

Colle, he is uneasy with a trinitarian model that appears to compromise the eternal community of the divine persons.

The ensuing discussion heard more voices critical of Schoonenberg than laudatory. Two of these voices echoed Del Colle's concern about the doxological adequacy of Schoonenberg's Christology. And more than one voice echoed Culpepper's unease about making God dependent on the world for God's full tripersonalization. Another complained of Schoonenberg's "post-Kantian" agnosticism about the immanent Trinity. Some support for his views was expressed. One very strong supporter wanted to express his support vigorously, but was too busy moderating the voices—and taking the notes necessary to write this report.

After the session, several participants met with the steering committee to choose a topic for next year. The topic will be: "From Spirit-bearer to Spirit-giver: The Mediation of Salvation through Jesus."

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COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ISLAM

Presenters: John Kelsay, Florida State University
Daniel Sheridan, Loyola University, New Orleans

Respondent: James Fredericks, Loyola Marymount University

In this year's seminar, which addressed the theological significance of Islam, John Kelsay presented a paper entitled "Piety, Politics, and the Limits Set by God," followed by Dan Sheridan's discussion of "Christian Faith's Judgment of Mohammed as a Prophet."

John Kelsay's paper takes for its point of departure the fact of the Christian's experience of limits in a world of vast religious diversity. Islam, with its powerful affirmation of God as the Creator who sets limits on a rebellious and disobedient creature, has a numinous quality for John Kelsay. As a comparativist, therefore, Kelsay must recognize the theological significance not only of the truths Christians can affirm with Muslims, but also the differences which divide them.

Kelsay's specific interest in his paper is Islamic sociopolitical thought. For Islam, the revelation of God to Mohammed is the sole basis of a just social order. The submission (*islam*) called for by the Qur'an creates an alternative to "secular" societies based on economic dominance, class privileges or political expediency. Thus, for Muslims, religious values and political existence in community are inseparable. The encounter with Islam leads Christians to revisit the debate on public theology and the works of Neuhaus, Weigel, MacIntyre, and Bellah. Theological justifications for Christianity's accommodation to secularism are called into question by Islam's refusal to allow religion to be privatized. Yet the notion of revealed truth as the sole basis for a legitimate society is no longer an historical option for Christians in the USA: Islam and Christianity have significantly different histories. Even recognizing the truth of Islam, our ability to embrace that truth is limited by history, and perhaps by God as well.

Dan Sheridan asks if Christian faith can affirm Mohammed as a prophet. His paper adumbrates a number of problems in this regard: Christianity recognizes Jesus as the Christ, not merely another prophet; Islam's claim that Mohammed is not the author of the Qur'an is in conflict with the canons of the historical-critical method; Islam rejects the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; to affirm Mohammed as a prophet should require one to embrace *shariah* (Islamic law). Despite these hesitations, the author suggests that Christians should recognize the prophethood of Mohammed. This will require Christianity to interpret itself anew in the light of God's revelation to Mohammed. Affirming Mohammed as a prophet will make necessary a Christian theology of Islam, even though the most fundamental differences may be resolved only eschatologically.

Jim Fredericks responded to both Dan Sheridan and John Kelsay. Islam sees Christian accommodation to secular society as a "horrible schizophrenia" in which public life is purged of religious values and driven ultimately by the raw employment of power. But Christians should also recognize the value of Pascal's warning that "Men never do evil so completely and so cheerfully as when they do it out of religious conviction." Does Christianity arise out of a revelation that abrogates all other truths? As some theologians have taught the abrogation of the Mosaic covenant by the "new covenant" established in Christ, so also Islam teaches the abrogation of God's revelation in Jesus by the final revelation in Mohammed. Does Christian refusal to recognize Mohammed as a prophet harken back to the theology of abrogation? How will a Christian recognition of the prophethood of Mohammed require a revision of Christian self-understanding?

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