

model since the point of the doctrine of the Trinity is divine-human communion. Papanikolaou further observed that in the Greek Orthodox tradition, at least, there is only one prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit. In prayer, the Holy Spirit is seldom presented as an agent that "confronts" other agents. It was pointed out, though, that Romans 8 does attribute agency to the Holy Spirit.

The discussion concluded with a number of questions concerning Robert Imbelli's depiction of the Holy Spirit as the hypostasis of communion. The Holy Spirit is not simply the bond between Father and Son, Imbelli argued, but is also the source of the one Body, the Church. With respect to the concern that the "We" that the Holy Spirit gives birth to will suppress individual differences, Imbelli noted that there is a difference between union and communion. The "We" that the Holy Spirit gives birth to is closer to communion than to union. It was observed that the Spanish term, *nosotros*, captures better than does the English term, *we*, the otherness that communion implies.

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MORAL THEOLOGY

- Topic: The Vocation of the Moral Theologian:
A Critical Analysis of Charles E. Curran's Writings
- Conveners: Thomas Leininger, University of San Diego
James Incardona, College of St. Elizabeth
- Presenters: Lisa Sowle Cahill, Boston College
Kevin T. Kelly, Liverpool Hope University College
- Respondent: Charles E. Curran, Southern Methodist University

Utilizing David Tracy's three publics, Lisa Cahill described how Curran has influenced the academy, the church, and culture as "the voice of moral theology in the time between the times" of the pre- and post-Vatican II Church. Curran has contributed to the life of theology in the *academy* in three main areas: natural law, the relation of personal and social ethics, and sexual ethics. Curran's emphasis on historical consciousness allows him to reclaim the strengths of the natural law tradition while avoiding abstract, ahistorical formulations. His emphasis on social ethics has helped to overcome the dichotomy between personal and social ethics. In the area of sexual ethics, he achieved much in the way of validating exceptions to established norms while not doubting the norms themselves. Cahill wonders, though, whether that is enough for the twenty-first century. Our task will be to reconsider the institutions in which our norms were developed.

Curran contributed to the life of the *Church* through his interpretation of faithful dissent as service of the highest kind possible by a theologian. Cahill wonders (as does Kevin Kelly) whether "dissent" is an appropriate term for the

kind of service provided by Curran. First, the term dissent marginalizes the dissenter while establishing and centering the current official position. Second, "dissent" suggests an emphasis on individual freedom from external coercion, while the freedom of a theologian is actually "freedom for" a "critical development" or "reappropriation" of the tradition. The emphasis on individual freedom from external authority privatizes theology and thereby undermines public theology as well as the genuine *magisterium*.

Regarding *culture*, Curran's emphasis on ecumenical theology and the social character of moral agency has served to show that although theoretical differences in a fragmented, pluralistic and permissive culture may not be easily resolved, some resolution on a practical level is possible. Finally, Curran has modeled the theological virtues: faith by rooting his life in the experience of God's love, hope by his trust that moral theology is on the right track, and charity by his gracious response to his experiences at Catholic University and his continually looking at what can be done positively.

United Kingdom theologian Kevin Kelly offered an analysis of how he has been personally influenced by the way that Curran has lived out his vocation as a moral theologian.

The Nature of Vocation. The example of the life of Curran sheds light on the importance of personal integration for authentic vocation: the more integrated we are, the more we are able to live out our vocation. Through his "burning love for the church" and loyalty to it despite its sinfulness, Curran displays how one can hold together communities of faith and scholarship.

Ecclesial and Pastoral Vocation. Curran built up the theological *magisterium* so that it could make a distinctive and real contribution in dialogue with the hierarchical *magisterium*. In his disputes with Rome, Curran served the Church by showing that the Catholic Church has a far richer teaching than that set forth in the current official articulation. We have a responsibility to support contributors such as Curran. His work on divorce and remarriage and artificial contraception helped Kelly and others make sense of their pastoral experience. The prevailing model of the time allowed only silence from a dissenting theologian. For Kelly, this suggests a defective theology. We must be the church that we believe in.

Vocation for Healing and Growth; and Public Vocation. Curran's writings on sin helped Kelly to understand the role of moral theology as an agent of healing and growth. Curran's willingness to appear in public, despite a personality disinclined to seek the limelight, is intrinsic to how he lives his vocation. The failure to engage in public debate due to fear of controversy is a failure of the vocation of a moral theologian.

Ecumenical Vocation. Catholic moral theology must be fundamentally ecumenical in the sense of being open to learning from other Christian churches rather than presuming to have the right position on all issues. Curran's years at Southern Methodist University are best understood not as years of exile, but as a witness to the necessity of ecumenism for authentic moral theology.

Vocation for Conversation and Women Sharing in the Vocation of Roman Catholic Moral Theology. Etymologically conversation and conversion both imply an openness to change. Curran models the kind of openness to conversion needed for true conversation. He characteristically begins with a thorough exposition of the inherited tradition and then asks, "How can we enrich this tradition?" Curran was among the first to welcome women into the CTSA and to recognize that women must be given an equal opportunity to share in the authority of the vocation of the theologian. He saw that the quality of theology depends upon the contribution of women.

In response, Charles Curran argued two central points: (1) his social location has been a concern for the discipline of moral theology as a whole, in the living Catholic tradition, in the light of the circumstances of the time; and (2) his concern for the discipline as a whole has its limitations. He learned more about both from the essays in the festschrift in his honor: *A Call to Fidelity: On the Moral Theology of Charles Curran* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003).

Social Location. Curran argued that his social location is crucial for understanding his work. He pointed out that his writings in moral theology reflected the current circumstances. He also emphasized the importance of his ecclesiology: "My church is a big church" with conservatives as well as radicals.

Limitations. Drawing in part upon the festschrift, Curran pointed to the shortcomings of his social location. He conceded that James Walter rightly pointed to the need for more depth in Curran's analysis of genetics as well as empirical science. In response to the claim that his use of the term "dissent" to describe his position gives too much away, Curran noted that in the 1960s dissent was the only term available. Curran attributed his failure to address racism in the Catholic Church, in part, to the fact that he was just too immersed in its tradition. However, he did attempt taking the first step with his discussion of homosexual genital relations. He noted that Timothy O'Connell rightly called for greater development and clarity in the model of responsibility and relationality that Curran has employed. In conclusion, Curran claimed that, in the future, it will be neither desirable nor possible for anyone to address the discipline as a whole. Moral theologians will have to specialize in the various subdisciplines, topics, and theories of moral theology. Yet, he argued this specialization will be good for moral theology.

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