

DEVELOPING GROUPS

THE THOUGHT OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

- Topic: Newman on Development: Testing Newman's Tests
Convener: Edward Jeremy Miller, Gwynedd-Mercy College
Presenters: Robert L. Kinast, Center for Theological Reflection, Tampa
Thomas R. Potvin, Dominican College of Theology, Ottawa
Edward Enright, Villanova University

Using Newman's own words to describe the aim of his 1845 *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (viz., not proving Catholicism but answering objections against it that its doctrines are corruptions of the apostolic faith), Edward Miller provided the context in which the seminar's three presenters examined from different aspects Newman's seven tests for genuine developments.

Robert Kinast compared Newman's tests to the criteria for Christian praxis found in Don Browning's book, *Fundamental Practical Theology*. Newman's first test, preservation of the form of Christianity's idea, lends itself to an aesthetic more than an analytic interpretation and is determined inductively. The test makes explicit what practical theology often implies—that a community's theology is imbedded in its life and can only be discerned from inside the experience. Newman's second test, continuity of principles, challenges practical theology to identify the principles of Christian praxis that pastoral strategies should exhibit if they are valid expressions of praxis.

Newman's fifth test, logical sequence, suggests a wide view of praxis in terms of the antecedents of a praxis (the fourth test) and its consequences (Newman's third, sixth, and seventh tests). In these ways Newman's tests make a useful contribution to contemporary practical theology.

In asking what Newman meant by Christianity's type of idea, Thomas Potvin suggested Christianity's inner *raison d'être* coming from God rather than any external equivalence between the current church and the primitive church. God uses human means to inscribe this one "idea" in a multitude of believers. In the first place comes Scripture bearing upon faith and morals. Based on apostolic tradition, then proceed the creeds (e.g., Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian), formulated by the church to transmit the faith to catechumens and within the liturgy. Ecumenical councils and infallible papal teaching define the content of the idea, but Newman also provides for the influence of patristic writings and theological debate on the idea's development. Finally, pastors and the body of the faithful contribute to development in their own ways. The idea of Christiani-

ty, equal to the whole of its many aspects, may, for convenience sake, be represented by one of them just so long as the importance of each is respected.

Edward Enright viewed Newman's tests through the eyes of four Protestant reviewers of the 1845 Essay: William Josiah Irons, Frederick Denison Maurice, George Moberly, and James Bowling Mozley. Irons dismissed the tests as useless because all seven tests could validate Nestorianism or other heresies. Maurice judged that Newman substituted papal infallibility for the invisible truth of God guiding Christianity. Moberly thought the tests unnecessary since everything needed for salvation is to be found in the New Testament. Mozley claimed that tests two through seven only expanded upon the first test, and for it a corrupt development seems as natural an outcome as a genuine development.

Since the presentations were limited to fifteen minutes each, there was ample time for lively discussion. The following topics surfaced: What earlier writings of Newman anticipated his later treatment of doctrinal development? Do these tests make sense to anyone operating with a modern or postmodern hermeneutic?

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YVES CONGAR ECUMENICAL COLLOQUIUM

- Topic: Congar on Authentic Expressions of the Apostolic Faith
 Convener: Mark E. Ginter, St. Meinrad School of Theology
 Moderator: Catherine E. Clifford, University of St. Michael's College
 Presenter: Susan M. Brown, King's College, London, Ontario
 Respondents: Frank Macchia, Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God
 Stanley S. Harakas, Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox
 Theology, Emeritus, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox
 School of Theology

According to the established custom for this Colloquium, a Catholic perspective on the work of Yves Congar was first presented, followed by two responses: one from the non-Catholic Christian West and one from the non-Catholic Christian East. After these three presentations, an open discussion followed. Below are the summaries of the papers and discussion.

Susan Brown argued that Yves Congar saw diverse faith expressions as arising both from the partial adequacy of particular ways of expressing the content of the faith as well as from the human capacity for spiritual and intellectual growth. She went on to describe Congar's understanding of the nature of doctrinal development and how it occurs. Noting that Congar's resistance (on account of his concerns about effective evangelization and ecumenism) to an unwarranted uniformity of faith expression within Catholicism was balanced by