

ANTHROPOLOGY—TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Disability, Race, and the Kingdom of God
Convener: Vincent J. Miller, University of Dayton
Moderator: Andrew Prevot, Boston College
Presenters: Kevin P. McCabe, Seton Hall University
 Brienne Jacobs, Fordham University
 Steven J. Battin, University of Notre Dame

Kevin P. McCabe's paper, "Justice and the Occlusion of Politics in Theologies of Disability," drew attention to the way in which theologians who write about persons with intellectual disabilities have strikingly little to say about justice. The claims of justice have little applicability, it is argued, to persons who will never fully be able to achieve the goal of independent selfhood. Instead, persons with disabilities are discussed in terms of relationships of friendship or as passive subjects—in both cases outside the realm of justice and politics.

McCabe argued that theologians ignore questions of justice at great peril. The opportunities and challenges that persons with disabilities face today highlight the need for renewed thinking about the intersection of justice and disability. The issues of friendship and sexual agency were discussed as case studies to establish this point. Friendship cannot be idealized without attention to the ways in which such relationships require norms of justice. Similarly, the sexuality of persons with disabilities cannot be treated as dangerous or non-existent, and persons with disabilities ought to be considered as subjects with legitimate claims to sexual agency. The paper concluded by suggesting that thinking about disability in Church and society exposes the limits of justice without charity, and the dangers of charity without justice.

Brienne Jacobs, in "Is Solidarity Justice? Seeking Justice in an Anthropology of Embodied Difference," pursued the questions: Seeking Justice in an Anthropology of Embodied Difference opportunities and challenges th own? How can solidarity be the means towards the end of justice? Looking particularly at white involvement in the Black Lives Matter movement, she argued that, while embodied difference means that the justice of the full realization of solidarity is an eschatological hope, embodiedness makes that hope possible. Moreover, it is only through interrogation of our embodiedness today that one is able to work toward the hope of solidarity.

The paper proceeded in two parts. The first explored the ideas of the body and embodied difference, with political philosopher Judith Butler, arguing that Butler's understanding of the body nuances how we might normally think about or hope for solidarity. In the second part, Jacobs turned to the work of Johann Baptist Metz and M. Shawn Copeland to suggest that the hope for solidarity rests in a radical orientation toward God, and that this orientation toward God in the hope of eschatological solidarity is instigated by an interruption and recentering of how one understands herself as a body in relationship with those who have suffered both in history and today.

Steven J. Battin, in "The *Imago Communitas Dei*: A Theological Anthropology of the 'Kingdom' of God," posed the question, "What would have been Jesus' theological anthropology?" He proposed that, rather than an anthropology rooted in humankind's divine image, what can be intimated from Jesus' social role as prophet

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is an inchoate anthropology of the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, Jesus' "kingdom" imagery functions as a coded message that invites a recollection and new embodiment of proto-Israel's originary activity—a project of becoming non-subjects to the state. The first part of the paper began to unpack these claims by turning to the work of cultural anthropologist James C. Scott, who provides a general history of stateless peoples living in unfavorable territories in order to escape state-civilizations. Battin then provided correspondences between proto-Israel and other autonomous, counter-civilizational communities in order to show that earliest Israel's non-state status was theologically indicative of God's Reign. Next, he demonstrated how Jesus' continuity with pre-monarchic Israel is reflected in the disciples' post-resurrection communitarian implementation of Jesus' teachings. He concluded Jesus' vision of justice and mercy relative to the kingdom of God is best understood in light of this practical collective struggle for communal autonomy from the imperial city-state, and that this particular historical site of struggle provides a context from which to preliminarily theorize justice and mercy as integral to Christian theological anthropology.

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