

CHRISTOLOGY

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF PIET SCHOONENBERG

Presenter: Ralph Del Colle, Barry University

Respondent: Gary Culpepper, Providence College

Ralph Del Colle made the following points in his presentation: (1) Schoonenberg's earlier Christology, which is ascending and stresses God's presence, calls for, and in his more recent Christology leads to, a more explicit Spirit-Christology. (2) The more explicit Spirit-Christology of Schoonenberg's later work results in a more constructive trinitarian theology, and with that, a convergence of Logos- and Spirit-Christology. (3) An abiding motif in both the earlier and later Christology is Schoonenberg's insistence on a reciprocal enhypostasis between God's Logos and Jesus. In the process of Jesus' development both the Logos and Jesus come into full personhood in the one person who is Jesus the Son. But the later Christology gives more attention to the personalization of the Spirit in the Christ event, though this occurs in a manner that cannot be termed a reciprocal enhypostasis. (4) Schoonenberg continues his speculative agnosticism about the nature of the Trinity apart from the economy of salvation. Here he shows his indebtedness to Marius Victorinus. (5) On the spectrum of contemporary Spirit-Christology, Schoonenberg's occupies a middle position between those to his left (e.g., Roger Haight) and those to his right (e.g., Walter Kasper). Though Del Colle's paper was expository rather than critical, one could infer from his concluding remarks that he doubts whether Schoonenberg's Christology does full justice to the worship of Christ and whether Schoonenberg's agnosticism about the immanent Trinity is warranted.

Gary Culpepper responded by first offering a general reflection in the spirit of Rahner on God's becoming human in Jesus and Jesus' becoming the divine Son in a self-transcending movement towards God. Culpepper sees more than a little similarity between Rahner and Schoonenberg in their overall scheme and intention. He believes, however, that Schoonenberg needs to provide more clarification about the reciprocal enhypostasis of the Logos and Jesus. Also, if the Logos is impersonal before creation, then it would seem that God becomes dependent on creation for God's full trinitarian personalization. Along with Del

Colle, he is uneasy with a trinitarian model that appears to compromise the eternal community of the divine persons.

The ensuing discussion heard more voices critical of Schoonenberg than laudatory. Two of these voices echoed Del Colle's concern about the doxological adequacy of Schoonenberg's Christology. And more than one voice echoed Culpepper's unease about making God dependent on the world for God's full tripersonalization. Another complained of Schoonenberg's "post-Kantian" agnosticism about the immanent Trinity. Some support for his views was expressed. One very strong supporter wanted to express his support vigorously, but was too busy moderating the voices—and taking the notes necessary to write this report.

After the session, several participants met with the steering committee to choose a topic for next year. The topic will be: "From Spirit-bearer to Spirit-giver: The Mediation of Salvation through Jesus."

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COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ISLAM

Presenters: John Kelsay, Florida State University
Daniel Sheridan, Loyola University, New Orleans

Respondent: James Fredericks, Loyola Marymount University

In this year's seminar, which addressed the theological significance of Islam, John Kelsay presented a paper entitled "Piety, Politics, and the Limits Set by God," followed by Dan Sheridan's discussion of "Christian Faith's Judgment of Mohammed as a Prophet."

John Kelsay's paper takes for its point of departure the fact of the Christian's experience of limits in a world of vast religious diversity. Islam, with its powerful affirmation of God as the Creator who sets limits on a rebellious and disobedient creature, has a numinous quality for John Kelsay. As a comparativist, therefore, Kelsay must recognize the theological significance not only of the truths Christians can affirm with Muslims, but also the differences which divide them.