

The discussion dwelt mainly on the meaning of the *notae ecclesiae*, being the subject of the chosen text excerpt. Particularly, the point was emphasized that the *notae* obviously were not regarded as criteria which the church had to meet in order to be church, but rather as means of sanctification (»heutstück Christlicher heiligung« thus substituting the debated sacramental terminology), as well as means of recognition – they are heuristic, as one participant pointed out, but they are not offering any security, being subject to eschatological re-

servation. Finally the participants discussed at some length the seventh sign of the cross, marking the transition of the signs of the church to the works of love. Particularly the notion of self-sacrifice was questioned. On one hand, it might be significant in the case of e.g. political resistance against totalitarianism. On the other hand, it might take the shape of self-imposed or meaningless suffering. It was concluded that the cross as a sign would (in contrast to self-chosen sacrifice) essentially be marked by absence of self-righteousness.

Philosophical Psychology in Luther's Theology

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Throughout his career Luther showed a thorough acquaintance with the academic psychology of his time. This acquaintance sometimes expressed itself in his harsh criticism of scholastic applications of Aristotle's *De anima* in theology. During the last years of Luther's career, however, psychology was incorporated again into the curriculum of the University of

Wittenberg. The main idea of the Helsinki seminar was to read and discuss some of Luther's texts in comparison with texts on philosophical psychology found in certain natural philosophy treatises written by Luther's colleagues in Wittenberg.

The seminar sessions were based on discussions of particular themes and source texts related to

them. The texts were distributed to the participants beforehand. They included Luther's texts from the 1530s and 1540s, which were compared to texts from natural philosophy in Wittenberg, namely *Epitome de anima* by Johann Bernhardt of Feldkirch (Johannes Velcurio, 1490–1534), written circa 1532–34, and *Commentarius de anima* (1540) and *Liber de anima* (1553) by Philip Melanchthon. Nearly all of the discussed texts were English translations, but Latin originals were also available during the seminar sessions.

The first task of the discussions was to compare the definition of the human soul found in Melanchthon and Bernhardt with Luther's definitions of the human being in the *Disputation Concerning the Human Being* (*Disputatio de homine*, 1536). The discussions soon spread to various issues concerning the human soul, such as moral psychology, the immortality of the soul, and so on. A considerable part of the discourse centered on Luther's view of the effect of original sin on human mental capabilities. The exact nature of the effect of the Fall, and respectively, the effect of justifying grace in healing the wounds caused by original sin, were felt to be extremely difficult to discern in Luther's

text, as well as the texts of his more philosophical colleagues in Wittenberg.

The second theme was the image of the Triune God in human being. Luther's commentary on Gen 1:26–27 from the *Lectures on Genesis* was discussed, although it was noted during the discussions that on the question of similitude Luther's interpretation of Gen 5:1 found later in the same work actually provides more new insights. Luther's critical tone regarding certain traditional interpretations of the Augustinian doctrine of *imago Trinitatis* was presented in its broad historical context, and the lines of continuity in Luther's and Melanchthon's notion of the knowledge and the love of God were pointed out. Although Melanchthon has more to say about the doctrine concerning the image of the Trinity, the main theme of his exposition follows to a considerable degree Luther's teaching: the image of God is to be found in the powers of the soul only after the light of grace illuminates them.

The theme of the next session was the immortality of the soul. Luther's views were briefly outlined since this time no specific reading was provided beforehand. The discussion took its starting point from

Melanchthon's *Liber de anima*. Unlike Luther, Melanchthon is known for his approval of the philosophical argumentation for the immortality of the human soul, but the difference between the two reformers does not seem that sharp. Melanchthon is obviously more sympathetic than Luther to the idea that Aristotle also was basically teaching the immortality of the soul, although for Melanchthon the main philosophers to provide arguments here are Plato, Xenophon and Cicero. In this respect, Johannes Bernhardt seems to still follow Luther's views, despite his overall strongly Aristotelian outlook. Finally, Melanchthon still holds that the philosophical arguments for the immortality of the soul are inconclusive and that the Word of God is the main source of certainty about these matters. The discussion in the seminar also raised questions concerning dualism with respect to the intellectual soul/spirit and body in Melanchthon's and Luther's views of the human being. Furthermore, Luther's unusual ontological views were discussed, in particular the problem of the continuity of individual identity after death.

The final theme of the seminar was conscience, or in general, the psychology of making ethical judge-

ments. Luther's reference to the function of the Aristotelian practical syllogism in his *Lectures on Paul's Letter to Titus* (WA 27) from as late as 1527 provided an interesting parallel to Bernhardt's and Melanchthon's later expositions on conscience and related powers of the soul. These expositions show that despite Luther's criticism of medieval theories of moral psychology, which were often used in forming the philosophical basis for the doctrines of grace, similar theories were still current, although in modified forms, among the early Lutheran reformers in Wittenberg. Themes raised during this final session included, among others, Melanchthon's and Luther's views on the possibility of knowing good within the framework of natural righteousness and the different functions of knowledge of natural law on the one hand, and the preaching of the law on the other. Here it was recalled that in discussing the immortality of the soul, Melanchthon refers to a certain internal punishment for sins in the form of sadness produced by a bad conscience, which seems to be a phenomenon largely independent of external impulses, such as preaching of the law.