

4. Luther's concern for and contributions to the practical administration of church order in the evangelical congregations.

5. The role of the two governances doctrine in practical politics.

6. The nature of Lutheran church order in contexts where the Landesherrliche Kirchenregiment was not operative.

7. The two governances doctrine as a contemporary theological resource for theory and praxis in the social / ethical arenas.

8. The integration of Luther's faith / love (freedom / servanthood) dialectic.

9. The reception of Luther's theology.

10. Words / concepts which require scholarly investigation:

a. consent (of the congregation)

b. the spiritual dimension of the church

11. Updating and revision of Emil Sehling's Kirchenordnungen.

12. The Formgeschichte of the Kirchenordnungen.

13. The law / love dialectic.

14. The impact of the visitations and of the Diet of Augsburg on Luther's apparent decision to recognize the schism within the Western church and to reorganize that church (i.e., to organize the emerging Lutheran communities).

## Luther's Ecclesiology

Seminar leader: Jared Wicks

Reporter: Jared Wicks

The members first named the issues they saw as most pressing in the study of Luther's ecclesiological writings.

*Ralph Quere* raised questions concerning the »marks« of the church set forth in »Von den Konziliis und Kirchen« (1539) and »Wider Hans Worst« (1541), especially in their relation to the »Apology of the Augsburg Confession« and to Luther's »Smalkald Articles«. Further questions emerged about the relation between the apologetic role of the marks and their pastoral purpose.

*Eero Huovinen* told of his recent work on *fides infantium* in Luther and indicated its possible relevance to rightly viewing the church in assisting, through its members, the child's development of a *fides propria*.

*Jared Wicks* related his findings on the church in Luther's catechetical works, noting how the church is properly *creatura Spiritus sancti* and is

ascribed a set of characteristic actions within the Spirit's sanctifying work. But what is the *Stellenwert* of such teachings?

*Carl Braaten* asked about Luther's possible contribution to overcoming disagreements among Lutherans on the doctrine of the ministry. Can Luther's ecclesiology help overcome the reductionist tendencies abroad in the land and lay a better basis for understanding ecclesial ministry?

### I The Church and Scripture

The second session took up *Johannes Wirsching's* »Sola Scriptura: Martin Luther's »Schriftprinzip« in seiner ekklesiologischen Bedeutung«. The paper takes seriously Luther's warnings that his early works were »disordered chaos« (WA 54, 179, 10) and that only in the five years before »Vom Abendmahl Christi, Be-

kenntnis« did his writings reach the level called for by the great issues of the day (WA 26, 509, 21). In »De servo arbitrio« Luther affirmed the clarity of Scripture and asserted that this quality makes Scripture able to test opinions and show where right doctrine lies (WA 18, 606-609). Such clarity concerns the essential content of Scripture, namely, its testimony to Christ. By the Spirit's work, this becomes the inner clarity of hearts that lay hold of the message. Scripture, as a clear witness of Christ, is God's gift to the church as its source of instruction and purification. But the church has Scripture only in the canon, which conveys the original apostolic word as the church's sole norm of life and teaching. The church's dogmatic acceptance of the canon, especially in the fourth century, shows a symmetry with Luther's notion of canonicity. What is »canonical« is Jesus Christ. A canonical hermeneutic will foster the inbreaking into our discourse of the single clear witness to Christ that underlies all the prophetic and apostolic books. In this sense Scripture is given by the Spirit to teach the church what she is, what she should do, and what she must continue to be (WA 53, 252, 32).

The ensuing discussion first brought out the difference between the historical and systematic-theological approach to Luther. The historian will not feel bound by Luther's own pejorative judgments on his early works, but will attend to the genesis of his thought and his movement through key transitions to become the mature Reformer. But Lutheran theology will work with the smaller corpus of those works that Luther himself singled out as normative in interpreting the Gospel.

A second reaction raised problems met today in using Scripture as normative in the church. The assumptions underlying contemporary exegesis produce an antagonistic relationship between the Bible, on the one hand, and the Creeds and liturgical tradition of the church on

the other hand. Scholarly commentaries make it hard to see the confessions of faith as the distillations of the content of Scripture. The notion of a single clear witness to Christ as a unifying center is undermined by exegesis that stresses the plurality of the »many Christs« found in the New Testament texts. In an word, today's biblical studies assume a break between Scripture and the church's dogmatic tradition. A question arises, however, whether Luther's own sermons and commentaries do not show him facing the pluralism of New Testament documents without losing hold of their unity.

A third complex of issues concerned aspects of canon-history. Can one simply assimilate the Reformation to the church of the fourth century, given the acceptance at that time of the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament? Also, were not canonical decisions made against Marcion and the gnostics by applying the church's *regula fidei* as criterion of canonicity? Here the church was active, and not just submissive, in determining what books authentically witness to Christ.

Finally, Luther himself, in »De servo arbitrio«, spoke of Scripture proving right doctrine in the church through those who hold the office of ministry as *duces et praecones verbi* (WA 18, 653, 22-28). The corps of pastoral interpreters must be taken into account when one speaks of Scripture »judging the spirits« in the public forum of the church.

## II *Luther's comunio Ecclesiology*

*Simo Peura* opened the third session with a review of current Luther-research in Finland. An alternative is being worked out to the existential interpretation of Luther's theology, which slights his ontological categories in treating the believer's union with Christ and does not do justice to his sacramental realism.

*Antti Raunio's* paper, »Die communio sanctorum als Einheit in der göttlichen Liebe bei Luther«, showed the centrality of the Golden Rule in Luther's thought on the church. Just as Christ has entered radically into the condition of sinful humankind, so the believer made one with Christ also enters lovingly into the situation of others. The unity created in the church rests ultimately on communion (Teilhabe) with God, who pours himself out in love. The Lord's Supper, with its promise and gift, is the creative moment in communion with Christ and mutuality of love between believers.

A first comment asked how Luther's notion of union with Christ and the Golden Rule relates to Thomas Müntzer's doctrine of conformity with Christ in Selbstentäußerung. Is it not strange that Luther sharply attacked Müntzer on this point, if indeed his own teaching features a self-emptying to enter into the situation of one's neighbor. One key difference, however, is that Luther stresses God's initiative whereas Müntzer calls for strenuous self-discipline as the way to empty the soul of self-regard.

*Simo Peura's* paper, »Communio sanctorum als Teilhabe an Gott«, showed that Luther did not abandon the communio theme after his »Sermon on the blessed sacrament and the brotherhoods« (1519). It was present in numerous sermons and the Catechisms. The doctrine was deeply anchored 1. in Luther's understanding of justification as union with Christ in the mutual exchange of possessions and 2. in his conception of the Holy Spirit's work as creating unity between Christ and his members by faith and baptism and then building up this community, especially by the Lord's Supper, in mutual love.

The discussion revealed serious questions about a view that ascribes primacy in conceiving the church to the community of love. Luther was quite emphatic on the primacy of faith and the profession of truth. The church is not a

community of consent formed by persons of good will. In crucial moments, truth must reign, even against a more ecumenical emphasis on unity in love.

Another question probed the fruitfulness of this communio ecclesiology for the doctrine of the ministry. It does strengthen the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, who are called to show their love by coming before God on behalf of others. But the ministry of the pastor is of another order, since it comes from Christ's provision for the mediation of his Gospel and grace to the community.

A perspective that carries us beyond the faith-love dichotomy and the church-ministry relation is that of the end-time, when Christ will hand over the kingdom to his Father (1 K 15, 24). Then the hidden church will give way to the visibility of the kingdom and the messenger's service will cease. Such a viewpoint leads to a major reordering of our ecclesiological priorities.

### *III Medieval and Eschatological Insights*

*Ninna Jørgensen* proposed a medieval background of Luther's egalitarian ecclesiological emphases in her paper, »The Notion of the Priesthood of all Believers Within the Framework of Late Medieval Catechetical Preoccupations«.

The late-medieval catechisms ascribed high value to the decalogue, treating it as much more than a check-list for preparing to confess. Luther reflects this in »De votis monasticis«, where he says that nothing is more sacred and religious for all Christians than the keeping of the commandments. Giving primacy to the commandments goes back to the reforming bishops of 13th century England, such as Robert Grosseteste. In the subsequent tradition, the decalogue could be called »the ten words of commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ« and be

taken to include the great commandments of love of God and neighbor. Under this codex of Christian life, the medieval texts show, all believers are equal. All are called to faith, confession, and docility to the Holy Spirit. All are one in the obligation to deal lovingly with their neighbor created in the image of God. Thus, Luther did not effect a break with, but instead a fresh appropriation of, a portion of late-medieval instruction.

A final presentation was made by *Carl Axel Aurelius* on the basis of his »Verborgene Kirche« (Hannover 1983). A methodological principle is to understand Luther's polemical arguments (against Eck, Emser, Alveld and Catharinus) by attending to his exegetical lectures of the same period, especially »Operationes in psalmos«. Luther argued at Leipzig and in subsequent writings that the church on earth is not modelled on the heavenly church (against Pseudo-Dionysius), but is the universal Christenheit of believing hearts. In his lectures, Luther terms the church *Almuth* (Ps 9,1) or »hidden unto death«. In the church Christ is coronatus as its head, who gathers the church until the end, when he will hand it over to the Father.

Among the numerous comments, the question was raised whether a christological star-

ting-point suffices to meet the issues of ecclesiology and ministry that we face today. Grounding the church in christology is a common starting-point and not at debate. But the ensuing debates show that something more is needed as a basis for solving the problems that bedevil both the inner life of the churches and the dialogues between them.

A final summary observation delineated three different ecclesiologies that emerge from our considerations. One view treats the church proleptically as the was the eschatological community is now realized under historical conditions. But this takes us away from bearing the burdens of our own existential setting in history. A second view is the *communio* conception, which however should be open to the rule of the *satisfactio* and to the ongoing work of God's Spirit who works in full freedom. A third view privileges faith as our grasp of truth. In our historical existence, truth has to be transposed into doctrine, and rightly so, for doctrine alone overcomes ambiguity in teaching and confession.

Throughout the sessions, comments and brief reports on their own research were made by Kristen E. Kvam, David Lumpp, Masami Ishii, George Pósfay, and Todd Murken.

## Das kirchliche Amt bei Luther

Seminarleiter: Tarald Rasmussen

Berichterstatte: Tarald Rasmussen

Am Seminar beteiligten sich elf Personen aus sechs Ländern. Folgende Texte waren als gemeinsame Basis für das Arbeiten im Seminar ausgewählt worden: Das Kapitel »De ordine« in »De captivitate babylonica ecclesiae praeludium« von 1520 (StA 2, 245-253). »Daß eine

christliche Versammlung oder Gemeinde Recht und Macht habe, alle Lehre zu urteilen und Lehrer zu berufen, ein- und abzusetzen. Grund und Ursach aus der Schrift« von 1523 (StA 3, 75-84) und »Ein Brief von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern« von 1532 (WA 30 III, 518-527).