

(10) *God as Trinity*. Behind a Christology from above is the doctrine of the trinity with high tritheistic tendencies. A Christology from below demonstrates that the doctrine of the trinity is derivative; its whole value depends historically and logically from Christology. By itself, it cannot logically support a Christology from above.

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THEOLOGY AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Topic: Religion and Genetics

Conveners: Thomas A. Shannon, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

William R. Stoeger, Vatican Observatory, The University of Arizona

Presenters: Thomas A. Shannon, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Zachary Hayes, Catholic Theological Union

"Adam and Eve, Modern Genetics and Original Sin"

Hayes began the dual presentation emphasizing the need to move from the general conversation between theology and the sciences to a discussion of an individual doctrine in terms of recent scientific findings. Such a focus exemplifies John Haught's "contact" model for relating science and religion. "Original sin" provides such an example. Bringing a specific set of theological issues into confrontation with the discoveries of the sciences generates a new set of interesting problems and insights.

Shannon began the conversation by presenting the conclusions that paleontology, anthropology, and population genetics have tentatively reached concerning human origins. He stressed humanity's profound biological solidarity with all other living creatures and the gradual decentering of human beings' earlier presumed privileged place in the biosphere. Though we possess a uniqueness and a special dignity, we are the outcome of a long process of evolution from the most primitive forms of life, and we carry a record of that process in our genome. Orangutans and humans share a common ancestor, which existed between ten and sixteen million years ago; and chimpanzees, gorillas, and humans share a common ancestor which flourished between five and eight million years ago. Despite these conclusions, the relationship between humans and subhumans is complex and unclear, particularly our relationship with Neanderthals. Shannon went on to describe the two competing theories of the origin of contemporary humans—the dominant "out of Africa" theory and the "multiregional" theory, and traced the likely series of migrations that support the former. What is clear, in any case, is that an original pair of humans ("Adam"

and "Eve") is not part of the solution. Scientifically, there is no support for monogenism.

Hayes reflected extensively and carefully on the theological issues these conclusions raise—in particular, on the innate tendency to evil in human beings, which we often refer to as "original sin." To set the stage for his primary point, however, he first emphasized the key affirmations of recent Papal documents, including the 1996 statement of John Paul II, in which there is a strong assertion that there is no contradiction between a properly understood theory of evolution and a properly understood theology of creation, as long as materialistic reductionism is eschewed. Hayes also referred to *Mysterium ecclesiae*'s insistence on the importance of always distinguishing the point of a dogma from the literary form or language in which it is couched. The point of the doctrine of "original sin" is that sin and evil have hounded humanity since the very beginning, despite creation's and humanity's basic goodness, and God's ongoing work of salvation culminating in Christ. What is the origin of this tendency to sin? Do we really need to attribute it to some single primordial moral failure? Certainly, from the point of view of the biological sciences, it more clearly traces back to the key role selfish behavior plays in the evolution of successful species, rendering it an inherited trait that has great survival value. As human beings achieved consciousness and freedom of will, human beings began to realize that, to satisfy their deepest yearnings, they really needed to act counter to these selfish and aggressive instincts. Furthermore, from the point of view of natural history, death and suffering are not the result of some primordial sin. Death, suffering and decay are written prominently into the processes of nature from the beginning, long before the emergence of consciousness, moral sensitivity and freedom.

Hayes also included in his treatment, a brief discussion of our "paradise past" as described in the Biblical narratives—which he suggested was to be understood symbolically more in terms of eschatology than in terms of protology, in line with Irenaeus' rich theology of history—and of Adam and Eve as the parents of all humans. He indicated that there was really no essential doctrinal need to assert actual monogenism—that is really not the theological point of the narrative, but rather part of its literary framework.

After the presentation there was a long and fruitful discussion highlighting a number of points, including the mythical role of the paradise in Genesis 2–3, the deeply ingrained inclination to evil and sin in human beings, who are basically good and oriented towards good, which is the focus of the doctrine of "original" sin and its origin in our evolutionary past, and the rather significant modification this signals in our characterization of "human nature." As Stephen Duffy pointed out, expanding on Hayes' presentation, this tendency arises from various dimensions of who we are: from angst, from the id (akin to traditional concupiscence), from the superego, from the influences of culture, from our genetic legacy of selfishness and aggressiveness (as mentioned above) and from our "epistemic distance from the supreme good, God." None of these is evil in

itself. They stem from our radical finitude. "The human task is not to repress or suppress these dimensions but to integrate them into a unified Christian life."

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MORAL THEOLOGY

- Topic: Casuistry, Imagination, and Terror
 Conveners: William A. Barbieri Jr., Catholic University of America
 Thomas B. Leininger, University of San Diego
 Presenters: Thomas B. Leininger, University of San Diego
 Richard B. Miller, Indiana University

Thomas Leininger spoke on "Method in Casuistic Imagination." Casuistry and imagination mutually inform one another: a healthy casuistry is the practice of a narratively disciplined analogical imagination, and a healthy narrative imagination is one that is subject to ongoing analogical testing in concrete cases. Of the six features of casuistic method identified by Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin in *The Abuse of Casuistry*, a reliance on paradigms and analogies is the most central and shapes the other five (analysis of circumstances, appeal to maxims, assessment of probability, use of cumulative arguments, and presentation of a practical resolution).

Casuistry is best understood not as a technique but as a "narrative art" located within the Aristotelian tradition of practical wisdom. It is the way that a community creatively disciplines and organizes its analogical imagination according to requirements of virtue. Cognitive science illuminates two important features of imagination: the character of emotionally and somatically evocative images as the "primary language of the brain," and the centrality of *pattern recognition* for the brain's activity. Taken together, these features highlight the importance of character, narrative, and virtue for a healthy casuistry. Stories—images arranged around patterns—render cases intelligible by framing them within a context of meaning organized around a beginning and an end. Character and virtue, for their part, both set the agenda of casuistry and determine how it is executed. Our judgments concerning such categories as terrorism and war will depend upon the images that shape our character as well as our virtuous exercise of the skill of recognizing and transferring their patterns in diverse cases. In sum, casuistic discernment that is properly informed by narratively configured character involves an ongoing dialogue of mutual correction between narratively normed moral convictions and their performance in concrete cases.