

narratives shape and form our own identity. This leads to Tilley's final major theme: (3) the primacy of soteriology. We need to know our own identity, because our relationship to Jesus Christ is not only mimetic but salvific. This raises the question of not only how Jesus saves us, but who can Jesus save. Who is *in persona Christi* is a central question for all Christology in our time. Unless the company of disciples is fully and completely inclusive then the narrative of Jesus Christ cannot be a saving narrative in our culture.

So for Tilley Christology in a North American context implies an interlocking triangle of three central themes: discipleship, identity, and soteriology.

Some of the issues raised in the ensuing discussion included the following: Given the privatization of religious experience in our culture, the recovery of the "we" is very important as the context for doing theology. This implies that, as both Mueller and Tilley contend, the process of doing Christology in a discipleship context is extremely important. There was also much discussion of and consensus on the significance of soteriology in the U.S. context. The question in this culture seems to be "What do I/we need to be saved from that from which we cannot save ourselves?" There was also an important discussion on American culture itself and how we analyze and evaluate it as theologians. The loss of history and memory, the impact of mass media, the globalization of American culture, the point of entry into the culture, and the extent to which the culture both reveres and ignores religion and faith simultaneously all pose significant issues for further analysis and discussion within our group.

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PATRISTIC THEOLOGY

WILL AND PERSONHOOD: THE MONOTHELITE THREAT TO THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Presenter: George Berthold, St. Anselm College

Respondent: Peter Casarella, The Catholic University of America

Berthold described the history of the monothelite controversy highlighting Maximus' theological originality. The monothelite challenge had underlined the pressing necessity of clarifying theological, and even psychological terms. Having

engaged in discussions with monothelite leaders, Maximus was convinced that terminology was being loosely handled, to the detriment of sound doctrine. Precise terms with precise meanings were urgently needed if theology was to contribute to an understanding of the truth. The first difficulty may be thus summarized: if Christ had a full human will then he had ignorance, for the fathers (Athanasius, Nazianzen) refer ignorance to the will. To this assertion Maximus replies that it is not true that the Fathers predicated ignorance of Christ along with his will. For if the *logos* of ignorance is the same as the *logos* of will, then either one will be completely ignorant of whatever one wills by nature, or conversely whatever one is ignorant of by nature will be the object of one's will. In such an absurd situation God, who is by nature totally free, will labor with the passion of ignorance while all inanimate things, ignorant by nature, will be moved by natural will. Moreover, since Christ had two wills (even if one be granted to be not natural but provisional) then he would have a double ignorance when in fact he had none at all. In earlier works Maximus had spoken of Christ's will as well as ours as *gnome* and *proairesis*. Later, his resistance to the monothelite movement forced him to revise this view in accordance with his own distinction of *logos/tropos*, nature and condition. According to Maximus, *gnome*, like the whole of human nature, is characterized by moral ambiguity, which precludes its being predicated of Christ whose sinlessness means that his union with God in freedom was never compromised.

Casarella's response dealt with Maximus' concept of the will, which differs from the characteristically modern theory of volition in three ways. First, contemporary philosophical reflection on the will generally conceives of volition as arbitrary and prone by nature to irrationality, as in Nietzsche's "will to power." For Maximus, on the other hand, *thelêsis* is naturally rational. The will's rationality and the rational grounds for volition are only barely distinguishable in his construction. Second, moderns generally think of the will as involved by necessity in the activity of choosing. Kant contends that the activity of choosing to incorporate a moral precept into one's own interiority is the hallmark of the will's freedom. Maximus, by contrast, argues that deliberation and choice are not essential to the nature of the will even if they appear to be inevitable results of its employment by created persons. Third, the human will for Maximus is intrinsically natural. Because of the will's essential naturalness, the activity of the will is an expression that must by definition conform to the natural order. For moderns the human will works against nature in the project of fabrication and even self-fabrication. In other words, Maximus' insight into the will's freedom lies very far in the background of the modern notion of autonomy according to which the human will creates itself out of or even in opposition to nature. After describing the reception of Maximus in the Latin Middle Ages, Casarella concludes that Maximus' defense of Christ's human will merits the attention of contemporary theologians because his theology allows them to recover at once

the trinitarian foundations of God's saving will and the soteriological implications of the drama of triune love.

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PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF NATIONAL HEALTH CARE

Presenters: Raymond J. Webb, University of St. Mary of the Lake
Gerard Magill, St. Louis University
Patricia Talone, Gwynedd Mercy College
Camil Ménard, Université de Quebec à Chicoutimi

Members of the group used the consensus regarding practical theology method, developed at last year's convention, to discuss national health care with local constituents during the year.

Ray Webb shared the results of discussions with twenty-six theology students after their internships. He summarized their descriptions, noted historical influences, listed five systematic perspectives and five practical conclusions. On the whole students tended to focus on individual rights rather than communal needs/solutions. Two other issues stood out: the meaning of death as a human event and the increased role of the community in the future of health care.

Gerry Magill reported on his discussions with ethicists and executives through the Catholic Health Association. Using the fourfold schema of Don Browning, a theological rationale can be articulated culminating in a practical theology of collaboration, holistic care, and preference for the poor. This allows Catholic organizations to network with others that provide abortion as part of a mandated benefits package and to perform sterilizations in Catholic facilities if it is part of a mandated benefits package.

Pat Talone described ongoing discussions with administrators, physicians, and employees of Mercy Health Corporation. Beginning with personal experience rather than tradition was more effective in surfacing the real issues but it also raised the problem of moving from experience to critical reflection and action, especially on threatening topics like abortion and loss of autonomy.