

1. Philip Melanchthon as Church Leader

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Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560): A Gifted Scholar & Leader

Began college at age 12 (Heidelberg), BA at age 14 (Heidelberg)

Master of Arts at age 15 (Tubingen), Professor at age 21 (Wittenberg)

First Lutheran systematic theology book, *Loci Communes*, 1521, age 24

First Protestant Confession, Augsburg Confession, 1530

And yet... Melanchthon's Bad Reputation, a Short List

1521/22: overwhelmed by 'Wittenberg Unrest'

1530: 'treading softly' as sign of timidity in Augsburg

1537: Criticism of Luther's Smalcald Articles on Holy Communion & role of papacy

1540: 'Double justification' in Regensburg

1548: Betrayal of Luther, Duke John Frederick & the gospel

1550s: Controversies over free will & 3rd use of the law

19th & 20th century view: Melanchthon killed Luther's Reformation with rationalism & cowardice

Today's Presentation: Melanchthon Deserves Better

Melanchthon was a) an effective, gospel-centered church leader, who b) blended courage & wisdom in public service and c) fostered faith, freedom & accountability as a teacher and reformer

Melanchthon's Leadership at the University

Reform of curriculum & society via languages

- Greek: New Testament, science, arts, math, ethics, philosophy, history
- Latin: logic, literature, law & everything else worth knowing & doing
- Hebrew: God's language

Luther & Melanchthon: Public Education as Spiritual & Social Good

Biblical commands to raise children in faith & to serve our communities

Priesthood of all the baptized encourages personal reading of Bible & godly service in daily life

Public education is good for church & society (LW 45:366-368)

Melanchthon as *Praeceptor Germania*

Three-step education for children: Learning to read, write, think

Gymnasium in Nuremberg (1526): Dialectic & rhetoric, Latin & Greek classics, math & music, Hebrew

Melanchthon as Church Leader

Never ordained: wasn't his calling

1521-22: junior professor with little authority

1528: leadership of Saxon visitation of churches

1529: Marburg Colloquy participant

1530: primary author of Augsburg Confession (CA)

1531: wrote Apology of Augsburg Confession

1537: wrote treatise on papacy

Good Leadership: Right Style at the Right Time

Augsburg Confession: Goals: Show roots of Lutheran teaching & gain legal tolerance from Emperor

Style: conciliatory; avoids sticky points

Apology to CA: Goals: Defend evangelical truth; provide basis for continued *Protestatio*

Style: forceful defense of evangelical truth

Angry Melanchthon on Clerical Marriage in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (BC 256.60-63)

Luther & Melanchthon over the Decades

Luther knew & approved of Melanchthon's development of 3rd use of law

Debate in Smalcald Articles is over clarity of language for sake of ongoing ecumenical dialogue

Melanchthon's work after Smalcaldic War (1547/48) matches Luther's political theology

University of Wittenberg had higher enrollment in 1550s than ever before

Melanchthon as a Giant of the Lutheran Reformation

Teacher of Germany, Doctor of the church, Confessor of the faith

Organizer of the church, Reformer of society, Ecumenical pioneer

2. Reading the Bible with Philip Melanchthon

Reformation of Bible Reading

Humanists of the 1400s & 1500s focused on "good literature" – *bona litera*

Literary devices like plot, style, theme; knowledge *and* application

Humanists asked: what if we bring these classic literary tools to our Bible reading?

The Bible as Persuasive Literature

Big idea! The Bible wants to persuade hearts & minds about the gospel!

If Paul was a careful writer, then... a) he knew classical rules of rhetoric, b) he used them in his letters, c) we can follow along, step by step, d) *Quid sit – quid affectus*: we learn both Paul's meaning & what he wanted his writing to do: "To know Christ is to know his benefits"

Melanchthon & Luther on Romans as Summary of Scripture

Think Like Melanchthon

Read a text - Look for *loci* - What might a high school English class notice in the text?

What grammar, vocabulary or concepts grab your attention?

What does the text want to persuade you about? How does it want to move you?

Practice on Epistle for RCL Lent 2, Year B: Romans 4:13-25

Melanchthon on Romans 4 (1532 & 1540)

Romans 4 illustrates the conclusions of Romans 3 (justification by faith), which followed Paul's discussion of sin & righteousness in chapters 1-3

Definitions & effects

Disputatio de discrimine legis et evangelii: theses on the difference between law & gospel in Romans 4

Does It Preach?

To know Christ is to know his benefits means it is good, right & proper to care about application

What does this mean? Bible study uses skills we learn in English class: plot, transitions, vocab, etc.

Conclusion: Melanchthon, Education & Reading the Bible

Bible is persuasive literature; Knowing and receiving Christ's gospel is its main goal

Bible persuades us through plot, vocab, style, character, etc.

Informed study immerses us in Word & God's story for us: Faith in God, love of neighbor