

THE NEW ANTHROPOLOGICAL SUBJECT AT THE HEART OF THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

The "turn to the subject" in the context of the European Enlightenment was intended to be emancipatory.¹ It aimed to release humanity to dare to rely upon reason, rather than revealed truth, as the authority by which to judge, decide, and act. But, humanity's "exit"² from its "self-incurred immaturity"³ was no progress. From the middle of the fifteenth century forward, a totalizing dynamics of domination, already obvious in anti-Semitism and misogyny, began to make itself felt in the so-called "new worlds" through genocide and racism, cultural imperialism and colonialism. This dominative thrust undermined the Enlightenment's more benign ideals, prompting a series of crises in epistemology and metaphysics, political philosophy and history, ethics and aesthetics. But, Christianity felt the full weight of its impact; it buckled. At times willingly, ambivalently, silently, Christianity was a partner in that domination. This complicity, no matter how fleeting or how superficial, compromised Christian thinking about the meaning of the human.

The dynamics of domination, the crises originating from it, and the collusion of Christianity set the staging ground for the performance of tragic narratives which have eaten the heart out of Western civilization. These narratives began in quest, but ended in conquest.⁴ These master narratives boast of the means

¹The phrase "turn to the subject" denotes the shift in Christian theology to attend the challenges of modern philosophy initiated by Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant. This meant a "focus of human subjectivity and its role within human knowledge and religious belief" (Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theology: Tasks and Methods," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John Galvin [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991] 35-40, at 35). For a discussion of issues basic to theological anthropology, see David Kelsey, "Human Being," in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. ed. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King (1982; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 167-93.

²Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas, Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 1995) 20.

³Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'" in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (1970; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 54.

⁴Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas*, 9. Dussel argues that while modernity is a European occurrence, it arose in dialectical relation with the so-called 'new' and 'third'

through which certain human beings were made masters and possessors and other human beings were made objects of property. They recount, in the words of Frantz Fanon, the ways in which "Europe undertook the leadership of the world with ardor, cynicism, and violence."⁵ The anthropological subject at the center of these narratives was the white male bourgeois European.⁶

Since the early 1960s, various political and liberation theologies have intensified the effort to dislodge, if not decenter, this subject, to rethink and to transform, from the bottom up, the world that he created.⁷ These theologies

worlds—Africa, North America, South America, Asia. North American and European thinkers, however, rarely acknowledge this relation; for example, see Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Stephen Toulmin, *The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: Macmillan, 1990); Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (1985; Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1987); cf. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (1961; New York: Grove Press, 1963); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future*, ed. Hans Küng and David Tracy (New York: Crossroad, 1989); Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992).

⁵Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 311.

⁶Thus, with Frantz Fanon and Lewis R. Gordon, I am appealing to Edmund Husserl's description of Europe. This description is not to be taken "geographically as it appears on maps, as though European man were to be in this way confined to the circle of those who live together in this territory. In the spiritual sense it is clear that to Europe belong the English dominions [Australia and Canada], the United States, etc., but not, however, the Eskimos or Indians of the country fairs or the Gypsies, who are constantly wandering about Europe. Clearly the title Europe designates the unity of a spiritual life and a creative activity—with all its aims, interests, cares, and troubles, with its plans, its establishments, its institutions. Therein individual human beings work in a variety of societies, on different levels, in families, races [Stämmen: stocks], nations, all intimately joined together in spirit and, as I said, in the unity of one spiritual image. This should stamp on persons, groups, and all their cultural accomplishments an all-unifying character" (*Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965] 155-56).

⁷Here I am thinking of political theologies in Europe and North America and of liberation theologies in Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America, and North America. I should point out that these theologies have not escaped suspicion. They have been accused of "oppos[ing] the transcendence of revelation expressed in God's Word," secularizing redemption, turning Christianity into political doctrine, rejecting the authority of the magisterium, and reducing theology to sociology or to ideology or to mere struggle for power and position in the church. See François Houtart's summary of the charges leveled against theology of liberation by the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in his "Theoretical and Institutional Bases of the Opposition to Liberation Theology," in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo*

turned the spotlight on God's invisible human creatures: the exploited, despised, marginalized, poor masses whom Fanon, so lovingly, called "les damnés de la terre," the wretched of the earth. These children, women, and men constitute "the immense majority of humanity . . . the seventy-five percent of the world [who] consume less than fifteen per cent of the planet's income."⁸ These wretched of our globe are the 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty, the 600 million who endure chronic malnutrition; they are the hundreds of thousands sick with AIDS and tuberculosis, sold or forced into prostitution, and murdered—simply because *their* embodiment, *their* difference is rejected as gift and offends.⁹

From the outset these theologies looked for God in history; this meant a "rediscovery of the indissoluble unity of [the human] and God."¹⁰ The incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth set the parameters. Jesus understood and revealed himself to be sent to those who were sick, outcast, downtrodden, and poor. These were children, women, and men without choice, without hope, without a future. To them, Jesus announced the coming of the reign of God and promised that beatitude which is God's intention for us all.

For these exploited and suffering poor, the prophet from Nazareth was the incarnation of divine compassion. His life and ministry provide the clearest example of what it means to take sides with the oppressed and poor in the struggle for life—no matter the cost. In Jesus of Nazareth, the messianic Son of God endures the shameful spectacle of death by crucifixion. He himself is to be counted among the multitude of history's victims. But as the messianic prophet, the sufferings of the Crucified Christ are not merely or only his own. In his own body and in his own soul, Jesus, in solidarity, shares in the suffering of the poor and weak.¹¹ Because God was in Christ, "through his passion Christ brings into

Gutiérrez, ed. Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1989) 261-71, at 262; Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'" (Vatican City, 1984). For some criticisms of political and liberation theologies, see Alfredo Fierro, *The Militant Gospel: A Critical Introduction to Political Theologies* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1975); Paul L. Lehmann, "Black Theology and 'Christian' Theology," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 31 (1975): 31-37; Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); James V. Schall, S.J., *Liberation Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982); Francis Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1994).

⁸Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas*, 9.

⁹Michael Kidron and Ronald Segal, *The State of the World Atlas*, 5th and rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 33-39, 51, 55.

¹⁰Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. and ed. by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (1971; Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1973) 8.

¹¹Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohn (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 130. Because the cross of Jesus of Nazareth has been used to justify social oppression and intrapersonal violence as the will of God, it remains for

the passion history of this world the eternal [compassion] of God, and the divine justice that creates life."¹² Through his death on the cross, Christ "identifies God with the victims of violence" and identifies "the victims of violence with God, so that they are put under God's protection and given the rights of which they have been deprived by human beings."¹³

With this critical reading of Scripture, these theologies could not but be directed toward the broken condition of the masses of marginalized poor. Yet it soon became clear, that in their demand for a new relationship to history and society, in spite of a christologically directed solidarity and careful social analysis, these theologies had covered over the angular situation of women.¹⁴ These theologies had exposed those master narratives that had deformed not only our basic human living, but our religious, moral and intellectual praxis as well. But, in order to make good on their claim to be critical, to face head-on their own contradictions, they had to place self-criticism in the forefront alongside collaborative praxis. This meant that these theologies had to take into account the humanity and realities of poor red, brown, yellow, and black women. Moreover, they had to grapple with the deep psychic wounds of despised, marginalized poor human beings—internalized oppression, self-abuse, violence, nihilism, self-contempt.¹⁵

Once the humanity and realities of poor women of color are moved to the foreground, new questions begin to orient Christian reflection on anthropology: What does the fact that most of humanity is oppressed mean for salvation in

many theologians a knotty challenge. For some examples, see William R. Jones, *Is God a White Racist? A Preamble to Black Theology* (1973; Boston: Beacon Press, 1998); Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn, "For God So Loved the World," in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (Cleveland OH: Pilgrim Press, 1989) 36-59; Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1993); Anthony B. Pinn, *Why Lord? Suffering and Evil in Black Theology* (New York: Continuum Books, 1995).

¹²Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 130-31.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴This was exposed in the analyses of women of color—ethicists, theologians, and scholars from Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America, and North America.

¹⁵There has been a good deal of literature on these concerns. For a brief sample, see Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, trans. Charles Markmann (1952; New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967); *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987); Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Woman Native Other* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992); Henry Giroux, *Border Crossings* (London: Routledge, 1992); Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, 1992); Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993) 9-20, 81-91, 93-105; *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, ed. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (New York: Routledge, 1997).

history? Where is the Triune God in a history flooded with the blood, bones, and tears of its victims? What might it mean for poor women of color to grasp themselves as subjects? For them, what does human being mean? What do liberation and freedom mean to these, the most wretched of the earth? These questions seek to understand and articulate authentic meanings of human flourishing and liberation, progress and salvation. They have foundational, even universal relevance for the faith of a global church seeking to mediate the Gospel in what, quickly and ambiguously, is becoming a global culture.

At the same time, reflection on the encounter of exploited poor human beings with historical oppression, structural impoverishment, racism, and sexism has provoked debates about the ontological status of the nonwhite, nonmale 'other,' about the meaning and "interpretability of biological difference."¹⁶ Rather than dismiss metaphysics, these categories engage it on epistemic, moral, ontological, and praxial levels. The historical and social (i.e., political, economic, technological) experience of women and men as exploited and poor, *as* different, *as* "anthropological other,"¹⁷ presses theology to probe the meaning of racial, gender, and cultural difference. These categories examine human nature in quite fundamental ways: Does emphasis on racial or gender or cultural difference undermine the notion that there is one real, human nature? Can all these different men and women have the same human nature? What is it in the essence of each human being that accounts for our *real likeness* in kind and for our *real difference* as individuals?

Finally, since the various critical political and liberation theologies believe that society can be transformed, reflection on anthropology poses the question of solidarity. The motive for this question is no utopian scheme but, rather commitment to discern and cooperate with the work of the Spirit in history, "to preserve the dangerous memory of the messianic God."¹⁸ His battered and crucified body, made so darkly glorious in the Resurrection, is the seed of a new people adopted by his God and Father and led by the Spirit into new life and hope.

My thesis is quite basic: The Enlightenment "turn to the subject" coincided with the dynamics of domination. From that period human being-in-the-world literally has been identical with white male bourgeois European being-in-the-

¹⁶Margaret Homans, "'Racial Composition:' Metaphor and the Body in the Writing of Race," in *Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Abel et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 77; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 311-16; Lewis R. Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁷Enrique Dussel, "Domination—Liberation: A New Approach," in *The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith*, ed. Claude Geffré and Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Concilium* (1974): 50.

¹⁸Johann Baptist Metz, "Theology in the Struggle for History and Society," in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*, ed. Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1989) 167.

world. His embodied presence "usurp[ed] the position of God"¹⁹ in an anthropological *no* to life for all others. This rampant presence was met with the anthropological *yes* of the ministry and sacrificial love of Jesus of Nazareth. His service to the outcast and poor reveal God's preferential love. That revelation directs us to the new anthropological subject of Christian theological reflection—exploited, despised, poor woman of color.²⁰

I will elaborate this in three sections. The first section assumes the new subject of theological anthropology, drawing on the work done in critical theologies for human liberation. Since Valerie Saiving first interrogated the meaning of the human situation nearly forty years ago,²¹ feminist, womanist, *mujerista*, *mestiza*, *minjung* theologians, ethicists, and biblical scholars have challenged the anthropological displacement of human being with bourgeois European white male being. The work of these scholars made analysis of human and social experience; embodiment, sexuality, and eros; identity, otherness, and difference; self-criticism; ecology and peace thematic in Christian theology. In this process, these scholars retrieved, analyzed, and reinterpreted key insights in biblical studies, Christian doctrine (the Trinity, christology, ecclesiology) and ethics.²²

¹⁹Enrique Dussel, "Domination—Liberation," 41.

²⁰With this focus on the humanity of women of color, I intend neither to replace poor men of color with the women of their communities and cultures, nor to rank order oppressions. At the same time, I do not dismiss the oppression of white women, particularly poor white women. Women of color are overdetermined in their flesh—they can in no way represent or stand in for white men or white women or even men of color. This may be mistaken for naïve empiricism on my part, but the abusive suffering that is meted out because of their indelible difference is neither naïve, nor merely empirical. Further, global statistics reveal that women are the most exploited and impoverished. Despised for their race and their sex, they have no one to care for them as human persons but God.

²¹Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View" (1960), reprinted in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, ed. Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979) 25-42.

²²What follows is very small sample of book-length works that demonstrate how these theological issues have been treated by critical white feminist, womanist, *mujerista*, *mestiza*, *minjung* biblical scholars, theologians, and ethicists. On Biblical Studies, Hermeneutics: Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), idem., *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1983), idem., *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1995). On The Doctrine of the Triune God: Sally McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991); Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1993); Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God* (New York: Cross-

Their work projects another phase in which Christian theology reaffirms the need for authentic solidarity in word and in deed. To presume this project is to presume a new anthropological subject for the whole of Christian theology.

The second section probes the implications of solidarity in light of this new subject, whose presence reorients notions of personhood and praxis. If personhood is now understood to flow from formative living in community rather than individualism, from the embrace of difference and interdependence rather than their exclusion, then we can realize our personhood only in solidarity with the exploited, despised, poor 'other.' In this praxis of solidarity, the 'other' retains all her (and his) 'otherness'—her (and his) particularity, her (and his) self; she (or he) is neither reduced to some projection, nor forced to reproduce a mirror image. Likewise, we retain particularity and self; we are not reduced by *ressentiment*²³ to projection or caricature. Rather, perhaps, a new and authentic human

road, 1989). On Christology: Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad, 1988); Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1994). On ecclesiology: Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ecclesiology of Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1995). On Ethics: Barbara Hilbert Andolsen, *Daughters of Jefferson, Daughters of Bootblacks": Racism and American Feminism* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1986); Margaret Farley, *Personal Commitments: Beginning, Keeping, Changing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); Katie G. Cannon, *Black Womanist Ethics* (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1988), idem., *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York: Continuum, 1995); Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), idem., *In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); Sally B. Purvis, *The Power of the Cross: Foundations for a Christian Feminist Ethic of Community* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En La Lucha/In the Struggle: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Marcia Y. Riggs, *Awake, Arise, Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1995); Christine Firer Hinze, *Comprehending Power in Christian Social Ethics* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Anne E. Patrick, *Liberating Conscience: Feminist Explorations in Catholic Moral Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

²³See Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, ed. Lewis A. Coser, trans. William W. Holdheim (1915; New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961). The word *ressentiment* is borrowed from the French and was introduced into philosophy by Nietzsche. *Ressentiment* is a reactive emotional state related to re feeling or reliving a particular conflict or moment, when a vulnerable or powerless person (or group) feels hurt or is made to feel shame. *Ressentiment* is usually directed against powerful persons or groups in a society. Hostility appears with *ressentiment* which may take the forms of envy, malice, hatred, revenge.

'we' emerges in this encounter; yet, that new 'we' can only be realized in the gift of grace.

The realization of that gift is the healing of a "body of broken bones"²⁴ unto the Mystical Body of Christ. In the last section, I want to make explicit the eschatological meaning of Christian solidarity on the side of exploited, despised, poor women of color. The doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ focuses attention on the metaphysical and historical relations of our communion with one another and the concrete and mystical relations of our union with the Triune God.²⁵ It accentuates the meaning of hope which will include an acceptance of uncertainty and of suffering love. This section is quite schematic, but it is, I think, necessary because the thesis involves not only a critique, but also a judgment. This judgment discloses something not only or exclusively about the white male bourgeois European subject, but about all of us—white and nonwhite, men and women. This judgment exposes the way in which we all have betrayed the very meaning of humanity—our own, the humanity of exploited, despised poor women of color, and the humanity of our God.

THE NEW ANTHROPOLOGICAL SUBJECT

What does it mean to say that the new anthropological subject of Christian theological reflection is exploited, despised, poor women of color? What does it mean to situate normative control of meaning and value in their cognitive, moral, and religious authenticity? Audacious as it might seem, this statement does not aim to satisfy the demands of a numerical majority or a kind of turnabout, as if now the anthropological baton is passed to poor women of color. If this were the case, then the subject of Christian anthropology would be subordinate to liberal political correctness, on the one side, or to classicist reactionariness, on the other. The simple opposition of identity politics can never decide the content of theological anthropology. Second, determining a new anthropological subject is not a calculation—as if the previously overlooked experience of poor women of color now could simply be added on. If these women's stories and experience

Scheler defines resentment as psychic self-poisoning. The re feeling or reliving damages and spoils the human spirit.

²⁴Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation* (Norfolk CT: A New Directions Book, 1949) 53.

²⁵Here the young Bernard Lonergan's sketch of the transformative role of a metaphysical grasp of solidarity is helpful. Already in the 1930s, Lonergan outlined the elements of a large-scale critique of the destructive effects of modern liberalism, fascism, and Stalinism on human living and human be-ing. The doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ was a fundamental element in his effort to adumbrate, what he called "a theology for the social order." Later, the Mystical Body of Christ along with the contrasting notions of "human solidarity in sin" and "divine solidarity in grace" would figure in his "Finality, Love, Marriage," in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967) 16-53.

were retrieved in this way, theology would resume an alignment with those master narratives which have run roughshod over the human agency of the oppressed. Third, thinking about the subject in this way implies critique and involves judgment; yet, it does not intend to alienate those who are white (European) or powerful or privileged or male. If this were the case, then the very articulation would be little more than ideology as crude social justification or a repeat of the desecration of the *humanum* (to borrow a term developed by Edward Schillebeeckx). Fourth, taking poor women of color as an anthropological subject admits the risk of personal arrogance, of manipulating (white and male) guilt, and, more importantly, of romanticizing or idealizing, thus, depersonalizing human persons. Finitude and sin are not alien to poor women of color. But the risk places us in the path of grace: To take oppression as a point of departure for theological reflection brings about encounter with the purifying powers of God in history "even before we are completely liberated."²⁶ Finally, taking poor women of color as the subject ensures that we are in no way attempting to reinstate any of the earlier and contested anthropological models (androgyny, unisex, and complementarity).²⁷ Mary Aquin O'Neill's caution is worth repeating:

Androgyny advocates a development of the individual such that she or he includes within the self all that has been traditionally divided between male and female; the unisex approach takes one or the other sex as the ideal and sets about

²⁶Edward Schillebeeckx, "The Role of History in What Is Called the New Paradigm," in *Paradigm Change in Theology*, ed. Küng and Tracy, 318.

²⁷For some feminist treatments of Christian theological anthropology, see Kari Elisabeth Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Woman in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Charles H. Talbot (1968; Washington DC: University Press of America, 1981); Sheila D. Collins, *A Different Heaven and Earth: A Feminist Perspective on Religion* (Valley Forge PA: Judson Press, 1974); Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974); idem., *New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); Mary Aquin O'Neill, "Toward a Renewed Anthropology," *Theological Studies* 36 (1975): 725-36; CTSA Research Report: *Women in Church and Society*, ed. Sara Butler (Bronx NY: Catholic Theological Society of America, 1978); Mary Buckley, "The Rising of the Women Is the Rising of the Race," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 34 (1979): 48-63; Anne Carr, "Theological Anthropology and the Experience of Women," *Chicago Studies* 19 (1980): 113-28. For examples of more recent and constructive work, see Anne Carr, *Transforming Grace: Women's Experience and Christian Tradition* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 117-33; Mary Aquin O'Neill, "The Mystery of Being Human Together," in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993) 139-60; and the essays in *In the Embrace of God: Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology*, ed. Ann O'Hara Graff (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

to accommodate the self to it, no matter what is given in nature; and the theology of complementarity has been based on the image of an individual body in which the male is the head and the female the lower part to be ruled over [by] the head, seat of reason and intelligence.²⁸

The first and second of these models remain bound to the European Enlightenment notion of human being as autonomous, isolated, individualistic, and acquisitive; the third is tied to confusions in understanding that are related to the absence of what Bernard Lonergan called "differentiation of consciousness."²⁹

Our search for the humanum is oriented by the radical demands of the incarnation of God; it reaches its term in the dynamic realization of human personhood. Thus, to be a human person is to be (1) a creature made by God; (2) *person-in-community*, living in flexible, resilient, just relationships with others; (3) an incarnate spirit, i.e., embodied in race, sex and sexuality; (4) capable of working out essential freedom through personal responsibility in time and space; (5) a social being; (6) unafraid of difference and interdependence; and (7) willing daily to struggle against "bad faith"³⁰ and *ressentiment* for the survival, creation, and future of all life.³¹ The realization of humanity in this notion of personhood is a dynamic deed rooted in religious, intellectual, and moral conversion. Taken together, the various theologies for human liberation push us, in self-giving love, to forward this realization in "the forgotten

²⁸O'Neill, "The Mystery of Being Human Together," in *Freeing Theology*, 150.

²⁹For some instances of Lonergan's treatment of this topic, see *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957) 322-24; idem., *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 81-85; idem., *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) 29, 120-23, 132, 227; idem., *Doctrinal Pluralism. The Père Marquette Lecture* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1971) 12-22.

³⁰Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 44; see his *Bad Faith and Antiracism* (Atlantic Highlands NJ: Humanities Press, 1995); idem., *Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism from a Neocolonial Age* (Lanham MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 1997).

³¹While this description approximates what Mary Buckley called a "transformative, person-centered model" in opposition to dual and single-sex anthropologies, it goes beyond Buckley's model by emphasizing the importance of community, difference, and interdependence; see Buckley, "The Rising of the Woman is the Rising of the Race," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 34 (1979): 48-65; also Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 731-43; Elizabeth Johnson, "The Maleness of Christ," in *The Special Nature of Women?*, ed. Anne Carr and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Concilium* (1991): 108-16; and Hinsdale, "Heeding the Voices: An Historical Overview," in *In the Embrace of God*, 22-48, at 29.

subject"—exploited, despised poor women of color.³² Only, in and through solidarity with them, the least of this world, shall humanity come to fruition.

SOLIDARITY

Love of neighbor was a first clear hallmark of Christianity. ("See how they love one another.") This apprehension of the 'other' as neighbor startled and provoked admiration, for that love was expressed through spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Almsgiving, in particular, was the work and duty of charity, the remedy for injustice and inequity in the human community. However, there was little attempt to probe the social or cultural reasoning for the tenacious and brutalizing poverty of the majority of human persons. This was the situation up until about the late nineteenth century, when *Rerum Novarum* appeared in response to the moral breakdown caused by the abuses of the industrial revolution. But the notion of charity could not meet the level of demand by the new structures and problems in society. In the effort to redefine the meaning of the common good, Leo XIII drew on the newer notion of social justice.³³

With the collapse of the nineteenth century ideal of progress, we have become even more aware of the contingencies involved in bringing about justice on a global scale.³⁴ We sense a need for something deeper and beyond the moral attention which social justice gives to the distribution of the material and cultural conditions for human living. That something deeper and beyond, I suggest, is solidarity.³⁵

³²Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. David Smith (1977; New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 237n.8.

³³Marie Vianney Bilgrien, "Solidarity: A Principle, An Attitude, A Duty? Or the Virtue for an Interdependent World," Ph.D. diss., Pontifical Universitatem S. Thomae, 1994, at 205-206. This is a very helpful study of the literature, history, and development of the notion of solidarity in Catholic social thought, with detailed analysis of the work of John Paul II, who began writing on this theme in 1969, and in that context, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987) denotes a culmination.

³⁴For two important studies of progress, see Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980) and Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).

³⁵For some general discussions of solidarity, see "Solidarity," in *Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Karl Rahner and Herbert Vogrmler (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 481; René Coste, "Solidarité," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, tome XVI (Paris: Beauschene, 1990) 999-1006; Matthew Lamb, "Solidarity," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1993) 908-12; Roberto Goizueta, "Solidarity," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1993) 906-907; Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "Solidarity," in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, ed. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (Louisville KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996) 266-67.

Solidarity has its secular roots in the European labor-union movements of the mid-nineteenth century, only recently entering into Christian vocabulary. René Coste has located papal use of the term in the encyclicals, texts, and allocutions of Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II.³⁶ Increasingly, solidarity has become a category in Christian theology and, as such, refers to the empathetic incarnation of Christian love.³⁷

³⁶René Coste, "Solidarité," 999-1006; cf., Edmund Arens, *Christopraxis, A Theology of Action*, trans. John E. Hoffmeyer (1992; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 162-64. Arens argues that while contemporary papal teaching underscores the subjective, inter-subjective, societal, international, and global levels of solidarity, it remains a toothless appeal, a moralism.

³⁷For political theology, see Metz, *Faith in History and Society*; Dorothee Sölle, *Political Theology*, trans. John Shelley (1971; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Matthew L. Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982); Helmut Peukert, *Science, Action, and Fundamental Theology: Toward a Theology of Communicative Action*, trans. J. Bohman (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1984); Gregory Baum, *Compassion and Solidarity: The Church for Others* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1990). For various theologies of liberation, see Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*; Jon Sobrino and Juan Hernández Pico, *Theology of Christian Solidarity* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Albert Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1987); idem., *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1988); Sharon D. Welch, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: A Feminist Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985); idem., *A Feminist Ethic of Risk* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); M. Shawn Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," in *Women and Theology*, ed. Mary Ann Hinsdale and Phyllis H. Kaminski (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1995) 3-38; Anne Clifford, "When Being Human Becomes Truly Earthly: An Ecofeminist Proposal for Solidarity," in *In the Embrace of God*, 173-89; Pontifical Commission *Justitia et Pax*, "The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society" (Vatican City, 1988) nos. 17-33. For some theological reflections on solidarity, see Hadewych Snijdewind, "Ways towards a Non-Patriarchal Christian Solidarity," in *God as Father?*, ed. Johannes Baptist Metz and Edward Schillebeeckx, *Concilium* (1981): 81-89; Gerhard Hoffmann, "Solidarity with Strangers as Part of the Mission of the Church," *International Review of Mission* 78 (1989): 53-61; Peter J. Henriot, "The Challenge of Global Prosperity: Social Justice and Solidarity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 24 (Summer 1987): 382-93; Norbert Mette, "Solidarity with the Lowliest: Parish Growth Through the Witness of Practical Service," in *Diakonia: Church for Others*, ed. Norbert Greinacher and Norbert Mette, *Concilium* (1988) 76-83; Pastoral Statement of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, "Solidarity and Service," *African Ecclesial Review* 32 (1990): 51-58; Juan Hernandez Pico, "Valor Humano, Valor Cristiano de la Solidaridad," *Estudios Eclesiásticos* (1989): 193-221. And, gratefully, solidarity seems to be cropping up in the most unlikely places: see Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Jodi Dean, *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), Patricia Huntington, "Fragmentation, Race, and Gender: Building Solidarity in the Postmodern Era," in *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black*

From the perspective of the new anthropological subject—exploited, despised, poor women of color—solidarity is basic to the realization of the *humanum*. Inasmuch as solidarity involves an attitude or disposition, it entails the recognition of the humanity of the ‘other’ as humanity, along with regard for the ‘other’ in her (and his) own ‘otherness.’ The principle of openness flows from this recognition and regard. Openness implies receptivity, i.e., a willingness to receive the ‘other’ and to be received by the ‘other’ in mutual relationship, to take on obligation with and to the ‘other.’

Even as solidarity includes recognition and regard, mutual openness and obligation, it is more than the sum total of these basic gestures. Solidarity is a task, a praxis through which responsible relationships between and among persons (between and among groups) may be created and expressed, mended and renewed. As we shall see, the fundamental obligations that arise in the context of these relationships stem not from identity politics or from the erasure of difference, but rather from basic human creatureliness and love.

The Transgression of the Humanum

On 12 February 1992, the *Times* of London reported the following story:

The plight of a Somali woman who gave birth unassisted beside a road in Southern Italy as a crowd stood by and jeered prompted telephone calls yesterday of solidarity and job offers.

The indifference shown by Italians to Fatima Yusif, aged 28, when she went into labor on the outskirts of Castel-Volturno, near Naples . . . provoked condemnation across the political spectrum and calls for the authorities to introduce legislation to curb the burgeoning racism against immigrants.

“I will remember those faces as long as I live,” Ms. Yusif, who was born in Mogadishu, told *Corriere della Sera* as she recovered in hospital. “They were passing by, they would stop and linger as if they were at the cinema careful not to miss any of the show.” There was a boy who sniggering, said, ‘Look what the negress is doing.’ ”

Existential Philosophy, ed. Lewis R. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 1997) 185-202. After the completion of this paper, I found a discussion by Daniel A. Helminiak, the title of which uncannily evokes my project, “Human Solidarity and Collective Union in Christ,” *Anglican Theological Review* 70 (January 1988): 34-59. Since Helminiak and I shared not only the same Boston College classroom, but the same teacher, Bernard Lonergan, similarity of interest may not be too surprising. Working from Lonergan’s notion of functional specialization, both Helminiak and I conceive these projects as exercises in systematics, but my intent is constructive and my approach combines narrative with analysis, while his intent is exploratory and he takes the direct explanatory route of theory. Where I prefer to texture and materialize the traditional notion of the Mystical Body of Christ, he prefers to examine “collective union in Christ;” we both provide phenomenological accounts for human solidarity, his analysis is more theoretical, mine more social, but both insinuate the significance of metaphysics.

[Help came] to the immigrant mother when a passing police car stopped half an hour after her baby boy Davide, weighing 5lb, was born. Television reports of the incident brought telephone calls to the hospital to which mother and child were taken, expressing solidarity with Ms. Yusif and offering her work. The . . . Vatican newspaper, *l'Osservatore Romano*, said the bystanders were not "worthy of the word man."

Livia Turco, for the Democratic party of the Left, the former Communist party, said that the episode "throws an obscure and disturbing light on the real level of humanity and civilisation of our country."³⁸

This report leaves us queasy, angry, embarrassed. Of course, there is much we do not know about Fatima Yusif or about the crowd of Italians who gathered to watch and mock.³⁹ What we do know is that this story points up transgression of the *humanum*; as such, it is a dramatic "anthropological signifier."⁴⁰

The story of Fatima Yusif enflashes the interlocking and conditioning oppressions of racism and sexism, social and human exploitation as well as the impact of border crossings, resentment, and bad faith. It captures graphically what it means to be an exploited, despised, poor women of color: to be vulnerable and visible, to suffer and endure shame, to live with little, or no, regard and consolation, to be a spectacle.

³⁸John Phillips, "Racists Jeer at Roadside Birth," the *Times* of London, 8. Dean begins her study, *Solidarity of Strangers*, 13-17 with this news report. She does not name the woman and she makes a detailed analysis of the response of the Italians. Any number of current newspaper or historical accounts might have been selected for analysis. For example: the gassing and burning of children, women, and men at Auschwitz, the almost nightly murders of 'street children' by police in Latin America (particularly, in Colombia and Brazil), the recruitment and abuse of child prostitutes in the United States and in Asia, the treatment of black women in the United States under the most recent welfare reforms, the outrageously high rates of imprisonment of black and Latino men in the United States, 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia, the rape of Croatian women by Serbians, the ambiguous 'visits' by foreign tourists (Westerners) to view the dismembered bodies of Rwandans, or the beating, torture, and murder of a Somali boy by the Canadian Airborne Regiment stationed in Somalia, in 1993 (for this last, see George Elliott Clarke, "White like Canada," *Transition, An International Review* [73]: 109).

³⁹For instance, we do not know whether Yusif was abandoned by a husband or lover. Had she been raped or seduced, then, left to carry the child to term, alone? Was the father of the child dead or alive? What are her moral values and what is her character like? How long had she been in Italy? Why was she in this rural town? Did she live there? Was she working there, or merely passing through? Was she looking for the father of her child? Was he too a Somali, or Italian? Why was the crowd so cruel? Were there women in the crowd? And if there were, why did not even one woman come forward to help? It is also important to note the danger that my analysis, however well intentioned, might foster negative stereotypes and reproduce the injury Ms. Yusif has already incurred.

⁴⁰Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 70.

On the side of a road, in childbirth, lies one of the human fragments of the colonial legacy of Italy in Africa and the neocolonial ruin of Somalia.⁴¹ Fatima Yusif is an immigrant because social oppression in Somalia so limited her exercise of human freedom, she could no longer meet the most basic human needs—adequate food, clean water, shelter, medicine. Long-standing patriarchal rights left her culturally undefended against wife beating and marital rape. Had Davide been born in Somalia, it is likely he would die of malnutrition and disease before his first birthday; should he live, illiteracy, poverty, and war would be his lot.⁴²

Fatima Yusif is an immigrant; once she crossed the border into Italy, she stepped out of a web of cultural, linguistic, personal, and moral support. Once again social oppression (racism, sexism, and exploitation of the guest-worker) circumscribes the exercise of her human freedom and personal responsibility. On this side of the border, her struggle to survive is met with suspicion and resentment.

As black, female human being, Fatima Yusif is *thrown* into a white world. This white world both makes her race and her body visible in order to despise and renders her humanity invisible in order to peer, to gaze (“Look at what the negress is doing!”). In this white world, Fatima Yusif’s identity is *defined* for her—by a child! In this white world, her identity comes, not from membership in an ethnic-linguistic group or from relationship to family and clan, but from race. On the grounds of naïve racist empiricism, she is, can only be, “the negress.” Racial representation so overdetermines her being that she is anonymous—“the negress” and, thus, every black female human being. She is not a person, she is not even herself, she is “the negress.” Fatima Yusif’s personhood is trampled. Her defiant cry “to remember those faces,” both discloses her shame and risks the spoiling of her spirit through *ressentiment*.

The story of Fatima Yusif magnifies the way in which exploited, despised, poor women of color are forced to meet the ordinary every day, *lo cotidiano*.⁴³ These women bear and face the burden of history (*her stories*) so that “every day [is] a situation . . . a choice, of how to stand in relation to oppression, whether to live as subsumed by [it] or to live as active resistance towards liberation.”⁴⁴

⁴¹Italy joined the other Western powers in the partition and colonization of Africa between 1880 and 1900, see A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

⁴²*The State of the World*, ed. Kidron and Segal, 32-39, 44-45.

⁴³Ada María Isasi-Díaz has been working out the meaning of *lo cotidiano* (the everyday) in various essays, including “Mujerista Theology: A Challenge to Traditional Theology,” in her *Mujerista Theology* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1996) 66-73; idem., *En La Lucha/In the Struggle: A Hispanic Women’s Liberation Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

⁴⁴Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 29.

On the side of a road, (white) Italian men, women, and children watch Fatima Yusif (a poor black woman) in childbirth. What they see is generated by a pornographic gaze: there is no human person, no mother, only an exotic object to be watched. A most private human moment now constitutes a spectacle for public consumption. Men, women, and children "linger as if . . . at the cinema," looking at "what the negress is doing!"

It is not unlikely that members of the crowd fear insecurity and loss. In the global economy, even in 'first-world' rural towns, it is sometimes difficult to make ends meet. These women and men fear the difference that poor people of color and immigrants represent. They do so, in part, because the impoverishment and humiliation that Fatima Yusif suffers could so easily circumscribe their own lives. The frustration and anger that they cannot express directly to venture capitalists and the affluent is spewed out on a poor immigrant black woman. In every country, corporate downsizing and disemployment leave a remainder—dirty jobs and scapegoats. Immigrants—especially women and men of color—serve these purposes. After all, *who* will collect the garbage, wash the streets, scrub the floors, clean the toilets, pick the grapes? And, *who* is said to threaten job security, dilute culture, spoil government, tempt sexual appetites, breed like rabbits? Fatima Yusif is immigration made flesh.

The headline assigned to the *Times's* article reads "Racists jeer at roadside birth." No human being is born a racist or a sexist, but every human being is born into the "pathological distortion of human existence," into what Lonergan terms bias.⁴⁵ Racist and sexist behaviors are rooted in bias—the more or less conscious choice to suppress the directives of intelligence, to repress conscience, to act in bad faith, i.e., to lie to ourselves "in an effort to escape freedom, responsibility, and human being."⁴⁶ The racism and sexism displayed by the crowd derive not only from each one's biased behavior, they are promoted by societal legitimation of that bias.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims*, 4; Lonergan, *Insight*, 191-244.

⁴⁶Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 44.

⁴⁷The sight of a lone woman giving birth by the side of a road calls out to basic intersubjective spontaneity, i.e., simple human care and human feeling. The refusal of the crowd to assist Fatima Yusif demonstrates how bias chokes the spontaneous demands of intersubjectivity, in this case, the natural and spontaneous impulse to help another human being, simply because she (or he) is another human being suffering. Critical attention to intersubjective spontaneity uncovers the way bias seeps into and disrupts the desires and aversions of competing individuals and groups within a social order. Lonergan's treatment of bias is found in *Insight*, chaps. 6 and 7. Individual bias is distortion in the development not only of a person's intelligence, but of affective and experiential orientation as well. This distortion comes from the egoistic pursuit of personal desire at the expense of the *humanum* as well as human relations, social cooperations, and solidarity. Group bias sacrifices intelligent, responsible discernment in the bringing about of the common human good in the social order to the blind pursuit of the interests of a particular class or racial

It is not surprising that the bystanders are condemned as unworthy of being called human or are accused of having betrayed the self-image of their nation. To some degree, these responses approximate basic gestures of solidarity. However, at least by what we are given to read, these rebukes appear blind to the legacy of European colonialism and fail to grapple with the depth of psychic suffering caused by social exploitation. These comments denounce the inhumanity of the crowd, but overlook the (possibly) bleak social situatedness of the crowd. Moreover, legislation against racism stands little chance in effecting a change of mind and heart. These remarks witness to the assault against the *humanum*, but they cannot account for it; and while necessary in the repair of social justice, offers of employment can never (re)constitute it. Only an authentic solidarity that neither apathetically resigns itself to the plight of the despised poor woman, nor self-righteously reproaches the crowd can address the injury done that day in 1992 to the human whole.

The Praxis of Solidarity

Between Fatima Yusif and the crowd lies the potential for an authentic praxis of solidarity—the cross of the Crucified Jesus. Through incarnate love and self-sacrifice, Christ makes Fatima Yusif's despised body his own. In solidarity, he shares her suffering and anguish. In his flesh, Christ, too, has known derision and shame; his broken and exposed body is the consolation of her being. At the same time, his love is available for the women, men and children in the crowd; his body absorbs their fear and sin, their failure to honor the *humanum*. ("Father forgive them.")

The cross of Christ exposes our pretense to historical and personal innocence, to social and personal neutrality. It uncovers the limitation of all human efforts and solutions to meet the problem of evil. Thus, the praxis of solidarity is made possible by the loving self-donation of the crucified Christ whose cross is its origin, standard, and judge. Solidarity can never be severed from self-giving love. Only those who follow the example of the Crucified and struggle on the side of the exploited, despised, and poor "will discover him at their side."⁴⁸

Clearly, then, solidarity is no mere commonsense identification among members of the same group (e.g., nation, class, gender, race), although that identification may be beneficial, sometimes, even necessary. Nor is solidarity to be confused with identity politics, although it does involve recognition of identity

or social group to the exclusion and repression of 'other' classes, racial or social groups. Individual bias overcomes intersubjective feeling. Group bias is kindled by the frustration, resentment, and bitterness of a group and reinforces these feeling in the individual persons.

⁴⁸Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 24.

and of difference. As a theological category for social praxis, solidarity concerns the empathetic incarnation of Christian love. It is an intentional, moral and ethical task.⁴⁹

Solidarity begins in *anamnesis*—the intentional remembering of the dead exploited, despised poor peoples of color, the victims of history. This memory cannot be a pietistic or romantic memorial. Intentional recovery and engagement of the histories of suffering is fraught with ambiguity and paradox. The victims of history are lost. But we are alive—and we owe all that we have to our exploitation and enslavement, removal and extermination of women (and men) of color. Helmut Peukert uncovers our anxiety when he writes, our “own existence becomes a self-contradiction by means of the solidarity to which it is indebted.”⁵⁰ Our recognition and regard for the victims of history and our shouldering responsibility for that history form the moral basis of Christian solidarity.

Solidarity calls for the recognition and regard for exploited, despised poor women of color as who they are—God’s own creation. It preserves the universality of love, without renouncing its preference for these women of color.⁵¹ In this solidarity, the Creator is worshipped, the *humanum* honored, particularity engaged, difference appreciated. Solidarity affirms the interconnectedness of human be-ing in common creatureliness. For as Lonergan has taught us, humanity is not a collection of individuals, or an aggregate of autonomous, isolated monads. Humanity is one intelligible reality—multiple, diverse, varied, and concrete, yet one.⁵² Whether white or red or yellow or brown or black, whether

⁴⁹It is true that merely to speak about social change does not bring it; but, the failure to speak about the need for change may insinuate unmindful acceptance of the status quo. Perhaps, at the very least, speech is protest. We can hope, as theologians, that it heartens and encourages those involved in daily ministry and efforts for change; we can hope that our theology contributes to the understanding of social situations and to clarifying the absolute stakes. Silence, I believe, is fatal for us all.

⁵⁰Peukert, *Science, Action, and Fundamental Theology*, 206. A move toward solidarity should never be confused with sentiment and its tendency to persuade us to forget the cruelty and conflict that domination causes. But, “a ruling class,” James Bowman writes, “is always subject to sentimentalism, since it helps it to close its eyes to the brutality on which its domination ultimately rests. The slave owners were sentimental about their ‘darkies’ whom they fondly imagined really liked being slaves; we are similarly sentimental about the historical sufferings of all kinds of ‘minorities’ in a way that our grandfathers (*sic*) never used to be precisely because the time when those minorities could constitute any threat to our wealth and power and privilege is long past. Having bought long-term security, we grow almost immediately sentimental about those at whose expense we bought it . . . just so long as it doesn’t cost us anything,” “Sorry about That,” *The New Criterion* 16/9 (May 1998): 54.

⁵¹See Segundo Galilea, “Liberation as an Encounter with Politics and Contemplation,” in *The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith*, ed. Claude Geffré and Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Concilium* (1974): 23.

⁵²In “Philosophy of History,” Lonergan sets forth a theory of the unity of the human

male or female, whether Irish or British, Australian or Japanese, Canadian or Somalian, human beings are intrinsically, metaphysically, ineluctably connected.

Oppression in its various forms assaults (materially, rather than formally) our connectedness to one another by setting up dominative structural relations between social and cultural groups as well as between persons.⁵³ Oppression is both a reality of the present and a fact of history. Solidarity mandates us to shoulder our responsibility to the past in the here-and-now in memory of the Crucified Christ and all the victims of past history.

This shouldering of responsibility obliges us in the here-and-now to stand between poor women of color and the powers of oppression in society, to do all that we can to stop their marginalization, exploitation, abuse, and murder. In memory of the cross of Jesus, we accept this obligation, even if it means we must endure rejection or loss. Moreover, this 'shouldering' summons us to take intentional, intelligent, practical steps against "the socially or technically avoidable sufferings of others."⁵⁴ For Christian solidarity repudiates every form of masochism and any assent to suffering for its own sake. Solidarity affirms life—even in the face of sin and death.⁵⁵

This shouldering of responsibility works for justice in the concrete and admits of particular tasks for each us by virtue of our differing social locations. It always requires us to be on guard against any form of self-deceit or self-delusion, any attempt to deny freedom and obligation or to act as though the world were devoid of women of color.

Such shouldering cannot be done by a man or a woman alone; agapic praxis characterizes Christian community. In remembrance of the Body of Christ broken for the world, the followers of Jesus, in solidarity with one another, stand

race: "[Humanity] is one reality in the order of the intelligible. It is a many in virtue of matter alone. Now any right and any exigence has its foundation only in the intelligible. Matter is not the basis of exigence but the basis of potentiality. The one intelligible reality, man, humanity, unfolds by means of matter into a material multiplicity of men [humans], that the material multiplicity may rise, not from itself, but from the intelligible unity, to an intelligible multiplicity of personalities" (Toronto: Lonergan Center, typescript, mid- to late-1930s, 118).

⁵³Iris Marion Young identifies and analyzes five specific forms of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence: *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁵⁴Javier Jiménez Limón, "Suffering, Death, Cross, and Martyrdom," in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, ed. Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino (1990; Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books; North Blackburn, Victoria: Collins Dove, 1993) 706.

⁵⁵Because humanity is one reality, Lonergan argues "that the [humans of the] present should suffer for the past is not unjust, for humanity is not an aggregation of individuals. . . . Men [and women] become from man [and woman] as grapes from the one vine; if the vine corrupts, so do the grapes; but the grapes suffer no injustice from the vine; they are but part of the vine" ("Philosophy of History" 118).

shoulder-to-shoulder, beside and on the side of exploited, despised, poor women of color. This praxis of Christian solidarity in the here-and-now anticipates the eschatological healing and building up of "the body of broken bones."

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL HEALING OF "THE BODY OF BROKEN BONES"

If the cries of the victims are the voice of God, the faces of the victims are the face of God, the bodies of the victims are the body of God. The anguish of the victims of history and the demands of authentic solidarity plead for the presence of the supernatural in the concrete. The history of human suffering and oppression, of failure and progress are transformed only in light of the supernatural. And, if humanity is not an abstraction, but a concrete reality that embraces the billions of human beings who ever have lived, are living or will live, and, if each and every human person is a part of the whole of interpersonal relationships that constitute human history, then we, too—each of us—shall be transformed.

Bernard Lonergan in a meditation on the Mystical Body of Christ brings its Trinitarian character forward.⁵⁶ Formally, then, the "Mystical Body of Christ refers to a concrete [perichoretic] union of the divine Persons with one another and with [humanity] and, again, of [humanity's] union with one another and with the divine Persons."⁵⁷ Metaphorically, the Mystical Body of Christ is a compact way of speaking about the role of the supernatural in healing, unifying, and transforming our "body of broken bones." It is a rich and multivalent way of drawing attention to the Trinity, the concrete oneness of humanity, Christ's identification with the one human race in his own bodiliness, the sacrament of the Eucharist, as well as Pauline language about the body.⁵⁸

Up to this point, the paper has displayed, I hope, a critical attitude; for some, however, the phrase, "Mystical Body of Christ," may insinuate a backward, even regressive, step. For some others, the phrase arouses suspicion; and for others, still, it edges comfortably toward nostalgia. Certainly the phrase "Mystical Body

⁵⁶Lonergan, "The Mystical Body of Christ" (typescript, 1951; The Lonergan Center, Boston College, 60.5.3).

⁵⁷Ibid. 1.

⁵⁸For some general discussions, see "Body of Christ," in *Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Rahner and Vogrimer, 53-54; Bernard Lee, "Body of Christ," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, 100-104; also, see John A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952); John C. Haughey, "Eucharist at Corinth: You Are Christ," in *Above Every Name: The Lordship of Christ and Social Systems*, ed. Thomas E. Clarke (Ramsey NJ: Paulist Press, 1980) 107-33; Dorothy A. Lee, "Freedom, Spirituality and the Body: Anti-dualism in 1 Corinthians," in *Freedom and Entrapment: Women Thinking Theology*, ed. Maryanne Confoy et al. (North Blackburn, Victoria: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995) 42-62.

of Christ," recalls Pius XII's encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*.⁵⁹ For nearly twenty years, the topic commanded theological interest, only to decline in the early 1960s.⁶⁰ Since that time scarcely a half-dozen monographs or dissertations have been written on the topic.

With the term "Mystical Body of Christ," I want to reaffirm salvation in human liberation as an opaque work—a work that resists both the reduction of human praxis to social transformation and the identification of the Gospel with even the most just arrangement of society. I am looking for a point of vantage that is pertinent to human development, that is relevant to human change in society, that refuses to foreclose human history, that is concrete and comprehensive enough to be compatible with the human telos in the divine economy. Further, as I noted earlier, my thesis contains not only a critique but also a judgment—and the judgment indicts us all. To think of our human be-ing in the world as the Mystical Body of Christ retunes that be-ing to the eschatological at the core of the concrete, reminds us of our inalienable relation to one another in God, and steadies our efforts on that absolute future that only God can give.

To best understand the Mystical Body of Christ, in all its "complexity. . . its manifold differentiations, its comprehensive network of relations," Lonergan proposes that we "take as a simple clue, as a guiding thread, the . . . basic theme of love."⁶¹ First, there is the originating love of the Three Divine Persons for one another; this love is "the love of God for God."⁶² Then, there is the love of the Eternal Father for the Eternal Son in both his human and divine natures. Through the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity "the love of God for God became the love of God for [humanity]."⁶³ Moreover, "because love is for a person . . . when the Word was made Flesh, divine love broke the confines of divinity to love a created humanity in the manner in that God the Father loves God the Son."⁶⁴ Third, Christ as human loves other human beings with a human

⁵⁹*Mystici Corporis*, Pope Pius XII, 29 June 1943. The encyclical treated the relation of head and members in juridical and hierarchical terms that confined membership in the "Mystical Body of Christ" to membership in the Catholic Church; but, it also called attention to the interior operation and reality of grace and the role of the Holy Spirit. This teaching was moderated by the Second Vatican Council with the introduction of biblical themes in understanding the church (e.g., *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 7-9).

⁶⁰In an examination of the use of the Mystical Body of Christ by John LaFarge and Paul Hanley Furfey in the service of interracial justice, Bradford Hinze points up their precritical limiting of the Mystical Body to a homogeneous (white and Catholic) group (see Hinze, "Ethnic and Racial Diversity and the Catholicity of the Church," in *Theology: Expanding the Borders*, ed. María Pilar Aquino and Roberto S. Goizueta (Mystic CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998) 162-99, 179-83.

⁶¹Lonergan, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 1.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid.

love. Here Lonergan stresses the concrete and existential humanity of Christ. The love with which Christ loves us is

the love of a human will, motivated by a human mind, operating through human senses, resonating through human emotions and feelings and sentiment, implemented by a human body with its structure of bones and muscles, flesh, its mobile features, its terrible capacities for pleasure and pain, for joy and sorrow, for rapture and agony.⁶⁵

This is human love committed to us irrevocably. This is the love of our deepest longing.

Fourth, "there is the love of the Eternal Father for us."⁶⁶ This love is as intimate and encompassing as the love with which the Eternal Father loves the Eternal Son. And here, Lonergan points us toward the sacrificial dimensions of Jesus' love. At the end of the discourses in the Johannine gospel, Jesus prays, "May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you . . . may they be completely one, that the world will realize that it was you who sent me and that I have loved them as much as you loved me" (John 17:20-23).

The Father embraces and adopts us human creatures as daughters and sons. This deepens the already real relations between us as creatures and the God of Jesus, whom we too may now call Father. This loving embrace and adoption deepens the already real relations between each of us human creatures. We are the daughters and sons of the God and Father of Jesus and as such we are sisters and brothers to him and to one another. And because of this love of God for God, because we are the children of God, the Spirit is sent to us.⁶⁷

Humanity in all its diversity and difference is a reflection of the community of the Three Divine Persons. Their divine love constitutes the ground of our realization of the Mystical Body of Christ and our unity in it. In this Body, each member has her and his own distinct existence; each remains herself and himself. But, even as we remain ourselves, we do not remain on our own.⁶⁸ In the Mystical Body, we belong to God and we are for one another. Through the animation of the Spirit we are knitted and joined together, we find authentic identity in union with the Three Divine Persons and with one another.

The Mystical Body of Christ is an eschatological reality; it is anticipated in the here-and-now through the gift of grace. To grasp our being in the world as the Mystical Body is to enact a praxis of solidarity that both forwards the *humanum* in poor women of color and enfolds the repentance of white male bourgeois Europeans.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid. 3.

⁶⁸Ibid.

The Mystical Body of Christ is a "way of being in the world with one another [through the Spirit] and with Christ because of who God is."⁶⁹ It is not a theology; it is a "divine solidarity in grace."⁷⁰ That solidarity makes a claim on each of us and a claim on theology: It obliges each of us to a social praxis in the here and now that resists the destructive deformation of sin in ourselves and in our society. It obliges theology to acknowledge and repent of its complicity in the transgression of the *humanum* in exploited, despised, poor women of color—in short, to turn its praxis to the new anthropological subject at the heart of the Mystical Body of Christ.*

M. SHAWN COPELAND
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⁶⁹Lee, "Body of Christ," 104.

⁷⁰Loneragan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 26.

*I come from a people, an African people, who encourage and esteem intellectual achievement—especially that which contributes to humanity. I come from a people who have one of the oldest traditions of locating the liberating impulse of the Bible—the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. For more than 500 years my people have had a love affair with that Book, with the Word Incarnate. It is in this spirit, that I dedicate this address to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza on the occasion of her sixtieth birthday, to thank her for the contribution she has made to liberating that Book for my people and hers—for the flourishing of the Mystical Body of Christ.

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