

THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Topic: Body Symbolism in Catholic Theology
 Convener: Anne M. Clifford, Duquesne University
 Moderator: Mary Ann Hinsdale, Boston College
 Presenter: Brian D. Robinette, Saint Louis University
 Respondent: Phyllis Kaminski, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana
 Presenter: Rosemary Carbine, College of Holy Cross
 Respondent: Kenneth Himes, Boston College

In his presentation, "I Will Be My Body: Anthropology in the Future Tense," Brian D. Robinette addressed the challenge of articulating the Christian doctrine of "bodily resurrection." Attention was given to modernity's depiction of the body, as insensate matter that functions as the external "instrument" of the soul or mind. To this challenge Robinette responded by drawing upon Karl Rahner's insight that Christians are "the most sublime of materialists." Resurrection faith's response to the dualism of "having a body" is "I *am* my body" and "I *will be* my body." Why? The resurrection affirms the eternal integrity of bodily life. Further, personal identity *is* embodied identity and because my body is an "open system," it is woven into the very fabric of other bodies, social and cosmic, making personal existence coextensive with the eschatological destiny of other persons and of all of creation.

To further develop Rahner's rich theology Robinette drew from the phenomenologists, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Drew Leder, giving attention to the ontological bond, which links the "self" and "Other." This link is "ecstatic," meaning that by being bodily, I am literally self-transitive and thrown outside of myself towards the cosmological and historical "Other." Drawing on the cosmological theology of Denis Edwards, Robinette argued that the human task of caring for creation has final future salvific significance. In company with the political theologian, Johannes Baptist Metz, he spoke of the resurrection as *God's* memory, a "dangerous memory," where what is "raised" is Jesus' entire embodied-historical existence: life poured out in love for the Other. With Jon Sobrino, he attended to the Other as the victims for whom Jesus died, revealing a God *for* victims, who in raising Jesus reveals that violence and death do not have the last word. Easter faith, far from being an "otherworldly" hope, is the ultimate hope *for* our earthly existence and also a charge to make present the ultimate future proper to creation.

Noting that all doctrines, including bodily resurrection, reveal and conceal, Phyllis Kaminski's response centered on corporeality in incarnational and eschatological theology. In relationship to the incarnation: How are we to think of God according to corporeality in ways that give attention to bodies, which are sexed, gendered and embedded in social, cultural, political and economic realities? In relationship to eschatology: Are our theologies of history and theological cosmology adequate to support and sustain the Rahnerian insights regarding ultimate fulfillment of bodily lived existence is in relationship to other persons and to the whole of creation?

Rosemary Carbine's presentation, "*Gaudium et Spes* Revisited: (Re)Building the Body Politic Through Theological Anthropology," turned our attention to the anthropology of *GS* and its relationship to public theology and "ecclesial work." She argued that *GS* analyzes fragmentation in and from public life in terms of theological anthropology (the dichotomies rooted in humanity, no. 10) and then proposes to heal them by drawing on Christology (nos. 10, 22, 45). She noted two competing Christologies in *GS* that lead to different ways of realizing a reconciled self and (comm)union in public life: (1) a static Christology with a Christ, who "is unchanging" (no. 10), and who models "perfect man" (nos. 22, 38) and perfect communion with God, self, and others; and (2) a more dynamic Christology that centers on the life and ministry of Jesus with emphasis on the active construction of the person and of community.

Carbine then set about retrieving the more dynamic, community based elements in *GS* by drawing on feminist Christology, especially wisdom Christology, and feminist theological anthropology, especially interstitial anthropology. Her purpose was to redefine and rethematize public theology that has the goal of actively achieving communion with God and others in public life. Her claim is that feminist insights can support the effort to integrate constructively multiple communities of belonging in the self. This constructive self-integration mirrors the same kind of "ecclesial work" involved in public theology's efforts to create and sustain a reconciled ecclesial body. In the concluding section of her paper, she gave attention to three major strands of ecclesial work in U.S.—discursive, covenantal, and prophetic—which she envisions as intertwined in "a public theology braid."

In response, Kenneth Himes offered one observation and raised three questions. He observed that the language of communion can mask the dominance of a particular group at the expense of others. His questions were: (1) Noting that public theologies have long drawn on elements of Jesus' mission and ministry, what is distinctively feminist about a public theology that attends to the dynamic Jesus? (2) Why is the interstitial anthropology proposed for public theology a uniquely feminist contribution—would we not expect construction of the self to be integral to ecclesial work? (3) Although the analysis of public theologians in the three proposed categories has merit, some of the persons associated with the individual strands could easily be listed in more than one category, which leads to the question, Is the braid metaphor helpful or potentially misleading?

The twenty-seven persons who attended the third session of this developing group voiced appreciation for the presentations and responses, and raised content and application questions. The session ended with a brief business meeting. A call for papers will be posted on the CTSA web page. Phyllis Kamiski will serve as coconvener with Anne Clifford in 2006.

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