister was asked to serve as *Substitut*<sup>37</sup> due to the pastor's flagging health.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Neumeister began his nearly 60-year pastoral ministry.

A brief comment is in order. From Riedel's description, one is left with the implication that this pastorate served several congregations in the countryside, but this is never stated explicitly. This implication is also taken from Neumeister's own words. He personally restarted the record book of church acts in Bad Bibra since he considered the former records to be unacceptable. Here is the first entry, which Riedel found in the Bad Bibra archives. There are breaks in the text due to physical damage, which is indicated by ellipses. The quote ends abruptly for this reason.

In Nomine Jesu July 14, 1697. I, M. Erdmann Neumeister of Uchteritz [sic]... installed at Biebra [sic] as Substitutus. There earlier on July 4th, Trinity V, after I had delivered my first official sermon, I discovered a very disorderly church book in which not only were all the congregations mixed up, but also the baptismal, marriage, and death records were written together. As I have begun ... the present church, and put it into better order ... I considered it unserviceable how it indicated inside.<sup>39</sup>

1697 was a bright and eventful year of Neumeister's life. He began working in pastoral ministry in the summer, composed a seven-page poetic eulogy for Duke Johann Adolf I of Saxony-Weißenfels in July, and was married on November 24.<sup>40</sup> At the time, Neumeister was 26,

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37. Based on Riedel's description of this position on page 63, this would be roughly equivalent to the position of a Vicar.

38. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 45.

39. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 46.

40 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 47–48. Erdmann and Johanna had, by all accounts, a happy marriage. Yet it was also marked by tragic loss. The couple had thirteen children. Only seven survived into adulthood.

and his bride was 19. They were married by Johann Olearius (1635-1711), the superintendent of the Saxony-Weißenfels consistory.<sup>41</sup>

Riedel describes these events with Neumeister's pride and pursuits from Leipzig in mind. It would seem, perhaps, that the young man was getting everything he wanted. He beat a rival poet in work and in love. His poetic eulogy was well received in the Weißenfels court, which would give him a greater connection to nobility. That connection, in turn, would put Neumeister on the radar for promotion to a more prestigious position. Perhaps Neumeister still had worldly success and ambitions on his mind. I find it difficult to confirm or deny this interpretation of Neumeister's first couple of years in Bibra. Regardless, the next year would greatly impact Neumeister's personal and pastoral character.

Neumeister's superior, Pastor Büttner, died on June 21, 1698. Only seven months into marriage and not quite a full year into ministry, Neumeister had to step up to take on full responsibility for the pastoral duties at Bibra. That would be difficult enough, but Büttner's widow made the matter more strenuous. She bitterly opposed him and slandered him in the community.<sup>42</sup> She wanted to avoid downgrading from the pastor's salary to a widow's pension, so she fought Neumeister's application to the consistory<sup>43</sup> to receive full compensation. On several occasions, Neumeister wrote an appeal to the superintendent of his consistory. At one point, he bemoaned in a letter, "Though I am far too lowly not to obey [the Consistorial order] in

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41. His name may cause confusion due to the fact that his father and four of his brothers all share the same first and last name. They can be differentiated by middle names. This is Johann August Olearius, the one member of the family not known as a hymn writer.

42. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 50–55.

43. The Consistory was the system of church governance in Lutheran territories. Within the Holy Roman Empire, each principality had its own consistory. These principalities include states like the Imperial Free City of Hamburg, the Duchy of Saxony, the Palatinate, etc.

a respectful manner, I only want to let healthy common sense to be the judge. Should I work without pay? Then a day laborer has it better than I.”<sup>44</sup> In another letter, he complained that the widow was starving him and turning his parishioners against him.<sup>45</sup> This battle resulted in Neumeister performing all the pastoral duties on a Vicar’s salary for about a year.

When Riedel presents several excerpts of the letters that went back and forth, he maintains a very neutral stance toward Neumeister’s conflict with the widow. He suggests the possibility that Neumeister was motivated by greed rather than need. I take a decidedly pro-Neumeister stance. It seems indefensible to me that Neumeister was merely greed. Here we have a fresh pastor possibly taking care of more than one parish, now with a pregnant wife, not receiving full time pay, all while living in the parsonage at Bibra, which was a wreck.<sup>46</sup> Granted, we do not know what the difference in money was between Neumeister’s *Substitutus* pay, Büttner’s salary, and his widow’s pension. I am inclined to believe that Neumeister’s concern was legitimate in view of all the aforementioned difficulties.

Concerning the parsonage, Neumeister wrote a complaint to the Duke of Saxony in 1699.<sup>47</sup> Neumeister’s request concerning the parsonage was eventually granted, and construction of a new house began in 1702. Locals complained that the new building was more becoming of nobility than a pastor.<sup>48</sup> Yet the Neumeisters would only spend six months in the new parsonage

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44. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 51.

45. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 53.

46 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 54. There had been a prior complaint submitted to the Duke of Saxony in 1661, indicating that the parsonage was falling apart.

47. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 54–55. In this complaint, Neumeister voices his anxiety that because the building was so weak and rotted, he was convinced a strong wind could break the house and kill his family.

48. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 56. Riedel records quite a lengthy complaint from the archives in Bibra.



since he accepted a call to Weißenfels in 1704. Neumeister's final entry in the church book at Bibra wishes his successor well, noting that the post in Bibra is no "rose garden" and that caring for the property alone will consume most of the pastor's salary.<sup>49</sup>

As for Neumeister's family, Johanna became pregnant four times during his ministry in Bibra.<sup>50</sup> Of these four children, three died. Their firstborn, Wihelmine Elenore, was born in 1698 and died in 1703. Adolphine Christine was born in 1701 and lived into adulthood. Their first son, Erdmann Gottvertrau, was born in 1702 and died exactly one month old. After the death of Wilhelmina Elenore in 1703, Johanna gave birth to another daughter. She shared both the name and the fate of Wilhelmine Elenore.

Death, difficulty, and responsibility all shape a man. Erdmann Neumeister was no exception. According to Riedel, Neumeister was a deeply treasured pastor, especially later on in Sorau and Hamburg. While it is unclear what brought Neumeister to Bibra, it is clear that the difficulties in Bibra changed him. During these years, his writings bear no resemblance to the self-absorbed and lustful young academic in Leipzig. At this point in Neumeister's life, his poetry took a decidedly spiritual turn. In 1700 he published "*Poetische Früchte der Lippen in Geistlichen Arien*" "Poetic Fruits of the Lips in Spiritual Arias." It is a collection of arias for each day of the church year. Neumeister penned the poetry, and Johann Philipp Krieger (1649 – 1725) composed the music.<sup>51</sup>

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49. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 60.

50. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 150.

51. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 57. Johann Philipp Krieger was an accomplished and prolific composer. He made both sacred and secular music for the Weißenfels court. Unfortunately, of his 2000 cantatas, most have been lost.

Returning to the charge of “dead Orthodoxy,” it is harder to give this label to Neumeister in Bibra than in Leipzig. The young pastor put up with much difficulty, but he faithfully carried out his duties. Not only this, but he also dedicated his pen to spiritual poetry. That is not typical of a cold or apathetic Christian. It would seem to me that Neumeister’s heart was softened by his financial struggles and the death of his children. The end of his pastorate in Bibra is the earliest mention I can find of his personal motto, the phrase “God is our Sun and Shield” from Psalm 84:11.<sup>52</sup> Neumeister had it written on the plaque commemorating the new parsonage. Neumeister later made a habit of putting this verse on everything he published, similar to Bach’s usage of the abbreviation SDG, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

The one question remaining is what exactly motivated Neumeister to take the call to Weißenfels. One could perhaps read a selfish motive in Neumeister’s acceptance of the call to Weißenfels since this would put him into a prestigious social circle. Another interpretation would consider all the difficulties that Neumeister endured. Given all the conflict caused by Pastor Büttner’s death, it is possible that Neumeister found himself unable to repair the damage that had been caused to the relationships with his parishioners. I suspect Neumeister also had his family in mind. The new parsonage was still under construction and would take months to finish. Moving to the court at Weißenfels would be a promising fresh start for his little family. It would also bring him close to his parents since his childhood home of Uichteritz was less than three miles from Weißenfels. It may also have simply been the young pastor’s honest decision after a period of deliberation.

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<sup>52</sup> Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 56.

### Pastorate in Weißenfels (1704 – 1706)

Neumeister's time in Weißenfels began quite pleasantly. When he arrived, a number of familiar faces greeted him. He was very close to home, and almost certainly enjoyed the company of his parents.<sup>53</sup> In his youth, he had befriended young nobility from the ducal court, and there were several acquaintances he had made either in Bibra or as a student in Leipzig.<sup>54</sup> The duke's organist, Johann Philipp Krieger, had already worked together with Neumeister. Another composer from Weißenfels, Johan Beer (1676-1700), had visited Neumeister in Bibra on occasion. Neumeister's work "*Poetische Lippen*" was dedicated to Duke Johann Georg of Saxony-Weißenfels. Perhaps that had gotten the duke's attention and led to Neumeister's call. Neumeister was appointed *Hofdiakon*, or court deacon, in 1704. Soon, he rose to the rank of *Hofprediger*, or court preacher. In addition to his pastoral duties, Neumeister was tasked with tutoring the duke's daughter, Friederike.

Riedel suggests that at the age of thirty-three, Neumeister may have thought he had finally "made it." Weißenfels seemed like a much better fit for the intellectually gifted pastor. He had a position in high society that enabled him to use his gift for poetry. It was certainly a much different locale than Bibra, and his talents as a poet would be much more appreciated in this setting. In 1705, Neumeister published a famous work that has been designated the "birth of the evangelical church-cantata," simply titled "*Geistliche Cantaten*" or "Spiritual Cantatas."<sup>55</sup>

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53 Curiously, Riedel makes no mention of Neumeister's parents during this time. He seems to think Neumeister was motivated by the draw of living among nobility as in his youth, but he doesn't mention that Neumeister would have been close to his parents again. Neumeister's father died in 1716, and his mother died in 1732, so they were certainly still alive. If they had moved elsewhere, I could find no mention of this fact.

54. Rucker, *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, 21.

55. Christian Bunnens, "Musiktheologische Aspekte Im Streit Um Den Neumeisterschen Kantatentyp," in *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, ed. Henrike Rucker, Weißenfelser Kulturtraditionen (Rudolstadt: Hain, 2000), 39; Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 65. The significance of

If Neumeister did have that kind of outlook when he arrived, it certainly did not last. Johanna gave birth to two daughters at Weißenfels. In 1704, Philippine Friderica was born, but she died in infancy. The following year, Carolina Ehrenmuth was born, and she lived into adulthood.<sup>56</sup> You may have noticed that the section heading indicates a rather short span of years. Neumeister soon took a call far away from Weißenfels all the way to Sorau,<sup>57</sup> a distance of about 170 miles. It is difficult to explain what happened because available information is lacking.

Uwe Riedel suggests the following course of events. The typically headstrong and forthright pastor may have had some difficulty adjusting to the intrigue-laden world of a ducal court. He reasons that Neumeister had grown accustomed to the world of academic debate in Leipzig and rural openness in Bibra. This would put Neumeister in a strange and dangerous context that he did not know how to navigate. Since he could not openly criticize the duke about moral failings without risk to himself, he took a more subtle tactic; he anonymously published poetry that presented indirect and satirical rebukes against the sins of the nobility and abuses of the court.<sup>58</sup> This led to a falling out with the duke, who pressured Neumeister to leave.<sup>59</sup>

I am somewhat skeptical of Riedel's reading of events in Weißenfels for several reasons. To begin with, Riedel notes that Neumeister may have had a kind of diplomatic immunity as

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this work is greatly debated, which is why I pass by without much comment. Bunnars' article gets into an academic discussion of music history and theory which is beyond my expertise to comment on meaningfully. Riedel makes similar comments about his own inability to weigh in on that discussion.

56. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 150.

57 That is, modern day Żary, Poland.

58. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 66.

59 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 66–69.

clergy.<sup>60</sup> One might expect this to embolden Neumeister to rebuke the duke openly. Furthermore, it is not certain that Neumeister wrote these collections of poetry. They were published anonymously with no reference to a year.<sup>61</sup> The connection to Neumeister is that these poems are about the Weißenfels court. The excerpts Riedel provides speak of a pastor who is confused by the church records, which list several children running around Weißenfels, conspicuously born to unmarried women, with no father listed in the ledger. It is presumed Neumeister is speaking of himself and using this to rebuke the infidelity of the nobility. I find this doubtful because Neumeister was such an outspoken critic. As will later be discussed, Neumeister publicly attacked nobility and even royalty. He criticized August the Strong for converting to Catholicism to gain the throne of Poland. He opposed the count of Sorau, who embraced Pietism. In Hamburg, he did not back down from his writings even when the King of Prussia responded to his polemics against Pietism. Lastly, Neumeister had to request release from the duke more than once, indicating that, to some extent, he wanted Neumeister to stay.<sup>62</sup>

That being said, Riedel's explanation does line up with most of the facts. All the incidents where Neumeister stood up to the political figures mentioned above took place after his short time at Weißenfels. It is possible that Neumeister's actions at Weißenfels were motivated by fear. If so, he later regretted that approach, and he changed tactics. If it is as obvious as Riedel

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60 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 67,69. To be fair, Riedel sees this immunity as a shield which Neumeister would have used to deflect attacks on his person. In his interpretation, Neumeister used poetic subtlety to address moral problems without getting himself into an official confrontation. I consider it equally likely that if Neumeister had that kind of immunity, it may have emboldened open rebuke from the pulpit.

61. Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 31. There are a number of anonymous works attributed to Neumeister. Most scholars do not debate these attributions. Professor Wallmann strongly contends that since Neumeister was such an outspoken critic and polemical writer that these attributions cannot stand. In context Wallmann is speaking about pamphlets written against Pietism in Hamburg. I believe that the reasons behind his objections are equally applicable to these collections of poetry.

62 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 73–74.

suggests that Neumeister penned these satirical poems, then perhaps that quickly soured his relationships in Weißenfels. It is certain that Neumeister met the Count of Sorau at a wedding in the summer of 1705, and Neumeister quickly received a call to Sorau at the end of that year. If Riedel is correct, that would explain why Neumeister was eager to accept this call and move far away in the middle of winter. Taking this reading into account, Neumeister's time at Weißenfels would be another step in his character formation. It was a failure of his courage and willingness to call a Christian to repentance. If this is the case, after Neumeister left, he chose not to back down from fear ever again.

Yet it is also possible that Neumeister rebuked the duke openly. This would be more consistent with Neumeister's character. The collections of anonymous poetry do not have to have been written by Neumeister. This does make it harder to explain Neumeister's rapid departure. Ultimately, that is a question that cannot be answered from extant information.<sup>63</sup>

Before moving on to the next stage of Neumeister's life, a brief word about the world stage is in order. These events are relevant to his time in Sorau. Europe had great upheaval towards the end of the 17th century and into the 18th century. Germany, still divided into the manifold states of the Holy Roman Empire, was recovering from the Thirty Years War, which ended in 1648. The fate of the Habsburg dynasty was decided through the War of the Spanish Succession (1701 – 1714). In order to gain the Polish throne, the Elector of Saxony, August the Strong, converted to Catholicism in 1697, endangering the historically Lutheran Saxony. The young and ambitious king of Sweden, Charles XII, became embroiled in a conflict with

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<sup>63</sup> If I were to hazard a guess, I think that there is something to Riedel's characterization of Neumeister's arrival. The position in Weißenfels does seem like a perfect fit for Neumeister's personal interests, a little cozy, even. This is only a hunch, but I wonder if Neumeister was motivated by the desire for greater responsibility. His acceptance of the call to Sorau put him in a position that demanded much more from him.

Denmark-Norway, Saxony-Poland, and Russia from 1700 to 1721. These conflicts threatened to change the balance of power in Europe and potentially elevate or threaten the Lutheran church. When Neumeister arrived, Sorau was effectively under the reign of the Lutheran monarch, Charles XII of Sweden who had defeated Augustus the Strong. Three years later, the tide had turned, and Augustus resumed rule of Saxony-Poland.

### **The Battle against Pietism in Sorau (1706 – 1715)**

According to Uwe Riedel, almost everything we know about Neumeister’s ministry in Sorau comes from Pastor Hans Petri, a German born in Romania who researched Pietism. Nearly all of the following material comes from his research in the Sorau archives. According to Riedel, it is unknown whether the original sources he combed through have survived or in what archive they may be found. I do not have access to Petri’s work, and therefore, my citations will point to Riedel.<sup>64</sup>

Hans Petri begins this chapter of Neumeister’s life by providing background about Sorau. The superintendent of the consistory in Sorau was old and in poor health. For this reason, August Hermann Francke wrote his wish to the Count of Sorau that he would be succeeded by “a righteous theologian,” and in a way, this wish was granted, just not by the kind of righteous theologian Francke had in mind.<sup>65</sup> The old superintendent, Ludwig Lucius, died in February of 1705, and the position remained vacant until Neumeister was installed in January of the following year. Neumeister had to request release from the duke more than once, and he arrived

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64. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 70–72.

65. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 73.

in Sorau on New Year's Eve.<sup>66</sup> The next day, Neumeister preached his first sermon, and the service for his installation as superintendent<sup>67</sup> of the Sorau Consistory took place on January 28th. This put him in a position of spiritual oversight and responsibility for the greater area of Silesia.<sup>68</sup>

Neumeister's relationship with his ruler greatly influenced his time in Sorau. He developed a close friendship with Count Erdmann von Promnitz (1683-1745). He was invited to preach for several special occasions, including the dedication of the count's new chapel in Pleß in 1706 and the groundbreaking of two new Lutheran churches in Catholic Silesia in 1709.<sup>69</sup> One of these churches would extend a call to Neumeister, but he declined it to continue his battle against Pietism in Sorau.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, Neumeister's friendship with the count would not survive his battle against Pietism.

Not long after Neumeister arrived, Pietistic influence also arrived in Silesia. Starting in 1708, some of Neumeister's sermons addressed local Pietist conventicles. There were rumors that these conventicles were forming a rival church that had its own sermons and celebration of the Lord's Supper. At this time, the incursion of Pietism in Silesia can be traced to a radical

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66. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 73–74.

67 A superintendent is comparable to a Catholic Archbishop. It denotes spiritual responsibility for a whole nation or geographical region. For Confessional Lutherans in America, this could be considered equivalent to District President.

68 Silesia is a historical region that comprises roughly 15,000 square miles. Part of it belonged to the Lutheran state of Electoral Saxony, and part of it belonged to Catholic Poland. For comparison, the state of Maryland is almost 10,000 square miles. Today it is mostly contained along the western border of Poland.

69 The Great Northern War brought Sweden into a defensive war against Denmark-Norway, Saxony-Poland, and Russia. In 1706, Charles XII of Sweden defeated the Polish army. The treaty between Sweden and Poland temporarily dethroned August and with the permission of the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph I, six new churches were built within Polish controlled Silesia. These were referred to as *Gnadenkirchen* since they were permitted by the "grace" of the Emperor.

70. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 74.



Pietist, Johann Wilhelm Petersen, who wrote anonymously under the name “Magister Wihelmi.” This man would prove to be the thorn in Neumeister’s side who would eventually sour his relationship with Count Erdmann von Promnitz.<sup>71</sup>

Petersen deemed Neumeister a worldly fellow, especially due to the pastor’s friendships among the nobility and the writings from his days as a student in Leipzig.<sup>72</sup> He personally attacked Neumeister’s character as a pastor and theologian in a writing dedicated to the Count of Sorau called “*Frejmütige Anrede*,” in English, “A Candid Address.” Neumeister responded in his writing, “*Frejmütige Widerreden*,” in English, “A Candid Objection.” Here is a brief excerpt from Neumeister. “Subsequently, he desires to go unnoticed in blaming me, as though I had boasted about the sins of my youth. But I have very little to be ashamed of in my years of schooling at Pforta as far as people are concerned; granted, that is not the case before God.”<sup>73</sup> In 1714, he published “Priesterliche Lippen” or “Priestly Lips.” This collection of sermons was aimed at revealing the errors of Pietism and elucidating orthodox Christianity. Each sermon is dedicated to a specific Christian doctrine, and the second part of each sermon attacks errors related to that doctrine.<sup>74</sup>

Tensions escalated in Sorau. A literary war began between Neumeister and Petersen, as the two wrote pamphlets back and forth, battling for the souls in Silesia.<sup>75</sup> It was also at this time that Neumeister reached out and formed friendships with Valentin Loescher and Ernst Cyprian

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71. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 75.

72. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 74.

73. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 77.

74 *Priesterliche Lippen* is discussed in greater detail on page 36.

75 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 75–76.

through letters.<sup>76</sup> Neumeister repeatedly thundered from the pulpit against Pietism, and his opponents resorted to slander. According to Neumeister, they would interrupt his sermon with bitter words and make a show of leaving in a huff. And if that were not enough, they began to make all kinds of far-fetched accusations, including cross-dressing and misconduct with women who came to his residence. None of these charges were ever substantiated, but they proved an annoyance to him and to many of his faithful parishioners.<sup>77</sup>

As Neumeister continued writing polemics, he became estranged from the Count of Sorau. In late 1709, after the Russians defeated the Swedes, August the Strong resumed control over the Polish throne. This entrenched his Catholic influence over Electoral Saxony. He made a habit of visiting Sorau regularly, which pressured the count not to offend him.<sup>78</sup> Since Petersen's brand of Lutheran Pietism took a stance of tolerance toward other denominations of Christianity, it became a safe public stance, especially compared to the harsh tone taken by Neumeister against Catholicism. His polemics aimed not only at Pietism but also at Catholicism.<sup>79</sup> He wrote against the king's conversion and went so far as to say that anyone who followed him by converting to Catholicism was "either an atheist or truly dumb."<sup>80</sup> This remark was later taken as sufficient grounds to have Neumeister censored. He was no longer allowed to preach. By the end of 1709, the count's uncle, Count Heinrich Reuss, had become a friend and patron of Petersen,

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76 Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 35.

77. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 80.

78. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 79.

79 Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 31–32. Professor Wallman speaks in general terms, so I am unsure what for this took in Sorau. It seems fair to suggest that similar to his approach against Pietism that he would have written doctrinal pamphlets about the errors of the Roman Church.

80. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 82.

Neumeister's nemesis. He provided funding for Petersen to publish a Pietist Catechism and greatly influenced his nephew towards Pietism. This led Neumeister to call Count von Promnitz publicly to repent but to no avail. Consequently, he refused to see Neumeister and began going to a Pietist chaplain for confession and spiritual guidance.<sup>81</sup>

The division between count and preacher escalated so much that in 1711, he took legal action against Neumeister, who was accused of neglecting duties of office. Neumeister was so insulted by the charges that he refused to show up in court on June 18th. Instead, he wrote a defense of himself and continued his business. On July 8th, more charges were added, including disturbing the religious peace for writing against the king and Catholic converts. Finally, a ruling came down at the end of August 1712, officially suspending Neumeister from preaching.<sup>82</sup>

The citizens of Sorau, however, were loyal to their pastor. They banded together to petition the Count to allow Neumeister to preach again. They presented a petition in the fall of 1712, which was ignored. They presented another petition in the winter of 1713, which was accepted. In February of 1713, Neumeister was permitted to begin preaching in Sorau again, but only at the city church. He was never permitted to preach again directly to the count in the castle church. In vain, Neumeister fought for complete restoration to his office as superintendent. That battle for restoration came to an end when Neumeister accepted a call to Hamburg in 1715.<sup>83</sup>

His acceptance of that call was a blow to his loyal parishioners. They loved their pastor. Neumeister's farewell sermon was on July 7, 1715. Here is a part of what Hans Petri copied from the handwritten record of church acts in Sorau. "There was much crying from his listeners

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81 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 81.

82. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 82–83.

83. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 83.

because he was a very beloved man in the congregation. He was learned, had a pleasant manner of speaking, and was capable of presenting all the difficult articles of faith so easily that anyone could understand him and gladly listened and thereby became an enemy of the Pietists.”<sup>84</sup>

A legend arose concerning Neumeister’s departure. At a distance, he looked back at Sorau from a mountaintop and prophesied that the Sorau castle would become inhabited by thieves and murderers. Whether the legend has any merit or not, something like that indeed happened. Seventy years after Neumeister left, the von Promnitz family died out, and the castle was converted into a prison.<sup>85</sup>

Neumeister’s time in Sorau is a testimony to his faithfulness as a pastor. Whatever his actions were in Weißenfels, Neumeister did not let himself be moved in Sorau. He was willing not only to call out Count von Promnitz but also King Augustus the Strong. Despite the literary war he engaged in, he had a devoted congregation who loved him as a preacher and teacher. This suggests a heart motivated his doctrinal endeavors. He was not merely an academic who was concerned about scientific correctness. Critics of Neumeister often attack the sharpness of his polemics in Sorau.<sup>86</sup> But there are two sides to every story. Erdmann Neumeister was not simply a bully who wanted to batter pietists. He looked upon the people of Sorau and the greater area of Silesia as his flock. Even after he was barred from preaching, he continued publishing and writing. Based on the congregation’s reaction, the decision to leave Sorau had to have been

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84. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 83–84.

85. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 84. There seems to be a mistake in Riedel’s writing. He records that the von Promnitz family died out *fifty* years after Neumeister’s departure, but his son Johann Erdmann von Promnitz died in 1785.

86 Wallmann, “Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus,” 29; Rucker, *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, 21; Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 75–76.

agonizing. He had been the defender of Orthodoxy for the Sorau Consistory. Was it better to take up the fight in Hamburg or to remain in Sorau? Was he running from persecution? Was he leaving his parishioners to the influence of men like Petersen or the possible tyranny of a Catholic king? Was Hamburg a better place for his family? Ultimately, Neumeister made a choice, and the next location of his ministry would be where he would spend the rest of his life.

### **Pastorate in Hamburg (1715 – 1756)**

The move to Hamburg was the farthest<sup>87</sup> and most difficult for the Neumeister family yet. Neumeister and his family had spent nine years in Sorau. He was leaving behind friends and dearly loved parishioners. Count von Promnitz had once been his friend. Neumeister asked for an audience before his departure but was denied.<sup>88</sup> The journey took months and was marked by tragedy. Along the way, three-year-old Erdmann Gottwerth died on August 4th, 1715. He was buried three days later, and the family continued moving to Hamburg soon after. Financially speaking, the city of Hamburg took care of its new pastor from the beginning. They paid for his move to Hamburg. The total cost amounted to 3189 Hamburg Marks. According to Uwe Riedel's reckoning, that would be roughly between 4000 and 6500 euros, between \$4300 and \$7000.<sup>89</sup> Neumeister arrived with his family sometime in September, and the new pastor was well received.

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1715, a devout congregation filled the St. Jacobi church to the very last spot. As the final verse of the hymn of the day was played, all eyes turned to the

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87 The distance from Sorau to Hamburg is roughly 375 miles.

88. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 84.

89. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 88. The calculation into USD is based on plugging Riedel's numbers into the current exchange rate.

pulpit with great anticipation. Today, the congregation would receive a new pastor in the person of the former senior court preacher, superintendent, and councilor of the Sorau Consistory, Erdmann Neumeister. A distinguished reputation preceded him, a capable preacher, faithful shepherd of souls,<sup>90</sup> highly talented poet of spiritual songs, and a dauntless champion for the purity of the Lutheran Confession. And so the anticipation was that much greater when the congregation witnessed her pastor mount the pulpit for the first time. Neumeister had been chosen on April 7th as successor to the blessed Doctor Johann Riemer, and now it had been five months of waiting for his relocation to Hamburg. After the congregation listened to Neumeister's sermon on Exodus 19:3-6, and the festive occasion of this introduction and installation of a new shepherd of souls came to an end, they departed God's house with great satisfaction.<sup>91</sup>

Neumeister had the same protective attitude about his flock in Hamburg as in Sorau. He continued publishing sermons, books, and pamphlets in Hamburg on various subjects, some were doctrinal, some devotional, and still others were polemical.<sup>92</sup> In Hamburg, he wrote against Pietism, Catholicism, Calvinism, and Syncretism.<sup>93</sup> And for the 200th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, Erdmann Neumeister preached on Zech 14:6–7. Riedel characterizes this sermon as a warning against the dangers of Pietism, Calvinism, and the Roman Catholic Church. Two years later, in a letter to the Hamburg council, he wrote, “Iterum censeo Carthaginem tam Papisticam, quam Calvinisticam esse delendam.” “Again, I reckon that both the Papist and the Calvinist Carthage must be destroyed.”<sup>94</sup>

Some of his polemical writings were direct responses to controversies that arose. In 1719, the Tübingen Professor of Philosophy Johann Christian Klemm published a writing entitled “The

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90. German: *Seelsorger*

91. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 92.

92 Wallmann, “Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus,” 31–32.

93 This refers to the blending of Christian denominations, particularly there were advocates in the Lutheran church who wanted to make concessions to Calvinist churches for the sake of achieving Protestant unity.

94. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 93. This is a play on a famous quote by Cato the Elder, who called for the Roman Republic to utterly destroy the city of Carthage in view of Hannibal's destructive campaigns.

Necessary Unity of the Protestant Church.” Neumeister wrote a characteristically sharp response. For the second time in Neumeister’s career, he aroused the ire of a king. The king of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm I, wrote to the council of Hamburg and demanded that Neumeister be punished and made an example of. Ultimately the matter went no farther, and no action was taken against Neumeister.<sup>95</sup> There was another controversy with the theological faculty of Tübingen in 1736. The issue centered around a *Gutachten*<sup>96</sup> by the faculty of Tübingen, which declared the Moravians to be legitimate Lutherans. Neumeister responded with “*Mene tekel dieses Bedenkens*,” in which he explained thirty-five significant points of doctrinal difference. This is especially interesting in light of Loescher’s interactions with Zinzendorf, a Moravian. Loescher at one point defended Zinzendorf and his Moravian congregation as superintendent.<sup>97</sup>

Neumeister also prompted controversy on his own at times. For example, he published a work in 1727 specifically aimed against the errors of Philipp Jacob Spener, the father of Pietism. This was written two decades after the man’s death. Most of the Orthodox Lutherans did not question Spener’s orthodoxy, nor did they attack him after his death. Neumeister was an exception in both regards.<sup>98</sup> This writing was banned in Saxony almost immediately, and Neumeister was met with no shortage of personal attacks.

While polemics feature heavily in Erdmann Neumeister’s time in Hamburg, there were also many joys. He officiated the weddings of four of his daughters in the St. Jacobi church.

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95. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 96–98.

96. A *Gutachten* is an official position on a theological issue. Historically, Lutheran theological faculties of universities would adjudicate local cases by rendering a verdict or *Gutachten* in a given controversy.

97. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism*, 384–87. As far as I have researched, Neumeister and Loescher never clashed over this. It would seem that from Loescher’s point of view, there were simply bigger problems to address.

98. Wallmann, “Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus,” 32.

They each married men of high standing whom Neumeister respected. For each of these weddings, Neumeister published poetry comprised of his well wishes for each new couple.<sup>99</sup> As the pastor grew older, he would receive little books of birthday wishes produced by his children and sons-in-law each year.<sup>100</sup>

On the other hand, death continued to visit Neumeister with regularity. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1741, his beloved wife Johanna Elisabeth died after a protracted period of illness. The following year, his eldest son Erdmann Gottlieb, who was serving in ministry with his father at St. Jacobi, suddenly died at the age of 27. He had been married for just two years. The cause of death has been lost to history. Following both of these crushing losses, numerous family members sent their condolences, some in the form of poetry.

A story that demands to be told is the 1720 incident with Bach. Erdmann Neumeister's contact and friendship with Bach had begun before the two met in Hamburg; he had written poetry for Bach while still serving in Sorau. In September of 1720, Hamburg was looking for an organist to replace Heinrich Frese. Bach applied for the position and was granted an audition. For the occasion, he played what is now known as "Fantasy and Fugue in G minor" (BWV 542). His two-hour recital left the audience awestruck. It seemed inevitable that Bach would have obtained the position. There was only one problem. The city of Hamburg was accustomed to receiving donations from new organists. Bach was expected to pay 4000 Marks to further his application. Uwe Riedel notes that this was, for all intents and purposes, bribery. Bach soon withdrew his application from consideration. After this, Johann Joachim Heitmann, by all accounts a rather mediocre musician, paid the 4000 Marks and took the post. Pastor Erdmann

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99. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 108.

100. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 111–12.



Neumeister was rather disappointed in the man and remarked, “He can play his preludes<sup>101</sup> better with his dollars than with his fingers.”<sup>102</sup> That disappointment followed Neumeister all the way to Christmas. On Christmas morning, at the very beginning of his sermon, Neumeister said, “Even if one of the Bethlehem angels came from heaven, played in a godlike manner, and wanted to become the organist at St. Jacobi but showed up with no money, then even he would only want to fly back to where he came from.”<sup>103</sup>

Neumeister was a much-beloved pastor in Hamburg for his service and dedication. He was a highly esteemed preacher, not only as an orthodox teacher but also for his ability to reach hearts. Each week, he would publish a preview of his upcoming sermon, which included the theme and arrangement of the sermon, an introduction to the biblical text, and a hymn. These were so beloved that even when Neumeister was prevented from preaching by blindness and the infirmity of old age, he continued to meet the demand for these weekly texts to be published.<sup>104</sup>

In his old age, Neumeister passed some notable opportunities. He was considered for the position of *Senior*, the highest ecclesiastical office in Hamburg. This position was effectively equivalent to the Bishop of Hamburg. At the age of 67 in 1738, Neumeister asked the council of Hamburg to spare him from the responsibility so that he could live out the remainder of his days peacefully.<sup>105</sup> In 1740, Neumeister produced a draft of a Hamburg Catechism. The Hamburg

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101. The German verb *prädulieren* can either mean to play a prelude or to audition.

102. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 104.

103. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 104.

104. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 101.

105. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 112.

ministerium approved of his work, but the city council was more hesitant to publish it. For once in his life, Neumeister backed down and withdrew from the project.<sup>106</sup>

On June 30th, 1747, Neumeister celebrated his fiftieth year in ministry. According to Riedel, at the age of 76, in true Neumeister fashion, he composed a fifty-stanza hymn that conveyed his reflections on his years in ministry and his wishes for the city of Hamburg.<sup>107</sup> This fifty-stanza hymn was written to the meter and rhyme of Martin Luther's "Dear Christians One and All Rejoice."<sup>108</sup>

Through the stanzas of this hymn, Neumeister reflects on his life, his ministry, his crosses to bear, his fears, and his wishes for the city of Hamburg. It is a stirring message and a beautiful confession of faith. It also summarizes his life. He recounts his youth and thanks God for the gift of his parents despite their poor economic status. He recalls his carefree days in school and thanks God for his teachers. Several stanzas are spent reflecting upon the enormous grace given that he should serve as a minister both at the altar and in the pulpit. In that same spirit, Neumeister was astonished to think that his ministry was longer than some people get the opportunity to live. He conveys a readiness to go home to heaven but also a willingness to praise God for as many days as he would be granted. The hymn reads beautifully, both in its meaning and its construction. Neumeister's humility and thankfulness bleed into every stanza. It is truly a labor of love.

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106 Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 112.

107. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 120. Riedel writes, "Neumeister preached the sermon himself, which consisted of fifty verses." Perhaps he meant that a hymn that long may as well be a sermon. I do not think Neumeister personally preached the sermon that day.

108. Erdmann Neumeister, *Psalmen, und Lobgesänge und Geistliche Lieder* (Hamburg: Rudolph Benke, 1755), 655–63.

In particular, one section beautifully conveys Neumeister's pastoral heart. Here is a paraphrase of stanzas 26-27 in the form of a prayer. "My dear Lord Jesus, I am ready to die. If I die, I die with joy. If I live, I live for your praise. But before I go, I have just one prayer left, for my joy, to your glory, and for all the sheep I have fed with your word. Grant that not one of them be lost, but rather lead them together with me to the flock of your elect that I may dwell with them for all eternity."<sup>109</sup>

In 1755, Neumeister went totally blind. He became utterly incapable of mounting the pulpit. His very last sermon was for Trinity 19 on Isaiah 26:2-4. To treat his blindness, he underwent an operation in 1756. A few weeks after the operation, Erdmann Neumeister died on August 18th, 1756. He was buried one week later at no cost to his family. The city of Hamburg paid for his wife's funeral arrangements and his own. His lifetime of service in the Lutheran church was praised in various forms of poetry and prose by family, classmates, and the greater circle of German Lutheran clergy.<sup>110</sup>

"For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless" (Ps 84:11). From this verse, the phrase, "Gott ist unser Sonn und Schild!" "God is our sun and shield!" served as Neumeister's personal motto, and it is a good summary of his life. Even in the midst of tragedy, persecution, and loss, God remained Neumeister's sun, the joy and warmth of his heart. And when he faced danger on every side from rulers and false teachers, God remained Neumeister's shield, the wellspring of his safety and confidence. In his correspondence, Neumeister always referred to himself as "Gottes allergeringste Knecht," "The least of all God's servants." For all of

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109. Neumeister, *Psalmen, und Lobgesänge und Geistliche Lieder*, 660.

110. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 120–23.

Neumeister's faults, this fact remained true. Erdmann Neumeister knew he was a sinner who had received the riches of God's grace in Christ.

## PART TWO: THE WRITINGS OF ERDMANN NEUMEISTER

The following overview and evaluation of Neumeister's writings is based on a rather limited sampling. I wish to acknowledge this limitation at the outset. I read about 25 sermons from several collections, two of his polemical writings against Pietism, and roughly 40 hymns. I also skimmed large sections of these books. For this reason, my comments are limited to observations rather than definitive or sweeping judgments about his works.

### **Polemics against Pietism**

In general, Johannes Wallman describes Neumeister's polemic against Pietism as typical of orthodox Lutheran argumentation.<sup>111</sup> His approach was different from Valentin Loescher's. Loescher always looked upon the Pietists as fellow Christian brothers and members of the Orthodox church. Not once did he call them a sect.<sup>112</sup> Neumeister, on the other hand, had no hesitations about calling them a sect and false religion.<sup>113</sup> Professor Wallman notes that Neumeister and Alberti had an especially close bond and mutual respect, and consequently, Neumeister's manner of critiquing Pietism is cut whole cloth from Alberti.<sup>114</sup>

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111. Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 31.

112. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism*, 407.

113. Erdmann Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg: Johann Christoph Kißner, 1730), 5-9, 40.

114. Wallmann, "Erdmann Neumeister – der letzte orthodoxe Gegner des Pietismus," 28–29.

The errors of Pietism were difficult for Orthodox Lutherans to diagnose. Even Abraham Calov approved of Spener's *Pia Desideria*.<sup>115</sup> Formal charges of false doctrine were rather easily deflected by more gifted theologians like Spener and Francke.<sup>116</sup> Erdmann Neumeister diligently read his opponents and was never afraid to call them out by name.<sup>117</sup> In his "*Pietismus a magistratu politico reprobatus et proscriptus*," he catalogs legal edicts and *Gutachten* against Pietism from all across Europe. Often, these edicts banned conventicles under suspicion of sedition, be it political or religious.<sup>118</sup> Neumeister categorizes these edicts variously. In one section, he defines Pietism according to the wording of official edicts.<sup>119</sup> These descriptions vary in specificity. One edict simply describes Pietism "as if all the old heresies had woken up."<sup>120</sup>

### Sermons

Erdmann Neumeister wrote prolifically, and he published various collections of sermons. It was common for the laity to read these collections as devotional material,<sup>121</sup> and Neumeister's

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115. Heinrich Schmid, *The History of Pietism*, trans. James Langebartels (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Pub. House, 2008), 25–26.

116. Koester, *The Spirit of Pietism*, 226.

117. The second part of every sermon in *Priesterliche Lippen* footnotes citations for each of Neumeister's accusations of false doctrine. I did not read every sermon, but skimming the book shows the footnotes running at the bottom of each page.

118. Erdmann Neumeister, *Pietismus a magistratu politico reprobatus et proscriptus* (Hamburg, 1736), 331.

119. Neumeister, *Pietismus*, 327–30.

120. Neumeister, *Pietismus*, 329.

121. Schmid, *The History of Pietism*, 26–27.

sermons were very popular for this usage during his pastorate in Hamburg.<sup>122</sup> A proper analysis or evaluation of Neumeister as a preacher is beyond the scope of this paper. This section will overview several of Neumeister's sermon collections and offer some observations based on reading roughly 20 of his sermons.

In "Priesterliche Lippen," each sermon has three parts. 1.) The Orthodox Lutheran Teaching 2.) Errors concerning this doctrine 3.) Consolation for a troubled soul. These sermons are rarely expository. If the Gospel reading for a given Sunday was about the doctrine he assigned to that day of the church year, the sermon was more textual. Each sermon has at least a small outline of the Gospel text followed by a short discourse explaining and applying it, usually less than three pages.

In his sermon for Advent 1, he explains his rationale. Every year, the same Gospel texts were read on the same Sundays. Since the congregation had already heard Pastor Neumeister explain these texts, it seemed reasonable to devote a whole church year to the various teachings of the Christian faith.<sup>123</sup> For example, the Gospel for Advent 2 is Luke 21:25–36. For that Sunday, Neumeister chose eschatology as the sermon subject.<sup>124</sup>

The bulk of these sermons are spent on lists of errors, identifying their teachers, and refuting them. These can be rather lengthy lists of errors.<sup>125</sup> It makes one wonder just how much an average parishioner could have meaningfully learned from the overview of forty errors on the

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122. Erdmann Neumeister, *Tisch des Herrn, in LII. Predigten über 1. Cor XI. 23 --- 32.* (Hamburg: Johann Christoph Kibner, 1722), ii.

123. Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 7.

124. Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 49ff.

125. Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 24. In the Advent 1 sermon, his catalogue of errors goes from point a. to point nn!

doctrine of scripture. It is likely that Neumeister added to these sermons when he published them, which was a common practice.

Neumeister shows pastoral concern, particularly in the third part of these sermons. The third section of that same Advent 1 sermon addresses the parishioner worried about the legitimacy of his faith from the fact that he is called “Lutheran” and not just “Christian.”<sup>126</sup> The length and quality of this third section vary from sermon to sermon, but it cannot be said that Neumeister had a cold heart. For example, Neumeister writes carefully and tenderly over the course of several pages when addressing the situation of a mother worried about the soul of her stillborn child.<sup>127</sup>

In “Rechtschaffene Früchte der Buße,” Neumeister presents a collection of sermons he delivered as pastor in Hamburg for their annual Bußtag,<sup>128</sup> a church festival celebrated at different times in the different states of Germany for the community to dedicate itself to prayerful reflection.<sup>129</sup> In the introduction, Neumeister states that these sermons aim to present the Word of God that they might produce fruits of repentance, and even if the full head of grain does not appear, he is content at least to have planted the seed.<sup>130</sup> This collection of sermons begins with the sermon for Hamburg’s Bußtag in 1716 and ends in 1738. Each year, Neumeister

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126. Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 26. Neumeister primarily addresses this concern by drawing a parallel between the pejorative use of the name “Lutheran” and “Christian.”

127. Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 88ff.

128. Based on the dates given for each of Neumeister’s *Bußtag* sermons, the annual Hamburg Bußtag was on the third Thursday of September.

129. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller, eds., *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. (Berlin: Walte de Gruyter, 1981), 7:492–94.

130. Erdmann Neumeister, *Rechtschaffene Früchte der Buße* (Hamburg: Christian Wihelm Brandt, 1741), i–viii. The introduction has no page numbers, so to distinguish it from the main body of the book, I have used Roman numerals.



chose a different text. These sermons vary in length from fifteen pages to nearly forty pages. The sermon introduction always concludes with an exhortation to pray the Lord's Prayer from the heart.

In "Worte des Glaubens," Neumeister presents his sermons from the 1727 church year. In his introduction, he mentions that, unlike his "Priesterliche Lippen," this collection of sermons is what we would now call expository.<sup>131</sup> It would seem that Neumeister picked up the habit of ending his sermon introductions with the Lord's Prayer for the rest of his ministry, as all these sermons do that, too.

In "Tisch des Herrn," Neumeister presents fifty-two sermons on the Lord's Supper based on 1 Cor 11:23–32. Each sermon is divided into three parts, and each part answers a particular question about the Lord's Supper. For example, he poses the question of whether the Lord's Supper truly gives forgiveness of sins.<sup>132</sup> He asks a further question: What is the point if Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper all give the same thing? To this, he draws a comparison between physical health and spiritual health. If the body, as God made it, is cared for by food, sleep, and medicine, then is it unreasonable that these means all take care of the soul? Furthermore, the one who has been baptized, absolved, and fed with the heavenly meal has the most excellent assurance of the forgiveness of sins!<sup>133</sup>

After reading a limited sampling of Neumeister's sermons, I am left with the impression that Neumeister cared deeply about the Bible, pure doctrine, and the well-being of his congregations. Neumeister demonstrates his erudition within his sermons, regularly quoting or

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131. Erdmann Neumeister, *Worte des Glaubens und der guten Lehre*, 3rd ed. (Hamburg: Rudolph Benke, 1727), i–iii. As with

132. Neumeister, *Tisch des Herrn*, 789–91.

133. Neumeister, *Tisch des Herrn*, 786–88.

alluding to scripture, history, and philosophy. His speech is decorated with scriptural allusions and quotations. He regularly appeals to Luther's Catechism and the Lutheran Confessions. At times, he even raises fine systematic distinctions, such as the *forma* and *materia* of scripture, and yet he straightforwardly explains them.<sup>134</sup> When he explains doctrine, his presentation is accessible. When he is refuting error, he comes across as a pastor speaking with fatherly concern. When he extols the gifts of God's grace and comforts the wounded conscience, he lives up to the word *Seelsorger*.

### Hymns

If an English speaker recognizes Neumeister's name, it would most likely be for his hymns. Neumeister wrote hundreds of hymns, and a few are still sung in churches today. The 2021 "Christian Worship: Hymnal" contains three of his hymns, "God's Own Child I Gladly Say It," "Jesus Sinners Does Receive," and "I Know My Faith is Founded."<sup>135</sup> There is also a translation of an excellent Communion hymn in an issue of "Studium Excitare."<sup>136</sup> Neumeister also produced texts for composers such as Bach. The texts considered come from the 1755 collection of Neumeister's hymns, "Psalmen, und Lobgesänge und Geistliche Lieder." This work contains nearly seven hundred pages of Neumeister hymns. Uwe Riedel offers this evaluation of

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134. Neumeister, *Priesterliche Lippen*, 14.

135. *Christian Worship: Hymnal*, 1st edition. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2021), 654, 679, 797.

136. Isaiah Duff and Caleb Raasch, trans., "Soul, Leave Affairs of Earth Behind You, Verses 1-6," *Studium Excitare*.19 (2020), <https://studiumjournal.com/translation/soul-leave-affairs-earth-behind-verses-1-6>.

Neumeister's sacred poetry, "It is unquestionable that Neumeister was a man of the word. He treasured music as a tool to convey his message yet more powerfully."<sup>137</sup>

When opening a collection of Neumeister's hymns, it is surprising to see titles that are clearly not original to Neumeister. These hymns are not plagiarism but what one might call an "evangelical remix." An interesting convention of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was to take striking lines from a well-known hymn and use them as a starting point for one's own poetry or music. Ada Kadelbach goes into greater detail on this practice in her essay on Neumeister's books of Cantatas for the church year.<sup>138</sup> In short, while Neumeister is noteworthy for the sheer volume of his derivative works, his parodies were not wholly unique.

Neumeister's methods of "evangelical remixing" varied. How much he kept from the original hymn varies in these "parodies," as Kadelbach calls them. For the hymn "Wer nun den Lieben Gott lässt walten," "If You but trust in God to Guide You," he penned several different versions.<sup>139</sup> To demonstrate the two methods described above, we will consider his "remix" of "Jesu Meine Freude" or "Jesus Priceless Treasure." The following page compares Johann Franck's original German text,<sup>140</sup> Neumeister's hymn,<sup>141</sup> a translation of the hymn,<sup>142</sup> and my own literal translation of Neumeister.

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137. Riedel, *Erdmann Neumeister*, 102.

138. Ada Kadelbach, "„Jesu Meine Freude, Purpur, Gold Und Seide“ Zitat Und Parodie in Neumeisters „Lieder = Andachten“,“ in *Erdman Neumeister (1671 – 1756) Wegbereiter Der Evangelischen Kirchenkantate*, ed. Henrike Rucker, Weisfenfeler Kulturtraditionen (Rudolstadt: Hain, 2000), 147–49.

139. Neumeister, *Psalmen, und Lobgesänge und Geistliche Lieder*, 382–90.

140. Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche, ed., *Lutherisches Gesangbuch* (Zwickau: Concordia, 2015), 297.

141. Neumeister, *Psalmen, und Lobgesänge und Geistliche Lieder*, 349.

142. *Christian Worship*, 823.

In a word, Neumeister's hymnody shows a heart. It is difficult to conceive of an apathetic man who could have penned such works as these. When one considers the volume of his hymnody, which followed conventions of meter and rhyme, his dedication is remarkable. Then, there is the content of these hymns. While it is beyond the scope of my research to speak authoritatively about Neumeister's poetry, I can certainly say that it touches my heart. As for an academic evaluation, Neumeister's poetry gets the most attention out of all his writings. This is not just because he wrote for someone famous, like Bach. It is acknowledged that his pieces convey a vibrant and living faith.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Bunnars, "Musiktheologische Aspekte Im Streit Um Den Neumeisterschen Kantatentyp," 39; Dieter Merzbacher, "Ob ein Poete wohl Superintendens seyn könne? Erdmann Neumeisters Kantatendichtungen im Spiegel seiner Poetik," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1886), 75.

Jesu, meine Freude,  
 Meines Herzens Weide,  
 Jesu, meine Zier,  
 Ach wie lang, ach lange  
 Ist dem Herzen bange  
 Und verlangt nach dir!  
 Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,  
 Außer dir soll mir auf Erden  
 Nichts sonst Liebbers werden.

Jesu, meine Freude!  
 Ich und du, wir beide,  
 Sind nunmehr vereint.  
 Wegg ist alle Sünde.  
 Mir, als seinem Kinde,  
 Ist GOTT nicht mehr feind.  
 Denn dein Blut Macht alles gut.  
 Diß, und deinen Leib darneben,  
 hast du mir gegeben.

Jesus, priceless treasure,  
 fount of purest pleasure,  
 truest friend to me.  
 Ah, how long in anguish  
 shall my spirit languish,  
 yearning, Lord, for thee?  
 Thou art mine, O Lamb divine!  
 I will suffer naught to hide thee;  
 naught I ask beside thee.

Jesus Priceless Treasure!  
 I and you, we both  
 are now joined together.  
 All sins are now gone.  
 For me, as his child  
 God no longer is my foe  
 For your blood makes all things well.  
 This and your body with it,  
 have you given to me.

## CONCLUSION

What do we make of Erdmann Neumeister? Is the charge of “dead Orthodoxy” fair? I don’t believe so. Neumeister certainly showed a capability for repentance. He left behind his way of indulgent way of life as a student in Leipzig. He endured hardship in different ministry settings. Whether or not he backed down in Weißenfels, he clearly refused to compromise his confession in Sorau and Hamburg. As noted previously, Neumeister was extremely well beloved by his congregations, who longed to hear him teach the pure Word of God even to his dying breath. His corpus of poetry stands as a testament to his heart. His faith was not purely intellectual.

I humbly submit that pastors would do well to learn from this man’s example. The sins of his youth, temper, and, at times, inflated view of himself are all recognizable pitfalls. And yet for all this, the grace of God shines that much brighter. The Leipzig student who dreamed of worldly pleasures was broken by the hard realities of pastoral responsibility and the death of his children. Whatever happened in Weißenfels, he took responsibility for the souls under his care in Sorau. Neumeister remained faithful to the Lutheran Church, and on more than one occasion he was willing to face the threats of rulers and princes.

Lastly, I must add my voice to the throng who bemoan that there is not more work written about or translated from this most humble servant of God. This is an entirely subjective point, but reading Neumeister has been a delight and joy that I gladly commend to the reader. God is and forever remains our sun and shield!

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