

edged, however, that such discomfort might enable men to identify more closely with what thousands of years of exclusion must feel like for more than half the church. Ultimately, "women-church" indicates a paradigmatic shift, with the emphasis on inclusive language providing a foundational key to facilitating the shift, concludes Grecco. His final remarks centered on the pastoral implications of "women church": How does one discuss sex differences except in connection with particular roles? How does one address the question of inclusive language in parish liturgy? and so forth.

The discussion which followed presentations by Flynn and Grecco centered on the following aspects of the question of gender roles: inclusive language and the liturgy; the interplay of language and experience; the difficulty of discussing biological differences without yielding to a stance of subordination; the ambiguity of language itself; the question of homosexuality; the legal ramifications of the feminist movement; and the general question of "consciousness raising" and the types of structural change needed to rectify patterns of exclusion based on sex.

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### C. CROSS-CULTURAL ETHICS: LEARNING "FOREIGN" LANGUAGES

The third concurrent session, "Cross-Cultural Ethics: Learning 'Foreign' Languages," was chaired by Lisa Sowle Cahill. Three presentors commented on their experiences as North Americans in India, Peru, and Africa. Each highlighted special ethical problems within the specific culture and raised concerns about the relation of those problems to the dominant Western ethos of U.S. culture and of Roman Catholicism.

Frank Clooney (Boston College) addressed the conversation between Catholic social ethics and Vernacular Hindu discussions of caste. He noted that there already exists a significant body of Hindu theological reflection on caste, and that this should be primary in Christian attempts to understand cast in Indian terms. In the Indian literature, caste is not premised on inherently superior or inferior characteristics, nor on a theory of reward and punishment. It is part of a differentiation of sacred from secular in a "poly-ritual" world. Each caste has its own religious rites, which lead its members to salvation. Although Indians have rarely proposed that caste distinctions are wrong, they have criticized the relevance of caste in judging the religious worth of individuals. Some argue that high caste status impedes salvation by creating impressions of self-sufficiency. The rise of devotional Hinduism offers indigenous possibilities for revising the meaning of caste. A key topic for a Hindu-Christian ethical analysis is the proper translation of religious values into realistic social categories.

Christine Gudorf (Xavier University) outlined moral issues in five areas: 1) *Marriage and family*. There are often legal, economic and social barriers to a sacramental, church marriage ceremony. As a consequence, "levels" of conjugal

union have developed: abduction or elopement; "joining"; civil marriage; and sacramental marriage. 2) *Preferential option for the poor*. Severe poverty, including lack of basic necessities such as water and medicine, gives rise to other moral dilemmas, such as exposure of abnormal newborns in order to conserve resources. 3) *Popular religion*. Priests and pastoral workers must confront the fact that participation in festivals with local religious overtones can have both negative and positive consequences for persons and communities. The pastor's responsibilities to the congregation may be complex and difficult to resolve satisfactorily. 4) *The church and the law*. Does the church cooperate with the peasants against the law, or manipulate the law to the advantage of the community or to the role of the church within it? 5) *Feminism*. Factors include the contact of "liberation" theologians with feminism abroad, solidarity of native women, and the formation of women's economic groups. Feminism is largely rejected in the Catholic liberation movement, which is male-led, and which criticizes feminism for taking away attention from its political agenda. Feminism is seen as white and middle-class, and as a threat to the family, which is the basis of change in the liberation movement. However, a more indigenous feminism addresses women's role in the family, to enhance it and make it more effective.

Thomas Schindler (Sisters of Mercy Health Corporation) reported on his experience in Ghana, during which he lived with a bishop, and conducted a workshop for the Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Kumasi. African culture challenges many Western attitudes, for example, individualism and reliance on technology. Housing is organized, not in terms of refuge from an outside world, but merely as a place to sleep within an otherwise open community. In resolving moral dilemmas, there is great reliance on family and community, especially the counsel of elders. In U.S. health care, even restraints on technology are justified individualistically, e.g., via "informed consent." In Africa, the custom in remedying illness is to go beyond direct physiological causes, and to ask what confluence of personal and social actions have made a person ill. The objective is to restore harmony by addressing spiritual concerns. A negative aspect is the "blame" placed on individuals for their illnesses or those of their children: a positive aspect is the integration of body and spirit, person and community.

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