

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.

WILLIAM R. STOEGER

*Vatican Observatory Research Group
Tucson, Arizona*

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

definitive judgment of human beings. Matthew 25:31-46 represents the first series. Its portrayal of the final judgment allows for the possibility of entering *either* the kingdom of the Father *or* the fire of hell. Properly understood, the nature of such discourse is a summons to accept and live out the divine law of self-emptying love. While such texts depict a judgment, they do not allow us to see beyond the crisis of decision to an actual negative outcome of any individual's destiny. The second series of texts allude to a "universalist" resolution, e.g., Rom. 11:32: "God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all." Von Balthasar claims that all attempts to render the first set of texts compatible with the second necessarily involve a fundamental asymmetry. The death of the Son of God on the cross for the sake of our salvation renders possible an analogy of freedom between God and humanity. By his sovereign act of judgment upon sin, God discloses the inmost recesses of his divine heart in order to evoke from human freedom a reciprocal act of judgment upon infinite love. Thereby, the inmost thoughts of the human person are laid bare. In order to be loyal to the full Biblical witness, one cannot choose one series of texts over another. Even though the actual results are mutually exclusive, the assertion of the *possibility* of both hell and universal salvation is not.

Hope for universal salvation, Turek continued, has found numerous defenders in the theological tradition, in the church's liturgical prayers, and in recent theology. Even Pope John Paul II in his audience of July 28, 1999 stated: "Eternal damnation remains a real possibility, but we are not granted, without divine revelation, the knowledge of whether or which human beings are effectively involved in it."

The key claim is Trinitarian powerlessness. For von Balthasar there is an inner-divine exchange of love whereby the Father delivers over his paternal love in an infinitely generative act of "omnipotent powerlessness." The self-exposure and vulnerability within the triune life is the condition for the possibility of God's work *vis-à-vis* human freedom. In Jesus' descent into Sheol on Holy Saturday, von Balthasar avers, human freedom is drawn to itself through the encounter between the Son of God in his representative death and the dying sinner. Turek raised critical questions regarding the distinction between this view and the allowance of a conversion after death.

Turek also addressed pastoral concerns. Von Balthasar, for example, avoids the charge of naïve optimism by accentuating the gravity of the decisions taken by human freedom in view of its being encountered by a divine self-disposing of the utmost seriousness. Hope for universal salvation thus becomes a demand of Christian holiness. For the saints "hell" is not so much a threat to be hurled at other people as a challenge to oneself. In sum, perhaps we ought not to ask whether we should hope that everyone will be saved and instead pose the question, "Dare we *not* hope 'that all be saved?'"

In his response, Griffiths expressed agreement with and admiration for Turek's presentation. He noted the timeliness and the constantly controversial nature of the topic. Considering the logical possibilities, he detailed five positions

on God's judgment: (1) that salvation is actually universal and unrestricted, (2) that salvation is actually limited to a few (Dante), (3) that salvation is possibly universal (von Balthasar, Indian Buddhism), (4) that salvation is necessarily restricted (double predestination), and (5) that salvation is necessarily universal (Origenism, Karl Barth). The fourth and fifth options are excluded by the Church's magisterium, Griffiths noted, while the third seems most compatible with sound Christian theology.

He then posed these two questions to Turek regarding the third position. Is hope for universal salvation actually incumbent upon the Christian? In other words, given that universal salvation is a possible outcome of God's freedom, *must* we hope for hell to be empty or are we simply allowed to entertain the possibility? Second, he wondered about the need for greater epistemic modesty. For example, 1 Tim. 1:15 urges a note of caution: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I myself am the greatest of them."

Griffiths also introduced some speculative questions beyond those addressed in Turek's presentation: How is it that von Balthasar and the *Catechism* express such certainty regarding the damnation of Satan? What are the implications of hoping that all may be saved for the dialogue among the religions? What drives some Catholics to insist so forcibly upon the fact that hell is populated in light of the absence of a magisterial affirmation that there is even a single, specifically identified human inhabitant in it?

PETER J. CASARELLA

*The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.*

COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

- Topic: Evangelization and Conversions Reconsidered
in Light of the Contemporary Controversy in India
- Convener: Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Boston College
- Moderator: Nancy Hawkins, St. Bernard's Institute, Rochester
- Presenters: Judson Trapnell, College of St. Benedict/
St. John's University, Collegeville
Michael Amaladoss, S.J., Vidya Jyoti School
of Theology, New Delhi
Anantanand Rambachan, St. Olaf College

This Comparative Theology session contributed to the theme of *missio ad gentes* by examining the contemporary debate over mission, evangelization and conversion in India. In recent years Christians and Hindus have debated mission, asking whether evangelization is intrinsic to Christian identity and whether it must aim at conversions. In India's shifting social and political context, many Hindus have argued strongly against proselytization and the frequently accom-