

ditur« in seinem letzten Teil so abändern »... non quod fit, sed quod sic est institutum a Christo Domino« (WA TR 1, 321, 9 [677]).

Ein Blick in die Genesisvorlesung, der hier leider aus Raumgründen nicht ausführlich ausfallen kann, bestätigt, daß die Auffassung Luthers von der Zusammengehörigkeit von Taufe und *vita christiana* ab 1519 strukturell gleich bleibt, auch wenn sich die Bestimmung des Sakraments modifiziert je nach der Frontstellung, in der die Ausführungen gemacht sind. Summa summarum darf man durchaus von einer einheitlichen Theologie der Taufe bei Luther sprechen. Der Vorwurf, den Schwab

(aaO, 357, Anm. 80) gegen Grönvik erhebt, ist unzutreffend; denn Grönvik arbeitet lediglich einen heuristischen Dissens heraus, um ihn zu überwinden (aaO, 108–114).

Literatur: Lorenz GRÖNVIK: Die Taufe in der Theologie Martin Luthers. Åbo 1968; Wolfgang SCHWAB: Entwicklung und Gestalt der Sakramententheologie bei Martin Luther. F 1977; Karl-Heinz ZUR MÜHLEN: Luthers Tauflehre und Stellung zu den Täufern. In: Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von 1526 bis 1546/ hrsg. von Helmar Junghans. B; GÖ 1983, 119–138. 765–770.

Luther's Sixteenth-century Successors

Seminar leader: Robert Kolb

Reporter: Robin Barnes

This seminar was devoted to the so-called »late Reformation« period (c. 1546–1620). The group sought to keep several general questions in view. What was the role of Luther's teaching in shaping the character of the age following his death? How was his authority understood and proclaimed? How did other individuals and cultural forces affect the reception of his teaching and the nature of the period in Germany? Finally, does it make sense to talk about a »late-Reformation era«, and if so what were its defining characteristics? While paper topics varied greatly, these questions supplied a helpful framework for discussion.

Those members who presented papers had distributed copies before the conference. Consequently papers were not read in seminar meetings; rather participants were given the opportunity to speak on the context and implications of their work, then to answer questions and engage in general discussion of the issues at

hand. The papers fell into four general problem areas: 1. The concept of confession and the origins of confessional orthodoxy; 2. Perceptions of Martin Luther; 3. The relationship between Lutheran teaching and other currents of thought; and 4. The development of Lutheran political resistance theory.

Robert Kolb initiated the discussion with comments on his paper, »The Gnesio-Lutheran concept of confession«. What did it mean to confess among Luther's heirs? The »Augsburg Confession«, a confession of faith arising from the consciences of lay people in the face of hostile forces, was an unprecedented event in the history of the Church. In the troubled decades after Luther's death a series of similar »confessions« appeared as groups of his followers struggled to clarify and defend their conceptions of evangelical truth. But while the »Confessio Augustana« had been conceived as the record of an oral act by laymen announced to a catholic

Christendom, these later »confessions« were essentially written expressions, by groups of theologians, of a »remnant« ecclesiology marked by a heavily defensive and eschatological tone. In these later documents the confession of faith was inseparable from the teaching of truth and the denunciation of error. From this perspective a fundamental conceptual shift in the direction of »confessionalism« was occurring already by mid-century.

Further light was thrown on these issues by Christopher Burchill's paper, »In the shadow of a Titan: Johann Marbach and the origins of confessional orthodoxy in Strasbourg, 1553–1563«. Marbach's intellectual development offers a case-study in the formation of confessional positions within Lutheranism. His efforts to implement a practical reform at the local level, and a growing dispute with the Reformed theologian Girolamo Zanchi, helped Marbach to clarify his own understanding of Luther's theology and his conception of the ministry. The evangelical movement could no longer appear as a unity in the eyes of one who had developed a deep fear of the »rationalizing tendency« of Reformed theology. Clearly the ideas of »confession« and »confessional orthodoxy« evolved at least partly in response to practical concerns and to the theological controversies that arose by the 1550s.

The various interpretations of »orthodoxy« among Luther's heirs were naturally inseparable from perceptions of the Reformer and his work. In a paper on »Lutherflorilegien zwischen 1550 und 1600« Ernst Koch examined some of the popular editions of Luther's writings that both reflected and helped to form the common understanding of the Reformer's significance. The goals of Luther's followers in publishing these inexpensive works included making the Reformer's teachings more broadly accessible, and maintaining pure doctrine in an increasingly confused age. Luther was variously depicted

as teacher, as spiritual counselor, and especially as prophet; these views would continue to influence Lutheran piety quite directly well into the seventeenth century. Perhaps most significant was the effort to present Luther's theology as a living reflection of human experience, to combat the tendency to make an intellectual dogma of his teaching. These popular collections are thus one manifestation of continuing spiritual vitality during an epoch full of numbing theological strife.

Differing perceptions of Luther also played a role in controversies between Lutherans and their Reformed opponents. In his paper »Reformation or deformation?« Bodo Nischan explored »Lutheran and Reformed views of Martin Luther in Brandenburg's ›Second Reformation‹«. Elector John Sigismund's conversion to Calvinism in 1613 and the Reformed push for a »completion« of the Reformation in the Mark evoked bitter denunciation from Lutherans who held »what was essentially a dogmatic interpretation that tended to absolutize both Luther and his reformation«. The Reformed defended themselves as the true heirs of the Wittenberger, whose authority they viewed rather in historical and relativistic terms; through their »Second Reformation« they were merely completing what Luther had begun. These opposed views, which might be termed »apocalyptic« and »humanistic«, reflect a fundamental conflict of assumptions about the meaning of the Reformation and the very nature of God's plan for history.

But to what extent was the thought of this age actually governed by confessional boundaries? How meaningful were the disputes of the theologians, even among most of the educated? In her paper on »Wittenberg and the sons of Hermes«, Arlene Miller Guinsburg directed attention to other powerful intellectual currents in late-sixteenth-century Germany that may ultimately have had far greater importance than

the confessional disputes of that age. There is weighty evidence that at the very hub of the Lutheran world, Hermeticism and related forms of thought were taken very seriously throughout the sixteenth century. Far from falling into intellectual conformity and sterility after Luther's death, the University showed significant »creative, tolerant, and inter-confessional« leanings. If we focus narrowly on the theological debates of the age, we risk missing essential elements in that world of thought.

Robin Barnes's paper on »Melanchthon and the popular literature of late-Reformation Germany« made some complementary points. The »Praeceptor Germaniae« had a generally positive reputation among popular writers; he was viewed »not as the remote symbol of an oppressive orthodoxy, but rather as a great seeker of wisdom and prophetic truth«. This was so at least partly because Melanchthon actually shared with popular culture a deep curiosity about man and the natural world, and because many popular writers saw in the wisdom of the learned the possibility of confirming the truths of the faith. Just as the divisions between orthodoxy and heresy in this period are often oversimplified, so those between »lay culture« and »learned culture« can easily be overstated.

Finally, the implications of Lutheranism for political thought were discussed in light of Luther Peterson's paper on »Lutheran resist-

ance theory, 1546–1550«. Peterson's bold thesis was that Lutheran pamphlet literature of the Schmalkaldic war period asserted not only the right of lower magistrates to resist their superiors, but also the right of the individual citizen to resist his ruler on the basis of Christian conscience. The source of such a right, it was argued, lay ultimately in the idea of »Schöpfungsordnungen«, which involved »the worth and responsibility of the individual as ›Hausvater‹, and the obligation of orders to watch over each other and, if need be, correct each other«. There was lively, though inconclusive debate on the thesis, centering especially on the question of whether the sixteenth century actually had any conception of the individual in political terms.

Concluding discussions returned to the larger problem of characterizing the period in general. A consensus seemed to emerge that the term »late Reformation« is indeed useful, if for no other reason than that the period showed differences from both the early Reform and from the later »Age of Orthodoxy«. Attempts to include the later sixteenth century in the period of Orthodoxy are misleading, for despite the settlement marked by the »Formula of Concord« (1577), Lutheranism remained under the influence of several »circles of consciousness« – humanist, academic, magical, and prophetic – at least until the era of the Thirty Years' War.