

Luther, Preaching and the Reformation

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This seminar considered a variety of topics related to Luther and preaching in the 16th and 17th centuries. In »Early Lutheran Preaching on Mary Magdalene,« *Margaret Arnold* (Boston University, USA) surveyed Magdalene's place in evangelical piety, as taught by Luther and his followers in the first three generations of the Reformation. A study of Luther's teaching on the pericope of the anointing at Bethany reveals that he used Mary Magdalene to instruct believers that the love of the sinful woman of Luke 7 is the appropriate fruit of forgiveness. In Luther's comments on the resurrection narrative of John 20, he described her as an example of devotion to Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel. The postil sermons of Luther's followers, such as Johann Spangenberg and Anton Corvinus, repeat or expand these interpretations, addressing the question whether the priesthood of all believers entitles women to preach in the absence of a competent male preacher.

In »The postilla of Hans Tausen (1539): concepts of originality and

theology,« *Rasmus H. C. Dreyer* (University of Copenhagen, Denmark) introduced the primary work of Danish reformer Hans Tausen (1494/98–1561). Tausen's postil of 1539 (*Winterdelen* [and] *Sommerdelen aff Postillen berid aff M. Hanss Tausen/Predickere y Kiøbenhaffn*, Magdeburg: Hans Walther) was the first complete Danish postil and the first and finest collection of sermons from the Danish Reformation. The few scholarly works on it have considered it an original work by Tausen and have seen it as presenting a genuinely Lutheran theology. They have sought to prove the originality of the postil by comparing it with the parts of Luther's *Kirchenpostille* drafted by Luther himself. No one has compared Tausen's postil with Stephan Roth's contributions to Luther's postils or with Roth's many shortened versions of Luther's sermons. Dreyer demonstrated this new approach and substantiated it by examples and comparisons. Dreyer also asserted that the postil, when considered with other early writings by Tausen, indicates that Tausen's

theology might not be genuinely Lutheran. Tausen's theological statements manifest a multi-faceted reformatory theology, typical of early non-Wittenbergian reformers in the German peripherals. Tausen's earliest writings and the postil support re-designating the so-called ›Danish Luther‹.

Sabine Hiebsch (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands) presented on »Luther's use of *sermo humilis* in his sermons.« She explained that *sermo humilis* comes from and belongs to the same spectrum of tradition as figural interpretation. She also gave a short description of the history and development of *sermo humilis*. Hiebsch then emphasized that Luther's primary goal in his sermons was to reach the heart of his hearers and readers in order to evoke, nourish and strengthen their faith. He used *sermo humilis* to accomplish that. In *sermo humilis* the message, the messenger and the recipients of the message are always linked together. Before Luther could be a messenger, he had to be a listener, a recipient of the same message he later conveyed. Luther himself had to be touched in his heart by the humility of Christ on the Cross as found in the Scriptures. In the second part, Hiebsch read and dis-

cussed excerpts from Luther's sermons to illustrate her explanations and to underline Erich Auerbach's (1892–1957) opinion: »Luther hat die Überlieferung des *sermo humilis* aufs Genialste im Deutschen heimisch gemacht.«

Simo Heininen (University of Helsinki, Finland) discussed the first Finnish postil. Written by the bishop of Turku, Ericus Eriici (c. 1550–1625), this postil, including 85 sermons on the Gospel lessons, was printed in two parts (Stockholm, 1621 and 1625). It comprised 1264 and 988 pages in quarto respectively. It remained the only postil in Finnish until the publication of the pietistic postil of Johan Wegelius in the 1740s. Ericus Eriici wrote his postil for pastors and also for housefathers to read at home. He used as models contemporary German postils (for example, the postils of Johann Habermann and Nathanael Tilesius). His method was analytical. He made extensive use of quotations from the church fathers (for example, Augustine and Chrysostom) and »from the Holy Man Dr. Martinus Lutherus.« Some polemics are present but these are not as extensive as in German postils.

Allen Jorgenson (Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Canada) examined Luther's *Sermon at the Dedi-*

cation of the Castle Church, Torgau (1544) (WA 49; 588–615). He explored how Luther developed a theology of place parallel to his notion of vocation. Native American theologian Vine Deloria Jr. has suggested that Christianity's landless nature betrays its Trojan horse character in service of imperialism: if Christianity can be at home anywhere, then everywhere can be its home. For Luther, as the Christian calling is to be in service of the neighbor, so the location of worship is ordered toward the good of the neighbor. Luther's theology of preaching presumes God's preventive work and the divine voice behind the preacher's, both of which instill a measure of humility that counters what too many have experienced as Christianity's colonizing tendency.

Paul Robinson (Concordia Seminary St. Louis, USA) presented »Luther on Fighting the Turks: Crusade Sermons Inverted?« He as-

serted that model sermons for the crusades shed light on how Luther's audience would have read or heard his writings on war against the Turks. In particular, Luther's *Eine Heerpredigt wider den Türken* (1529) (WA 30,2; 160–197) inverted common themes of crusade sermons, including those related to scripture, papal authority, the holy land, martyrdom, and Christian suffering. Crusade sermons used the sufferings of Christians under Muslim rule as a rationale for the call to crusade and crusaders became God's sword to avenge these wrongs. In contrast, Luther assumed that Christians must suffer because Christ remains weak in the eyes of the world and saw the Turks as God's sword against Christendom. Reading the *Heerpredigt* in the context of crusade sermons suggests that Luther used juxtaposition rather than proposition to reject the idea of crusade.