

In order to support his thesis Hendrix has to weaken two pillars of Reformation historiography: first, that the Anabaptists were separatists at heart and second, that the magisterial reformers compromised their ideals as they sought the cooperation of territorial political authorities and unwittingly began a process of secularization. With regard to the former, Hendrix suggests that at first the radicals did not aspire to create »separatist cells of serious Christians«. Their aim was more general; they hoped to reform society at large or, in the words of Hendrix, to »rechristianize« Christendom. To say that the radicals were isolated and insular is to ignore the original vi-

sions of Thomas Müntzer, Hans Hut (1490-1527) and Menno Simons. It was only when the civil authorities resisted their reforms that the radicals began to speak of separation.

Jeannine Olson's paper explored Calvin's views and critiques of the Anabaptists. And *Ye Ke* and *Xian-min Kong* of China gave brief overviews of the situation of the church in China with particular reference to the influence of Luther. Special attention was paid to the Marxist interpretation of Luther's role in the Peasants' War and the extent to which that view is still being taught in Chinese interpretations of the Reformation.

Luther's Writings on the Turks

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The seminar was designed to explore the significance of Luther's writings on the Turks against the background of the medieval inheritance and with a view to assessing Luther's impact on European perceptions of Islam.

The first day was devoted to setting the scene for interpreting Luther's writings. In the first session, *Armin Kohnle* presented a paper entitled »The Turkish menace: politics and images in early modern Germany«. Across a time span from the fall of Constantinople to the end of the 18th century, the paper explored three key questions – how contemporaries perceived the Turkish menace, what kind of images were spread about the enemy, and what reactions were expressed. By the second half of the fifteenth century, the Turks were characteristically seen as God's punishment for the sins of Christianity and this view remained unchanged until the mid 17th century. Images of

cruelty, murder, enslavement of Christians and defiling of holy places persisted alongside the first efforts to collect more and better information about the Turks. From the second half of the 15th century some more positive images appeared, emphasizing the Turks' capacity to create peace and order in their lands and their military prowess and showing by contrast how bad Christians were. In reaction to the menace, medieval concepts of crusade and Christian knighthood came to the fore, while pragmatism prevailed on a practical level, and western rulers were more preoccupied with conflicts among themselves than with common action in response to the threat. Traditional images persisted, but the fading of the political threat after 1683 and the influence of the Enlightenment helped to develop a new and more secularized view of the former enemy, with the Turk becoming a »normal« factor in European politics.

In the second session of the first day *Denis Janz* presented a paper entitled »Fear, fascination and loathing: Luther and the medieval demonization of Islam in the West«. He showed how Luther combined an intense intellectual curiosity about Islam with an emotional reaction of horror. Until 1530 his knowledge of Islam was derived from Ricoldo de Montecroce's (ca. 1243-1320) »Confutatio Alcorani« and the »Cribatio Alcorani«, of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), who found in the Qur'an confirmation of Gospel truth alongside lies and perversity. But in that year Luther gained access to the »Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum«, and in 1542 two Latin translations of the Qur'an. Luther at first doubted the truth of Ricoldo's account, but changed his view after acquiring the Latin translation of the Qur'an in 1542. He translated Ricoldo – including extended Qur'an quotations from Ricoldo's work – into German, adding his own preface and conclusion. Ricoldo's view of Mohammed as a devil – based on his lies and sexual immorality – is endorsed by Luther who is mystified that so many would revere such a wretched book as the Qur'an. The »Libellus ...«, authored probably by George of Hungary († 1502), a Dominican who had been a long term Turkish captive, Luther found a superior source and published it in 1530 with his own Latin preface. Fundamentally a descriptive account of Muslim life, it castigates the institution of slavery and Muslim marriage law, repudiates Muslim miracles and identifies Mohammed as »apostle of the Antichrist« while commenting favorably on the Turks' modesty, sobriety, cleanliness and reverence in worship. In his preface Luther emphasizes that Muslims surpass Christians in external ceremony, virtue and law, yet Islam, like Roman Catholicism, is seen as a religion of works rather than grace. Janz found Luther's stance in relation to the medieval demonization of Islam a mixed balance sheet. On the one hand, he published and warmly endorsed the »Libellus ...«, which undermined the traditional view, and he was instrumental in the publication of Theodor Bibliander's (ca. 1504-

1564) superior translation of the Qur'an. On the other hand, his view of Islam remained that of the »Confutatio ...«, which he translated, published and highly recommended. On balance, then, Luther neither mitigated nor exacerbated the medieval view.

The second day was devoted to a reading and analysis of Luther's major writings on the Turks, »Vom Kriege wider die Türcken« (1529), »Heerpredigt wider den Türcken« (1529), and »Ver-mahnung zum Gebet wider den Türcken« (1542). Of these »Vom Kriege ...« was seen as a straightforward exposition in line with Luther's other writings on worldly authority, rejecting the notion of war on religious grounds but stressing the validity of defensive action under the authority of the Emperor. *Greg Miller* led a detailed exposition of the »Heerpredigt ...« and made a persuasive case for its major importance in understanding Luther's views, especially their apocalyptic and prophetic dimension, based on Daniel 7, Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelation 20. The Turks were interpreted as the »small horn« of Dn 7, 8-27 and Gog of Ezekiel, a scourge of God to punish Christendom for its sins. They would eventually fail, but meanwhile those who fought against them could do so with a good conscience, but as a secular affair under secular leadership.

The third day was devoted to the question of mission to Islam, with papers by Bjarne Madsen and Edward Schroeder. *Madsen* presented a detailed critique of Ingemar Öberg's view of mission with special reference to Luther's writings on the Turks. He argued that those writings were essentially apologetic and should be understood in terms of an inner critique of the Church rather than encouragements to mission. He suggested that Luther's writings on the Turks should be defined in terms of »testimony« rather than »mission«.

Schroeder explored the issue of mission by using Luther's concept of the *deus absconditus* as a fruitful basis for religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Whereas current missiological scholarship looks for common »grace

experiences« as a basis for interreligious dialogue, he proposed Luther as a resource for the exact opposite, dialogue based on common human experiences of God's hiddenness or absence in segments of life that are not »grace-ful« at all – sickness, oppression, helplessness, death. From that common base of negative lived experience, subsequent dialogues about grace encounters in one's own religious world have more promise. To the extent that this approach implied moving beyond dialogue to proselytizing Muslims, there was vehement disagreement from some seminar members.

The fourth and final day was introduced with a paper by *Greg Miller* on »The wider significance of Luther's writings on the Turks«, which argued – against Norman Daniel and Edward Said – for the importance of the early modern period, and of Luther in particular, in shaping Western understandings of Islam. Luther's vital role in the publication of Bibliander's translation of the Qur'an with his own introduction was not fully recognized because his introduction was omitted from the older editions of his works. Themes in Luther's writings which helped to shape the way scholars understood Islam included the concept of Islam as a religion, a subtle alteration of the role of Islam and the Turks in the apocalypse, an emphasis on theology, especially Christology, and a de-emphasis on the role of biography of Muhammad in Christian polemic against Islam, and the concept of the Just War in relation to Islam, especially related to Luther's unequivocal rejection of the Crusade.

The complex and wide-ranging discussions of the week did not lend themselves to formulating simple conclusions, but there was broad agreement on a number of perspectives. Firstly, Luther was seen to have shown a genuine interest in understanding Islam and to have encouraged its study, especially through his part in publishing the Qur'an. Secondly, though he avoided passing on many of the scurrilous medieval myths, his views continued to represent in many respects a massive distortion of Islam. Thirdly,

Luther pointed in the direction of understanding Islam as a distinct faith rather than merely a Christian heresy, though this view was more fully realized in Lutheran orthodoxy. Fourthly, a reshaped eschatological role for Islam – quite distinct from the traditional Roman Catholic role which identified Islam with the Antichrist – was built into the foundations of Protestantism. Fifthly, and notwithstanding this, Luther's comments about Turkish rule opened up the possibility for accepting the Turks as a legitimate European state due in large part to Luther's emphasis on obedience to temporal authority, even the authority of the Ottoman state. Finally, Luther's utter rejection of the medieval crusading ideology in favor of a defensive war fought on secular grounds was an important contribution to the development of the Just War tradition (though some seminar members thought this development less significant in practice than in theory).

In the course of discussion, seminar members also addressed the common but mistaken tendency in Christian circles to identify Muhammad as the »Muslim Jesus« and the Qur'an as the »Muslim Bible«. It was noted that the closest equivalent to Jesus in Islam is not Muhammad, but the Qur'an itself which is the speech of God, co-eternal with God, God's full and final revelation and the means of salvation. Muhammad, whom Muslims believe was illiterate, is seen as the human mouthpiece through whom the pre-existent Qur'an came to humankind. Although his life is a model of faithful submission to God, no claim is made that he is divine, or rose from the dead or is an aid to individual Muslims' salvation. The closest equivalent in Islam to the Christian Bible is the Hadith, the authoritative collection of sayings and stories that bear witness to the life of Muhammad and the reception of the Qur'an.

Wide-ranging as the discussions had been, the participants in the seminar felt that at the end of the week much further work remained to be done and that a seminar following up some of these themes should be planned for the next Congress.