

SEMINAR ON SPIRITUALITY

Both sessions of the seminar developed the conference theme, "Inculturation and Catholicity." Continuing the seminar's focus on method in spirituality, the first session was a discussion of Belden Lane's *Landscapes of the Sacred: Cultural Geography as a Methodological Category in American Spirituality*. Michael Galvan presented a Native American perspective and Carmina Chapa-Gutierrez gave us a Hispanic American perspective. The second session discussed Lawrence Cunningham's paper on "American Catholic Spirituality and Inculturation: Some Points for Discussion," and Jamie Phelps' paper on "African American Spirituality: A Question for Catholic Inculturation."

The first session dealt with the reciprocal relationship between physical landscape or space and our interpretation of it. Particular attention was given by Michael Galvan, a Native American and pastor of St. Monica's Church, Moraga, California, to four axioms of sacred place which Belden Lane describes: that sacred place chooses rather than being chosen; it is ordinary place; it chooses some and not others; and it gathers us and sends us out. In her remarks, Carmina Chapa-Gutierrez, a Mexican American at St. Mary's College, Moraga, moved from landscape to architecture as sacred space.

We discussed the notion of space, the strength of the ocean, the natural beauty of the land and the ugliness of poverty space, the psychological effects of the deprivation of space, the mediating role of the physical location of religious experience, the differing perspectives toward flatland and mountains depending on one's preference, the power of the terror of place as in the earthquake, the shifting views toward the Oakland Cathedral, the effect of artificial constructs, enhancing the sacred space by lingering on it in memory, individualized local spaces made universal, sacred space in tradition, the interaction of physical location and religious experience, and the violation of private space in, for example, jail.

Galvan summarized his response to Lane's comments on Native spirituality. First, the place of emergence from which a people come has radical significance. Native people believe that Mother Earth gives birth to them, the place of emergence and renewal. Second, attachment to the soil and the deprivation of the soil in forced migrations are vastly important: interaction with the soil makes me who I am. Third, only the ordinary is sacred. The sweat lodge is a way of going back to the earth and becoming one with the earth. Fourth, the impact of storytelling. His grandmother told him: "If you have to write it down, it is not important." Fifth, silence as a form of communication can be used in a positive and negative way that purges us. At some times, place is the sacred moment and other times silence is the sacred moment.

Chapa-Gutierrez assessed Lane's treatment of the Baroque in New Spain and New France in view of the need for one to take a multicultural approach to North

American spirituality in order to grasp, for example, the Spanish or French mentality. Describing the arid desert landscape of the Spanish Southwest points up the truth and the fallacy of the interplay of landscape and spirituality. She disagreed with Lane's description of the extravagances of New Spain and suggested a raw and dried crown of thorns laid on burlap as the central image.

We discussed the effects of the loss of space, the American value of mobility, the relatedness between rootedness and environment, the effect of cultural phenomena like homelessness, creating environments like cocooning in one's living room, the multicultural uses of space, the paradigm of sacred space in ordinary domestic space and in monastic structured space, space as an active partner of the psyche, romantic attachment to the land, architecture as physical space, and the groundswell of natural history writing. We concluded that decisions about the restriction or expansion of space are decisions about nurturing or destroying the human spirit.

In the second session, Lawrence Cunningham of the University of Notre Dame offered some basic assumptions about American spirituality and inculturation, emphasizing the values of a liturgical community, the strong parish structures, and models of Christian living. He observed the changing nature of parishes and the creation of urban sacred spaces by immigrant churches.

Jamie Phelps of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago reflected on African American spirituality as community-centered and Spirit-centered directed toward the nurturance and preservation of life. She reminded us that the church in the United States is not solely a church of immigrants since it includes Native Americans and African Americans.

In the conversation that followed, we discussed several points. One was that out of the experience of discontinuity, African Americans go back to their own tradition; out of the experience of continuity, Euro-Americans feel the need for the retrieval of the mindset and psyche of their people. The question was raised: To what degree is retrieval class-based as opposed to ethnic-based? We observed that the dominant trend is viewed as normative and this implies a non-legitimation of those radically different. We concluded that all spirituality is inculturated spirituality.

Another point we discussed was the cultural phenomenon of the place of liturgy in spirituality when liturgy in a parish context is so exclusive especially of women. Rather than being able to view liturgy as central to spirituality, many felt that the gap between liturgy and spirituality is widening because liturgy is so alienating.

The session concluded with a brief business meeting to give suggestions about next year's seminar to the new moderator, Michael Downey.

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