

In the following business meeting appreciation was voiced for the many years of service to the society by outgoing coordinator, Melvin Michalski, and by the outgoing editor of the "Rahner Paper," steering committee member, and webmaster, Robert Masson. An invitation was extended to members of the Society to consider becoming the webmaster of the Rahner Society. Mark F. Fischer (St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California) has generously accepted this position. Ann Riggs expressed an interest in compiling stories of Rahner's life. Those who have interesting anecdotes about Rahner should contact Ann via her email address <ariggs@rivier.edu>.

Discussion of next year's topic focused on commemorating in some fashion (for example, audiovisual presentation, papers, etc.) the centennial of Rahner's birth and the twentieth anniversary of his death. It was noted that Lonergan shared the same anniversaries and collaboration with the Lonergan Society would be fitting. The steering committee will be in contact with the Lonergan Society to explore this possibility. Consultation with members of the Rahner Society regarding the plans for the 2004 program will be conducted by members of the steering committee.

The breakfast ended, as is the custom of the Society, with an anecdote about Rahner.

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CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- Topic: Social Transformation and the Vocation of the Theologian:
 Learning from Personal Experience
- Convener: Brian D. Berry, College of Notre Dame of Maryland
- Moderator: Brian D. Berry, College of Notre Dame of Maryland
- Presenters: Lee Cormie, St. Michael's College/Toronto School of Theology
 Daniel R. Finn, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota
 Christine E. Gudorf, Florida International University

This session focused on how the personal experience of theologians within efforts for social transformation has affected their thinking and teaching, and what these changes might imply for Catholic social teaching more broadly.

Lee Cormie ("Witnessing to Hope in Global Justice Movements") observed that since the mid-1990s, there has been the irruption of a range of "global justice" movements which are seeking to carry forward the concerns of liberation movements that began in the 1960s, and to resist the neoliberalism of governments and international financial institutions that became established during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Key among these movements are the annual World Social Forums held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as well as various local and regional

social forum processes that have emerged around the world, for example, the Toronto Social Forum Process. Cormie suggested that the convergence of these movements at this time reflects the following hard-earned lessons: respect for diversity, the priority of participation for all, recognition of the local and global dimensions of social struggles, the quest for broader solidarities, the centrality of ethics in discussions of all issues, and new forms of collaboration, such as online organizing. It also makes clear that the reigning map of Catholic social teaching is "no longer operational," inasmuch as it fails to incorporate the perspectives of these new voices, address the contested character of debates and their histories, recognize the concrete roles of official teachings and institutional priorities in specific contexts, articulate the challenges to the church at every level, and propose practical strategies for change as essential to good teaching. The good news, however, is that on the margins and at the bottom of the church, another "social teaching" is blossoming in the resurgence of progressive social justice movements worldwide.

Daniel Finn ("So Do *You* Want More Power?") spoke of his involvement from 1998 to 2003 in a local, church-based community organization in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Recently, the organization, called GRIP (Great River Interfaith Partnership), successfully completed a four and a half year campaign for affordable housing, marking the first time in the history of the United States that a group of neighboring cities has agreed to the same affordable housing policy. Finn's learnings related to self-interest and power. First, he recognized that self-interest and power are essential to the public relationships of any locality. People act and change behavior out of self-interest, and the exercise of power at times requires not being liked. Second, Finn became convinced that theologians working for social change should own up to their own interests and seek greater power, disciplined by broader moral principles. Although this is "not the way of Thomas à Kempis," we often receive gratitude from others for our leadership, the attention of the general public through the media, and the personal satisfaction of not being "just an academic." We should take steps so that others, both within the advocacy organization and at city council, care what we think and seek out our advice.

Christine Gudorf ("A Different Kind of Hope") identified her context as social justice work in the developing world, the church, and the family over the past twenty-five years. She remarked first on the importance of devising local political strategies for social justice as part of a global network. With the globalization of capital that has occurred over the last three decades, there now exists a global economy but only national politics. People must create a network of powerful political blocs worldwide to ensure that international economic treaties include livable wages, safe working conditions, environmental sustainability, and consumer safety. Second, Gudorf argued that the church must not only teach principles of social justice but also critical applications, which can only be done at the local level. However, since all governance and teaching authority in the Roman Catholic church is invested in clerical status, the laity and women are

excluded from decision-making power. Given that these persons often have more theological training and greater worldly expertise than do the clergy, it is time to follow Pope Paul VI's direction in *Octogesima Adveniens* and admit that Christians everywhere need to participate in discerning principles and devising local political strategies. Finally, Gudorf suggested that strong personal relationships with particular victims of injustice are necessary for sustaining the work of political resistance in the face of defeat, rejection, tiredness, and the social stigma of dissidence. Drawing on her experience as the parent of two mentally disabled children, one Hispanic and one black, she explained that it has been knowing, living with, and loving these children that—more than anything else—has kept her and her husband relatively constant, honest, and committed in their social justice work.

The discussion that followed focused on the specific issues of self-interest and power identified by Daniel Finn. One participant suggested that self-interest and seeking power seem to presume a view of the self as individual rather than relational. A second person urged the development of a spirituality and theology of asceticism in relation to the use of power, like an asceticism of using wealth. A third member proposed that power in itself is neither good nor bad, but that it is best used to empower and facilitate.

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NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES

Topic: Autobiography as Theology
 Convener: Nancy Pineda-Madrid, St. Mary's College of California
 Presenter: Donald Gelpi, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley
 Respondent: Alejandro García-Rivera, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley

Recently, Donald Gelpi finished his theological autobiography manuscript, *Closer Walk: Confessions of a US Jesuit Yat*. This manuscript formed the basis of his presentation, Personal Reflections on My Experience of Theology as Vocation. He began with a humorous story that illustrated the origins of the word *Yat*, a term that New Orleanians use to identify themselves. Gelpi painted an intimate and stimulating self-portrait of the various experiences, communities and intellectual traditions that have shaped his theology over the course of more than 30 years. Gelpi explained his aim in writing his theological autobiography:

I hope to retell the story of my life with a focus on the kinds of experiences which have lead me to develop the kind of theology I have to date formulated and published. Since my closer walk has prompted me to wander down some new and unfamiliar theological paths, I retell my story in the hope that it will assist those who find what I have written