

receivers." The judgment of *Dominus Iesus*'s that the mission of the church *ad gentes* goes "primarily to those of other religions," whose members are "in a gravely deficient situation" (22), appears inconsistent with the positive assessment and dialogical approach established from *Ecclesiam Suam* and the teachings of the Second Vatican Council onwards.

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THEOLOGY AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Topic: God after Darwin: Doing Theology in the Light of Evolution
 Convener: William R. Stoeger. Vatican Observatory Research Group
 Presenter: John F. Haught, Georgetown University
 Respondents: Michael H. Barnes, University of Dayton
 Anne M. Clifford, Duquesne University
 Anthony M. Godzieba, Villanova University
 Stephen P. Happel, The Catholic University of America

In his presentation—"Evolution and Divine Providence"—Haught first summarized the evolutionary recipe in terms of contingency (chance), impersonal laws of nature such as natural selection and the immensity of available time. He emphasized that, unlike scientific creationists, who identify providence with design, usually leaving out consideration of chance and deep time, and also unlike those who argue that no new theology is needed to respond to the conclusions of evolutionary biology, we should see our increasing knowledge of evolution and of genetics as an unparalleled opportunity for constructive theology. We can find some guidance for doing this from luminaries such as Whitehead and Teilhard. There is no need, therefore, to edit out any of the important aspects of biology's story, as long as we conceive of creation as unfinished and moving forward towards a promised but only hazily perceived fulfillment. From a theological perspective, the key is the love of God, who endows creation with order, yes, but also with autonomy, freedom, and indeterminacy, and who also descends into creation, expressing that love in divine self-emptying to reveal its possibilities and its destiny, and to persuade it to pursue their realization. Providence then is much better conceived as persuasion than as design. Providence foresees what is promised and the fulfilment of that promise.

This deeply connects with the universe's capacity for self-transcendence, as well as with the meaning of the Cross and the Resurrection. The laws of nature at all levels are expressions of God's fidelity and of God's concern that creation be independent as well as fruitful.

One of the underlying themes which emerged in the responses and in the brief discussion afterwards was the need to explore the metaphysical implications

of what Haught has proposed. M. Barnes, noting Haught's use of process theology, which is consonant with Biblical language, suggested that J. Bracken's *Divine Matrix* and K. Rahner's "Hominization" might be aids in further elaborating Haught's theology.

A. Clifford found the importance of "promise" in his theology evocative of the future-directedness of creation and deeply consonant with the significance of the Incarnation. She stressed how this might be more concretely described through the realization of God's presence in genetic structure: history is encoded in our genes, establishing the potential for the future. Our hope and destiny in Christ finds the beginnings of, and the movement towards, their realization through this channel.

A. Godzieba pointed out the striking paradigm shifts Haught's paper signals. Taking Darwin seriously forces a reconfiguration of God—a more kenotic and covenantal God. And Haught's preoccupation with time, especially with the future, demands a correlative renewed search for creation's autonomy in God and for a consonant understanding of rationality. As a result, Haught challenges the prevailing philosophical and cultural interpretations of evolution much more than he does theology itself.

S. Happel, while speaking of the need to relate the competing cultural stories, worldviews and rhetorics of biology and theology, underscored the urgency of an exploration of the metaphysical and empirical conditions for what Haught proposes. How is God's love instantiated in the sheer impulsiveness of genes? How is God beyond being, yet immanent? How does self-transformation generate information? Where does the agency come from? How can the future and time itself be agents? How does the "excess of the past" lead to the future?

The ensuing discussion followed up on these and other metaphysical and theological issues.

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HANS URS VON BALTHASAR SOCIETY

Topic: Trinitarian Love and Christian Hope

Conveners: David L. Schindler, John Paul II Institute
for Studies of Marriage and the Family
Peter Casarella, The Catholic University of America

Presenter: Margaret Turek, University of Dallas

Respondent: Paul J. Griffiths, University of Illinois at Chicago

Turek's presentation dealt with the Trinitarian grounds for Hans Urs von Balthasar's assertion that Christians dare to hope that God may save everyone. She first laid out the divergent series of statements in the New Testament on the