

SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AND THE HISPANIC EXPERIENCE

The title of the workshop presentation was "A Road Paved with Good Intentions: Social Justice and the Hispanic." Donald L. Jones (Our Lady of the Lake University) was the presenter and J. Willis Langlinais (St. Mary's University) was the respondent.

Jones opened with four questions about social justice and the Hispanic experience. Does the Church teach with one voice or several voices on social justice? Does a "theologically correct" attitude or climate distort the evangelical message of the Church? How do Hispanics perceive liberation theology? and What do the results of twenty-five years of theological education on social justice look like on the undergraduate level?

There seemed to be agreement among the workshop participants that the Church presents a more or less convincing argument for social justice, but the actual experience of many undergraduate students in Catholic universities does not reflect much progress in its realization. Although there is need for social justice education, it seems that political agenda issues can distort the heart and soul of Christian social justice and that "legal" solutions to situations of injustice often reflect only a superficial commitment to an internalized social justice.

Langlinais commented that in speaking of the Hispanic experience one must be aware of the variety of experiences and the real diversity of Hispanic cultures. There is no one voice or message that can adequately reflect Hispanic experiences.

Gerard Sloyan pointed out that university theologians must be ever aware of the need for social justice education on the undergraduate level and committed to such education for the good of the Church and society.

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