

nar—ended with a trip to the Stadtkirche, where the ideas and themes from the preceding days came alive

in front of the church's magnificent 1547 altarpiece and rich collection of Lutheran epitaphs.

Religious Colloquies of the 1520s and 1530s

Seminar Leader: Gordon A. Jensen

Reporter: Gordon A. Jensen

The seminar involved three presentations, and ample time for discussion. The seminar began with *Henning Bühmann* (Georg-August-University Göttingen) giving an introduction to his habilitation project on disputations in the early reformation period, which is currently funded by the pan-European research group »Humanities in the European Research Area« and is part of the research project »Protestant Legacies in Nordic Law.« The disputations held in Wittenberg were an embodiment of a pan-European disputation culture. This disputation culture provided an important background for the development of reformation theology as well as its spread within the republic of letters. Bühmann focussed on the relationship of the medium of disputations and its impact on the development of reformation theology.

First, Bühmann used the entry of the Dean's book of the theological faculty of Wittenberg to examine the *Sitz im Leben* of Luther's *Theses against Scholastic Theology*. Those theses were defended in September 1517 in a disputation by one of Luther's students in order to acquire the degree of *Baccalaureus Biblicus*. Understanding this academic function is essential to evaluate their role for the development of reformation theology. Furthermore, the fact that a graduate student was able to defend Luther's attack on scholasticism shows that the new theology was very established in Wittenberg at this time.

In the second part of his presentation, Bühmann described the publication history of disputation theses from Wittenberg. While the publication of printed theses belonged to academic rituals, theses from Wittenberg were collected

and published in several collections starting from the early 1520s. Those early collections highlighted the interest of the international educated community in the Wittenberg theology. Starting from 1530, several collections containing new theses were published in Wittenberg itself. This publication of printed thesis collections was supplemented by manuscript collections.

Finally, Bühmann introduced the participants of the seminar to his research on legal subjects in Wittenberg disputations. Based on the research done by Ulrich Bubenheimer on Karlstadt's understanding of law, he emphasised the intimate connection of jurisprudence and theology in Wittenberg. In the early stage of the reformation, Luther and his colleagues did not dispute the validity of canon law, but emphasized its subordination to the Word of God. After the Leipzig debate in 1519, their rejection of canon law as human tradition in opposition to the Bible became more and more pronounced. While this discourse was mainly theoretical, in 1521 Wittenberg theologians started to demand practical reforms. Disputations were an important instrument to discuss, and implement reforms of liturgy, church structure and civil life. Biblical law was supposed to be-

come the basis for the organisation of church and community. But during the Wittenberg movement different approaches became apparent. While Karlstadt kept his demand of Biblical reforms, Melancthon and the returning Luther started to emphasize the doctrine of the two kingdoms, which provided a differentiation of the spiritual and political realm.

Bühmann's presentation to the seminar group clearly showed the impact of academic disputations on religious discussions as well as practical church reform during the Wittenberg movement. He was able to give an overview on the close entanglement of academic form and the development of reformation thought. The presentation of his research was especially relevant for this seminar group, because the practice of disputations was adapted by city magistrates and other decision-makers to legitimize theological reforms. The Wittenberg disputations thus became a model for the religious colloquies which were the subject of the following presentations.

The second presentation was given by *Cameron A. MacKenzie* (Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne), on the negotiations between the English theologians representing

King Henry VIII and the Wittenberg Circle. The English were represented primarily by Robert Barnes, Bishop Edward Fox, and Nicholas Heath, the archdeacon of Canterbury. With the Act of Reformation in England in 1534, the Church of England had cut its ties with Rome. As a consequence of this action, England was considering whether to join the Schmalkaldic League as further support in its battle with the French and the Pope. In return, the League considered appointing Henry VIII as the commander in chief of the League. To facilitate this, Henry VIII sent a delegation to Wittenberg to engage in negotiations on his behalf, and they attended the Schmalkaldic League meetings in December 1535. The decision of League at that meeting, however, requiring subscription to the Augsburg Confession as a condition for membership, met with a cool reception from Henry. Nevertheless, as a way to get around this condition, after negotiations between the British and Wittenberg theologians had concluded, Philip Melancthon penned the *Christmas Articles* as a summary of their conversations. These articles were signed on December 25, 1535. These articles were, to a large degree, paraphrases of the *Augsburg Confession*. After

initial feedback from England, the British delegation in Wittenberg engaged in further negotiations with the Lutherans, leading to the signing of the *Wittenberg Articles* in March of 1536. The *Wittenberg Articles* were an attempt by Melancthon and the Lutherans to meet the English halfway, even though it was basically a paraphrase of the *Augsburg Confession*. The English side expressed their concerns over the Lutheran approaches to communing in both kinds, the marriage of priests, the veneration of the saints, and monastic vows, even though they agreed on most of the articles. This draft of the *Wittenberg Articles* was sent back to Henry VIII for consideration, but by June of 1536, the king had decided that with the Pope calling for a general council, the alliance with the Schmalkaldic League was not needed. Instead, Henry VIII had his theologians prepare a new document, the *Ten Articles*, which were not as reformatory in nature.

The *Wittenberg Articles* of 1536 reflected a Roman Catholic approach to the theology of the Lord's Supper, at least in terms of how the concept of »real presence« was described. It is questionable, then, to suggest that the *Ten Articles*, later adopted by the Church of England, were significantly influenced by

the *Wittenberg Articles* and the *Augsburg Confession*. Rather, the position in the *Ten Articles* and the *Augsburg Confession* reflect a resonance in the Eucharistic theology—at least in terms of real presence—with Roman Catholic teachings. This suggests that the Church of England, at this period of time, did not move far away from its Roman Catholic moorings.

The third presentation was given by *Gordon Jensen* (Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon) on the *Wittenberg Protocol* or *Concord*. The *Concord* did not resolve the Eucharistic controversies of the 1520s but it did become a resource for later Lutheran confessors. The negotiations leading to the *Concord* dealt with the Lord's Supper, baptism and confession. The Lord's Supper dispute was the major stumbling block. Two matters had to be resolved: Christ's presence in the meal, and who partakes of the meal. Once Bucer and the south Germans realized that Luther did not hold to a local inclusion, according to his 1528 *Confession* Concerning the Lord's Supper, their concerns were significantly alleviated. Bucer appreciated Luther's language of a sacramental union. Further, Luther's emphasis on the distribution of forgiveness obtained by Christ on

the cross echoed by Melanchthon's stress on the importance of the use of the sacrament. The sacraments distribute the gospel. The focus on »distribution« also addressed the south German concerns that the Lutherans taught transubstantiation or *impanation* (local inclusion). Meanwhile, Bucer avoided the idea of impanation by focussing his attention on the use of the preposition, »with« (*cum*) in describing Christ's presence. He rejected Luther's other prepositions used to describe this presence, namely »in« and »under«. Luther treated the three prepositions as interchangeable, but Bucer emphasized *with* the bread, because it set up a parallel between the bread and the body of Christ, rather than an intermingling of the two.

Also debated was the question of who *eats* the body of Christ in the sacramental meal. Bucer insisted that the ungodly (*impii*) ate the body of Christ, while Luther argued that all partake, regardless of their piety. The Lutherans felt that the *Wittenberg Concord* solved this problem by replacing the term, ungodly, with unworthy (*indigni*), thus including everyone. However, Bucer considered the unworthy to be those struggling with their faith. Bucer held that the faith of the recipient determined whether one re-

ceived Christ, or only bread, in the meal. For Luther, Christ's promise, not one's piety, was the determinative factor.

Jensen further pointed out that Bucer stuck to precise formulations to explain Christ's presence in the meal and who partook of Christ's body in the meal, while Luther was consistent in stressing the theological actions of God in the meal. Exact wordings of phrases, central for Bucer, were for Luther merely human attempts to explain Christ's presence in the meal that creates and distributes the forgiveness of sins.

The negotiations concerning baptism and confession, unlike those about the Lord's Supper, were brief and to the point. It was significant that many important themes in baptism and confession, such as original sin, regeneration, and private confession, were not discussed.

What most authors dealing with the *Wittenberg Concord* miss, argued Jensen, was the failed component of the negotiations. The south German and Lutheran negotiators could not reach agreement on the authority of civil authorities over religious properties or who owned the property rights of vacated monasteries and convents. Events in Augsburg provided a pressing case study

for the negotiators. A memorandum drawn up by Melanchthon reiterated his position in *Loci Communes* of 1535. It also echoed Luther's approach laid out in his commentary on Psalm 101. The question of who had authority over church property was an important matter for the rulers of reformation territories. The only full time staff employed by the Schmalkaldic League, for example, were lawyers who represented them before the Imperial Chamber Court, which dealt with property matters in the Holy Roman Empire. The court was not predisposed to supporting the property rights of the evangelical estates, and so the Schmalkaldic League sought ways to redress this imbalance. The south Germans took the approach that the rulers of the evangelical territories and cities had the right to control and operate church properties within its boundaries, even if they were owned by the Roman church or patrons. The Lutherans, however, insisted that the distinction between the temporal and spiritual realms must be observed. City councils were not to use religious revenues for secular purposes. On this point, the negotiators could not find consensus, and the south Germans refused to sign the memorandum composed by Melanchthon.

In conclusion, Jensen argued that the *Wittenberg Concord* provided some creative and flexible solutions to some of the most fractious inter-Protestant debates over the sacraments. It also strengthened

the Schmalkaldic League. Thus, the *Wittenberg Concord* was quite successful, at least for a few years, in providing a helpful space for dialogue on these matters at a crucial time in the reformation era.

Luther on the Concept of Knowledge

Seminar Leader: Ilmari Karimies

Reporter: Ilmari Karimies

The seminar on Luther on the concept of knowledge examined models of Luther's anthropology, philosophical and theological psychology as well as ontology with regard to the concept of knowledge. Focus was on Luther's view of the nature of faith as a cognition and its relation to the Medieval theories of cognition from 12th to the 15th Century, especially the theory of illumination, as well as the ontological underpinning of the theory.

The seminar was chaired by *Ilmari Karimies*, who lectured on his 2017 doctoral dissertation »In your Light we see the Light: Martin Luther's Understanding of Faith and Reality between 1513 and 1521«. Alongside this, some 18 pages of excerpts from Luther's Biblical commentaries from 1515 to 1521 were

discussed and compared to excerpts from other medieval Augustinian authors. The aim was to demonstrate that Luther's view of the cognition of God incorporated ideas of the Augustinian mystical tradition, such as the idea of the cognition of God being an ecstatic cognition where the object exceeds the capacity of the subject and the soul is taken captive by the object, as well as using a number of images and schemes which appear in the mystical texts of medieval Augustinianism. The main point of Karimies was that the central concept of the texts, the light of faith (*lumen fidei*), can best be understood as in relation to the Augustinian theory of illumination, and that Luther's concept of faith as immediate but partial knowledge of God stands in continuity with that tradition.