

# Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe)

Katharina Schütz Zell



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Imbued with character and independence, strength and articulateness, humor and conviction, abundant biblical knowledge and intense compassion, Katharina Schütz Zell (1498–1562) was an outspoken religious reformer in sixteenth-century Germany who campaigned for the right of clergy to marry and the responsibility of lay people—women as well as men—to proclaim the Gospel. As one of the first and most daring models of the pastor's wife in the Protestant Reformation, Schütz Zell demonstrated that she could be an equal partner in marriage; she was for many years a respected, if unofficial, mother of the established church of Strasbourg in an age when ecclesiastical leadership was dominated by men.

Though a commoner, Schütz Zell participated actively in public life and wrote prolifically, including letters of consolation, devotional writings, biblical meditations, catechetical instructions, a sermon, and lengthy polemical exchanges with male theologians. The complete translations of her extant publications, except for her longest, are collected here in *Church Mother*, offering modern readers a rare opportunity to understand the important work of women in the formation of the early Protestant church.

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