

As is our custom, the meeting ended with a few Rahner anecdotes.

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BLACK CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

- Topic: Contemporary Black/Womanist and Hispanic/Latino/a Theologies
 in America: A Dialogue—Session I
 Covener: Jamie T. Phelps, Loyola University Chicago
 Presenter: Stephanie Mitchell, University of Detroit
 Respondent: Orlando Espin, University of San Diego

“Tangle Roots—African Diaspora and Mestizaje”

Stephanie Mitchell initiated her presentation by recalling a racial incident with which most people of color resonated, a commonplace act of human degradation manifested by a white female colleague who patted her on the head as a gesture of congratulations. The Latina in the room nonverbally shared her shock and anger by a moment of eye contact.

Mitchell noted that Hispanic and African Americans share a common or parallel history. Colonialism was linked with nationalism, racism, classism in the construction of social systems. The inequities originating in these diverse social processes became structurally imbedded in the social and ecclesial institutions of American societies of North and South America.

Today, both Hispanics and African Americans are subjected to the threats posed in our contemporary situation. Both of our peoples are threatened by cultural annihilation as we march toward increase continent wide “Americanization” and the co-modification of culture. Both are threatened by the appropriation of their languages in a way which exploits them for the benefit of others. Language has become a barrier to the recognition of our common situation.

Ecclesially, both groups have been proactive in creating parallel structures to provide resources for the Roman Catholic Church’s mission and ministry within our respective communities. Both groups have developed and disseminated national pastoral plans. Both groups have established institutes for cultural learning: the Mexican American Cultural Center (MAC) and the Institute for Black Catholic Studies of Xavier University of New Orleans (IBCS) Both groups have developed a series of documents through the United States Catholic Conference to aid in the development of inculturated liturgies, religious education, and ministerial programs.

Our cultural confluence in an African past and histories of conquests provide a basis for commonality as we explore our contemporary mutual experience as “marginal outsiders” in the church. Our common contemporary experience of

being "divided by suspicion, mistrust, and hostility as the so-called minority groups in the United States: can be the starting point for "an intentional alliance between African and Hispanic Americans."

Blacks and Hispanics have several common critical sociological and theological challenges. Sociologically we need to redefine many fields of study which are sources of theology from the perspective of people of color. This effort, nevertheless will be difficult in a dominant context which is conflicted about the reality and role of race and which promotes "colorblindness," rather than cultural consciousness, as a way to authentic unity. Second, we must learn to overcome the history of being used by the dominant culture to betray one another by adopting patterns of mutuality and accountability in our efforts to be included as adult participants and subjects in our church and society. African and Hispanic American Catholic theologians must strategically collaborate:

- (a) rethink theological concepts as people from the margins;
- (b) engage in-depth social analysis by critically reading each other's work in the areas of racism and economic justice to provide common action plans from our particular perspectives;
- (c) serve as resource people for the development of study guides or religious educational materials which reflect the presence and active participation of Hispanics and African American Catholics and other people of color that can be used by all parishes;
- (d) encourage Hispanic, African American, Asian, and Native Americans vocations as theologians;
- (e) work collaboratively to find ways to sponsor and support the Catholic Theological Education of students of color, especially Latino/as and Blacks.

In response, Orlando Espin basically affirmed the initial reflections of Mitchell and noted that the issue of race has been hidden in Latina/o analysis in the language of *mestizaje/ mulatto*. Since Hispanics are both white and black, white Hispanics often hide the internal racism among Hispanic peoples. White Cubans and other white Latinos must admit their participation in white privilege. We need to explore further how to engage collaboratively in the construction of a Catholic Theological tradition and a Catholic systematic theology and not collude with those who might want to pit us one *against* the other while maintaining the dominant control and decision making in the theological world. We need to expand our reading of each other's theological writings to date as we continue in our search for self-understanding. We need to explore the "popular religion" of both Hispanic and African American Catholics as a source for theology done in and from the perspective of the our respective communities. Whose church are we doing theology in and from what perspective? The majority of the U.S. Roman Catholic Church of the future will be that of people of color. Indeed people of color constitute the majority of the Roman Catholic Church worldwide today. A lively discussion ensued, adding questions related to poverty and wealth. We are in a world and church which is in the process of coming

together to create a new reality. Like our ancestors before us we must be self-determining subjects in naming and claiming this new reality.

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RENAISSANCE AND MODERN THEOLOGY

- Topic: Historical Criticism
 Convener: William E. McConville, St. Francis of Assisi Church, Raleigh, NC
 Moderator: John E. Thiel, Fairfield University
 Presenter: David G. Schultenover, Marquette University

David Schultenover read a paper entitled "Luis Martín, the Black Pope of the Modernist Crisis, on Historical Criticism." Luis Martín García (1846–1906), superior general of the Society of Jesus at the time of the modernist crisis and sweeping church-state relations, was poised by office to be a foremost reader of the signs of the times. The paper focused on his reading of the signs with respect to historical methodology. It showed how the times—the multiple revolutions in Spain related to the French Revolution and Enlightenment thinkers as well as to Spain's loss of empire and consequent worsening economic conditions—brought to Martín's awareness the importance of preserving Jesuit archives and the Jesuit story. It argued that, as foundational to this effort, Martín enthusiastically but critically supported modern historical criticism. His support took him into many difficult situations, precipitated primarily by the Jesuit Bollandists' large-scale deconstruction of the Church's devotional and liturgical life.

The paper was divided into three parts, sandwiched between introductory and concluding comments. The introduction quoted two encyclicals of Leo XIII, his first, *Inscrutabili Dei consilio*, of 21 April 1878, "On the Evils of Society," and *Saepenumero* of 18 August 1883 on the opening of the Vatican archives, to show how Leo's words were carefully echoed by the words and deeds of Luis Martín.

Part one detailed the story of the founding of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, the project to produce the still ongoing publication of the most important documents relating to the Society of Jesus. Part two explained how Martín took the initiative to continue writing general histories of the Society of Jesus, assistance by assistance, that had been interrupted by the suppression of the Society in 1773. Finally, part three narrated Martín's struggle to bring Jesuit writers to be more judicious in their historical criticism, in the face of ecclesiastical criticism for what were deemed excesses, particularly in the Bollandists' effort to deconstruct the Church's liturgical and devotional life.

Relative to Martín's reading of the signs of the times, the paper reached the following conclusions: First in chronology, Martín read the handwriting on the