WHAT MAKES A THEOLOGIAN OF THE CROSS

Martin Luther on Oration, meditation and temptation

Presentation March 5th, 2009
By Markus Wriedt

Born in 1958 in Hamburg
Studied Theology, Philosophy, History in Hamburg, Southampton UK, Munich
PHD Hamburg 1991
Second Doctorate Frankfurt 2004
Professor of Historical Theology/Church History at Goethe University Frankfurt/Main and at Marquette University, Milwaukee WI
Ordained Minister of the Evangelical Church in Hesse
12 books
160 scholarly articles
Managing Editor of Archive for Reformation History – Supplement
Martin Luther
1483–1546
10.11.1483: born in Eisleben
The Parents

MARGARETHE LUTHER

HANS LUTHER
Baptized
November 11, 1483
Städte und Gemeinden im sächsisch-thüringischen Raum, zu denen Luther Beziehungen hatte.
In Magdeburg living with the Brethren of common life
In the shadow of his later exile: Wartburg: and Eisleben
Singing and Begging – Luther’s live as a student

- Since Luther did not have the money for tuition he payed for it by either singing in the Choir or begging in the streets. Luther did both.
Studies in Erfurt 1501

- Liberal arts:
  - Grammar
  - Rhetoric
  - Dialektic
  - Arithmetic
  - Geometry
  - Physic
  - Astronomy
Beginning his career

- a jolly good fellow
- The dorm: Georgenburgse
- Graduation for Magister artium
- 1505 Begin of studies at a higher faculty: Law
July, 2, 1505: On the back from his visit of his parents Luther got caught by a thunderstorm. A lightening nearly kills him. In his fear he cries out: Help me, Saint Anna. I will become a religious.
Juli, 16 1505 Luther starts his noviciate

Fall 1506 Luther swears to obey the evangelical commandments (Poverty, Chastity and Obedience)

Meeting with Johann Staupitz, who recommends him for the studies of Theology.

Talk under the apple tree.
Johann von Staupitz (1465-1524)

- Vicar General of the Observants of the Hermits of Augustine
- From an old saxon family
- Friend of the electoral prince
- Since the University was founded, Staupitz was a staff member and partially dean of the faculty.
- Well known for his talents as pastor and preacher
Search for a merciful God
Repentence and Peanance without effect
Does God really want to save the sinner?
Eternal predestination
Christ as threatening judge
Pastoral consolation by Staupitz

- Accept the Grace of God!
- Look at the wounds of Christ!
- Trust the unbinding Love of God
- Do not reject redemption!
Luther and John Tauler

- Mystical Theology (unio mystica, the non-speakable, mystery, the look for metaphor)
- Reality hidden under the contrary
- Theology of the paradox
- The hidden God
- The masques of God
- Eternal resignation to hell
- German Theology
The Heidelberg Disputation

- Searching for the core of the nut
- The modus loquendi theologicus – the art of speaking theologically
- Hermeneutics of Scripture
- A paradigm shift
- A framework that is designed to embrace all of biblical teaching and guide the use of all its parts
- The center of Scripture: Christ reveals a merciful God and his love to all mankind.
In John 14 [:8], where Philip spoke according to the theology of glory, “Show us the Father,” Christ straightaway set aside his flighty thought about seeing God elsewhere and led him to himself, saying, “Philip, he who has seen me has seen the Father” [John 14:9]. For this reason true theology and recognition of God are in the crucified Christ.
Theology of the Cross versus Theology of Glory

- Temptation and affliction
- Suffering
- The hidden God
- Put all your hope in Christ
- No human dignity
- No human activity

- Happiness and fulfillment
- No distraction and pain
- Trust in the revealed Good
- As redeemed we are safe
- As children of God we have the power
Revelation through the Word of God

When God speaks, reality results

- Calling the thing by its name
- Set into power what these things are
- Destroys pretention and masquerade
- Humility
- Affliction through broken dreams
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAW</th>
<th>GOSPEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reveals the sin</td>
<td>Gives faith through the promise of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveals the threatening and</td>
<td>Reveals the merciful God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fierce Judge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatens with punishment</td>
<td>Comforts through the story of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroys human self</td>
<td>Enables and edifies human abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paradoxa and Anticipations

- Heaven
- God and Christ
- Light
- No pain
- Heart/Soul
- Inner
- Above
- With the eyes of God

- Hell
- Man and Satan
- Darkness
- Pain, Suffering
- Flesh
- Out warded
- Down
- With the eyes of a human
About God

- The revealed God
- Mercy and Grace
- Love above all
- Christ, the Resurrected
- God, the Creator
- God, the Redeemer
- God, the Comforter

- The hidden God
- Anger and Wrath
- The mighty Warrior
- The threatening Judge
- God, who sends pain
- God, who punishes the sinner
- God, who destroys any other beside him
The right righteousness

- Passive righteousness
- The righteousness of God which he applies to the sinner
- Happy Exchange
- Christ became a sinner that the sinner could become God’s beloved child
- Bonded human will
- Depravation and hell

- Active righteousness
- Those who do what is in them God will not deny his grace
- Active accounting
- Christ helps us with his model and his supporting grace to become righteous in the eyes of God
- Free human will
- Glory and heaven
Theology of the Cross

- The hidden God
- The justified sinner
- The unbinding love of God
- The unbreakable promise given
- Faith which clings to Christ’s promise only
- Comfort and eternal hope
How to become a theologian of the Cross

- Temptation, affliction, suffering
  - Carnal or bodily temptation
  - Spiritual affliction
  - Learn to see the world and yourself as you are in the eyes of God

- Meditation
  - Read Scripture and learn about the Will of God
  - Confess what you are and what you cannot be
  - Learn to be quiet and listen to the lively word of God

- Oration
  - Speak with God
  - Continuous prayer
How to be comforted through a theology of the Cross?

- Confession
- Oration
- Trust and Faith in God’s promise
- Reinforcement
  - Sermon
  - Bible
  - Share the word
  - Communication
  - Sacraments
  - Gift of Spirit and Grace
Whereas the theologian of glory tries to see through the needy, the poor, the lowly, and the “non-existent,” the theologian of the cross knows that the love of God creates precisely out of nothing. Therefore the sinner must be reduced to nothing in order to be saved. The presupposition of the [sc. Heidelberg] Disputation . . . is the hope of the resurrection. God brings life out of death. He calls into being that which is from that which is not. In order that there be a resurrection, the sinner must die. All presumption must be ended. The truth must be seen. Only the “friends of the cross” who have been reduced to nothing are properly prepared to receive the justifying grace poured out by the creative love of God. All other roads are closed. (Gerhard Forde)
• Philip S. Watson: Let God be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947
• Gerhard Ebeling: Luther, Introduction to his Thought, Philadelphia Fortress Press 1970
• Walther von Loewenich: Luther’s Theology of the Cross, Minneapolis, Augsburg 1976
• Gerhard O. Forde: On beeing a Theologian of the Cross, Reflections on Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation 1518, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997
• Robert Kolb: Luther on the Theology of the Cross, Lutheran Quarterly XVI, 2002, 443-466
• Roy A. Harrisville: Fracture as meaning of the Cross, Lutheran Quarterly XXII, 2006, 427-446