

Bibelübersetzung hat für Finnland fundamentale Bedeutung, weil sie das bedeutendste frühe Zeugnis für die finnische Sprache ist. Die Glossen der 1548 erschienen Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments Agricolas stammten aus der Wittenberger und der Schwedischen Bibel. Möglicherweise halfen finnische Studenten, die Wittenberg besucht hatten, ihrem Landsmann Agricola bei der Übersetzung.

Insgesamt zeigte das Seminar, dass selbst bei einem durchaus gut erforschten Thema wie der Luther-

bibel noch eine ganze Reihe von ungeklärten Details zu bearbeiten sind. Dazu zählt beispielsweise der theologische Einfluss Philipp Melanchthons auf die Gestalt des deutschen Bibeltextes zu Luthers Lebzeiten. Die von Georg Rörer angefertigten Protokolle sind bei der Beantwortung dieser Frage eine zentrale Quelle. Die Arbeit an den Quellen, die historische, philologische und systematische Methoden berücksichtigte, erwies sich als äußerst fruchtbar und für eine seriöse Diskussion unverzichtbar.

Luther and Modernity

Seminar Leader: Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth

Reporter: Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth

This seminar was originally organized by *Marius Timmann Mjaaland* to be a study of Luther as a disruptive thinker who introduced new perspectives on selfhood, metaphysics, and society. *Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth* took over the position as seminar leader for Mjaaland when he was unable to attend the Congress. The topic drew a diverse group of scholars from around the globe who had differing definitions of the term modernity and, thus,

divergent views on Luther's influence on modernity. While some scholars found Luther to be a constructive force in modern thought, others found Luther's theology to be a helpful corrective to certain mistakes in contemporary thinking. The thoughtful papers and lively discussion led to a general conclusion that Luther's writings were certainly disruptive in the history of thought, often positively influential on thinkers after him, and still

relevant in current debates in the academy, church and society.

Three of the papers approached the topic of Luther and Modernity from the perspective of Luther's influence on the history of Continental philosophy after him. *Mjaaland's* paper, »Is Luther the Beginning of Modernity?«, was read in absentia. The paper argued that Luther's reformation theology presented a new understanding of the self. Relying on the work of Reiner Schürmann in *Broken Hegemonies* (2003), Mjaaland argued that Luther prefigured the Copernican turn in Kant by establishing the conscious self as the first principle for thought and action. Mjaaland's paper admitted the controversy among German thinkers concerning this statement but Mjaaland ultimately agreed with Schürmann that Luther did introduce a fundamental change in the way philosophers consider the nature and the role of the self when he criticized and dismantled the Scholastic view of Aristotle's metaphysics in the Heidelberg Disputation (1518). Indeed, throughout much of his writing, Luther emphasized that reality is only real in so far as it is real for a conscious self. For example, the God that is able to be discussed by theologians is Christ, the God made manifest for human consciousness.

While Luther certainly held many philosophical positions that are not taken up by Kant, Luther's thinking clearly influenced Kant and others such as Hegel, Feuerbach and Heidegger. Mjaaland's paper concluded by claiming that a closer look at Luther's key insights is worth pursuing as contemporary philosophers grapple with current philosophical problems and issues.

David Hockenbery's presentation »Recovering the Forgotten Luther« was on a similar theme, but discussed Luther's influence on Continental philosophy more broadly. He explained Luther's synthesis of ideas from medieval nominalism, humanism and mysticism was a new way of thinking that influenced deeply later philosophers' responses to social and political questions as well as questions of metaphysics and natural philosophy. Hockenbery specifically spoke to Luther's influence on three specific strains of Continental philosophy: Leibnizian rationalism, Kantian transcendentalism, and Kierkegaardian existentialism. Hockenbery's conclusion echoed Mjaaland's call for further study of Luther's ideas in order to elucidate current debates in philosophy and society.

Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth's paper »The Master/Slave Dialectic

in Luther, Hegel and Contemporary Philosophy« focused on this leitmotif in Continental and contemporary philosophy. Arguing in a similar vein as Mjaaland and Hockenbery, Dragseth stressed the significance of Luther's break with Aristotle's metaphysics in the Heidelberg Disputation (1518) and the *Disputation on Scholastic Theology* (1517). Focusing specifically on Luther's disagreement with Aristotle's social and political categories of men and women and citizens and servants, Hockenbery Dragseth detailed how Luther's claims in *On Christian Liberty* (1520) influenced Hegel and through Hegel influenced American thinkers such as Martin Luther King Jr and the contemporary philosopher Judith Butler. She argued that Luther's view of Christian freedom and the paradoxical nature of the Christian as both Lord/Master/Citizen and Peasant/Slave/Servant is an idea worth exploring as a way forward in contemporary discussions about democracy and social policy.

The role of Luther in contemporary social and political philosophy was the focus of two papers that concentrated on Luther's view of violence in resisting oppression. Anthony Bateza's paper, »Reconciling Rapacious Wolves and Misguided Sheep« carefully detailed Luther's

Admonition to Peace (1525) as his response to the peasant uprisings in his own time while making the claim that Luther's views on authority, responsibility and systematic injustice demand more research and deliberation in contemporary thought. While Bateza admitted that Luther's view on natural law is currently debated, he provided evidence that Luther's position is clearly opposed to that of those who claim to have unique access to godly or divine law. Additionally, while Luther's tone was often acerbic and his position on the importance of political order was used to justify violent suppression of revolution, Bateza argued that Luther gave a holistic view of the political body and called his reader to think about what useful and compassionate collective action might look like. As such, his work rightly continues to influence contemporary social and political philosophy.

Similarly, *Laudecir Daniel Kern's* paper »Faith and Suffering« applied Luther's thinking directly to the specific context of Brazilian social thought. Kern focused on Luther's understanding of the theology of the cross and the way that understanding influenced Bonhoeffer's political philosophy. Kern then applied this mode of thought

to suffering in the contemporary Brazilian context. Like the papers summarized above, Kern's paper assumed that Luther's work created a paradigm shift not only for theology but for society generally. Key to this paradigm shift is the theology of the cross which presents a way of seeing and embracing the world's brokenness and its suffering. While Luther did not call Christians to glorify suffering, Luther's insistence that God is with those who suffer allows the believer to let go of her ethical conflict and to forego the attempt to justify her own suffering with victory. The Christian is freed from all works and is able simply to serve her neighbor in need without concern for her own preservation or salvation. Such a theology grounds a call to radical non-violence in times of suffering and oppression when the lack of resistance in the face of oppression disrupts the cycle of suffering and evil. But, Kern argued, such a lack of resistance, such a power of non-violent love, requires a faith in a God who dwells with those who suffer and justifies them totally even in their suffering.

The importance of Christian faith in the face of modern secularism grounded the three remaining papers that focused on Luther's work as a critique of certain aspects

of modern thought. *Hans-Martin Barth's* »Luther's Theology of the Cross« argued similarly to Kern that the theology of the cross has viability and value in today's world. Barth explained that modernity's secular social thinking required a re-examination of the pre-modern Luther's theology. After explaining the social context of East Germany's secular political world and discussing the secular and Buddhist worldviews of scholars he had recently met in Japan, Barth carefully explained Luther's theology of the cross as a way of thinking that could benefit the contemporary individual, society and church. The contemporary individual in a secular society has an egotistical world-view that he must create his own glory and end his own suffering. This view permeates social structures and even church structures. An individual who embraces the God who suffers on a cross must give up arrogance and triumphantalism. He must give up measuring his worth by the number of his successes. So too, must the society and the church who embraces this worldview give up their view that their value comes from their success. This entails a radical reevaluation of values and is an invitation to a new way to embrace life. Barth insisted that this reevaluation and

invitation require a commitment to Christian faith that is often lacking not only in secular society but also in the modern church.

A similar critique of modernity was made by *David Lumpp* in his paper »Freedom Re-Imagined: Professor Luther Engages Modernity«. He defined modernity as a mode of thinking that emphasizes self-actualized freedom—a concept Lumpp saw in Descartes, Lessing and Kant. In contrast to this view of freedom, Lumpp suggested a re-examination of Luther's understanding of Christian freedom which is neither new nor modern but primarily Pauline and Christocentric. This Christian freedom lets go of the futile effort to create one's self and one's value in order to freely serve the neighbor in love. Lumpp's paper articulated the view that true freedom comes from service to God in faith and cannot be secularized.

Finally, *Paulos Huang's* paper »Dialogue and Critique: The 16th Century Religious Reformation and Modernity« discussed the concept of modernity itself. As a Chinese scholar working in Finland, Huang compared the Chinese view of modernity as a time of progress, wealth and technological advancement with the Finnish view of modernity as a period of immorality and

the American view of modernity as secularization, capitalization and democratization. Huang discussed how Luther's theology historically influenced certain aspects of modern life while also suggesting ways in which Luther's theology read today might critique certain aspects of modernity. He was sensitive to cultural differences, noting the suspicion Chinese Confucians have of what they perceive to be a lawless lack of ritual in Luther's ethics. Ultimately, he argued that Luther's theology of the cross, suspicion of Aristotelian metaphysics, and view of Christian freedom needed to be re-examined in the contemporary context and mined for insight that might be applicable to debates and discussions today.

All of the papers given during the seminar were presented in the spirit of sparking discussion and promoting further study of Luther's works in the context of modern and contemporary thinking. We were pleased to have participants from four different continents and six different countries as well as from the diverse disciplines of philosophy, theology and history. Each participant offered a different perspective to the group that arose from his or her own cultural context and discipline. Discussing divergent un-

derstandings of modernity was a helpful beginning place as we came to consider how Luther both influenced modern modes of thought and offered a pre-emptive critique of those same modes of thought. All

participants left with a renewed interest in pursuing the engagement of Luther's theology with modern philosophy and social thought more deeply.

Karl Holl 1917: Luther in der Theologie und in der Deutung des Weltgeschehens des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts

Seminarleiter: Christine Svinth-Væge Pöder

Berichterstatte: Christine Svinth-Væge Pöder

Der Berliner Kirchengeschichtler Karl Holl hat mit seinem Lutherbuch 1921 den Beginn der deutschen Lutherrenaissance eingeleitet. Im Seminar über »Karl Holl 1917« lag das Gewicht besonders auf dem Zusammenhang zwischen Theologie und Gegenwartsdeutung. Durch die Kurzvorträge der Teilnehmer entstand ein facettenreiches Bild von der Zeitgeschichte, den theologischen Deutungen, den Zusammenhängen von Theologie und Sozialwissenschaften und von der Wirkungsgeschichte Holls.

1. Die Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkriegs und der deutschen Niederlage 1918 prägten Karl Holls Theologie entscheidend. Vier Pre-

digten, die Holl im akademischen Gottesdienst der Kaiser-Friedrich-Gedächtniskirche in Berlin zwischen 1917 und 1919 hielt, lassen Aspekte seines neuen Denkens bereits erkennen. »Die ›Kriegspredigten‹ Holls« wurden im Referat von *Andrea Hofmann* zunächst mit anderen Predigten aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg verglichen und dann in Beziehung zu weiteren Schriften Holls gesetzt. Motive, die vor allem seit 1917 nicht nur bei Holl, sondern in Kriegspredigten generell auftreten, sind neben dem Aufruf zu Nächstenliebe und Opferbereitschaft die Deutung des Krieges als Meilenstein auf dem Weg zum Reich Gottes. Der Krieg sollte zu