

ness of Pannenberg's emphasis on the future as determining the present, or the movement from the future to the present, is there not in much Catholic theology a degree of emphasis on teleology that is similarly onesided? And is not one of the problems of theology today an attempt to interrelate the future as *adventus* (shown, e.g., in the early Christian expectation of Christ's *parousia*) and the future as *futurum*? This question was raised in several forms, without full agreement being reached in answering it. (2) What was the intentionality of the early symbolic language in Christianity? What happened in the Easter experience? Does Pannenberg's heavily theoretical use of language do justice to this? (3) In what sense does my concrete future destiny determine my present identity? If my future is shipwreck, is that who I now am? To what extent does Pannenberg's viewpoint imply a determinism in fact, though this is not his intention? (4) To what extent has history already been given its final answer? Rahner's view on eschatological assertions was called upon here to suggest that perhaps we should interpret the Easter experience as promise. We participate in the future by our faith, and thus we experience the kingdom; and the mode of the kingdom will be determined by our freedom in grace. (5) Pannenberg tries to show in this book by his use of the human sciences that they point beyond their own limits toward hints of man's relation to God. He stresses play as a prime place where human experience intersects with the religious thematic. His emphasis on metaphor and on presentational language point in the same direction.

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B. THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

At the second session, co-moderated by Mary Catherine Hilkert (Aquinas Institute, St. Louis) and Susan A. Ross (Loyola University of Chicago), presenters were Christine E. Gudorf of Xavier University, Cincinnati, and Nancy C. Ring of LeMoyne College, Syracuse. Mary Buckley of St. John's University was scheduled to be present, but was unable to attend. The text for this session was Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 7.

Christine Gudorf began by noting the assumptions of theological anthropology—that there are fixed structures discernible in people—and that feminist theology rejects this concept and follows the social sciences which see differences between the sexes as largely learned. The issue for feminist anthropology is how to change social structures for a renewed human nature. Gudorf then went on to describe three types of feminism, according to their anthropological assumptions. First, liberal feminism sees sex roles as having been uncritically handed down and that the purpose of education is to dismantle these roles. Liberal religious feminists rely on analyses of Genesis 1:28 and of Genesis 2-3 as describing an originally androgynous human nature. Second, radical feminists see the problem as located in men who fear and envy women. In religion, this fear and envy is seen

in the monopoly of sacramental functions by men. Religious radical feminists tend to be oriented toward Goddess religions. Third, Marxist/Socialist feminists see problems in the division of labor, property, etc. Religious feminists of this type see sin and evil neither in society alone nor in the person alone. Gudorf's own responses to these types focused on the concepts of sin and conversion. Those who accuse feminists of ignoring or underestimating the reality of sin do not see that women do know sin and must risk much in their struggle for equality. For the future, Gudorf saw liberal feminism as most valuable for its broad appeal (its "PR"); radical feminism as most valuable for its insights into reality; and Marxist/Socialist feminism as best for political praxis. Catholic feminists need to incorporate dimensions of all three.

Nancy Ring began her comments by acknowledging her indebtedness to Bernard Lonergan. As she read Ruether, Ring saw that she and Ruether used such terms as experience, conversion, and body in different ways. Ring then distinguished these two ways of conceiving experience: first, as a structural element of human experience, an *a priori*, in which we "discover experience to be 'there';" and second, as a "dynamic coincident with an awareness of reality," which she defined as "transformative, because acting within it, we are called to shape the future." The first, which Ring attributes to Ruether, cannot change experience but only describe it, where the second (a more Lonerganian understanding of experience) allows for transformation. She used the examples of the consciousness of marginalization, anger, and suffering to outline how she would differ from Ruether. For Ring, this consciousness not only discloses what is sinful but more importantly, contains within itself the imperative to transform the sinful situation. Decisions consequent to this imperative create a new future. Ring concluded by arguing for the greater adequacy of this transformative understanding of experience over Ruether's.

The discussion that followed focused first on Ring's understanding of suffering and experience, with several participants arguing that suffering itself can give the impetus for transformation, and that Ruether's understanding incorporates this impetus. Some pointed out the need to remember suffering and for a healthy attitude toward the experience of suffering. Discussion moved on to a questioning of Christian theological categories (cross and resurrection, sin and grace), and whether they are adequate to the experiences of women. It was noted by a participant that *all* experience is interpreted and that some categories do not automatically command the allegiance of a Christian feminist; one participant noted that, from her feminist perspective, no Christian categories are automatically to be accepted.

Other participants pointed out that the suffering of Christ and of women has been ideologically distorted and therefore Christian suffering needs to be critiqued and redefined. One participant pointed out that when Christianity moved beyond persecution the value of suffering was lost. Another participant urged that discussion shift to the seminar's title, "the future of humanity," and said that Ruether's new book invites Christian feminists to do constructive work. In response, it was argued that if central issues (such as suffering) are not rethought, Christian feminists are prohibited from moving forward. Some discussion ensued on redemptive experiences which do not arise out of suffering. Another participant stated

that refashioning images of God will inevitably lead to violence and suffering. Further discussion touched on different perceptions of suffering, the need to deal with suffering in psychologically healthy ways, and the issue of God's role in relation to human suffering.

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