

CHRIST—TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Christ  
Convener: Elisabeth T. Vasko, Duquesne University  
Moderator: Orfilio Valiente, Boston College  
Presenters: Colleen Carpenter, St. Catherine's University  
Peter Fritz, College of the Holy Cross  
Anna Floerke Scheid, Duquesne University

In her paper, “Katrina was not an Act of God: The Black Christ in an Age of Environmental Disaster,” Colleen Carpenter locates whiteness at the root of the ecological and racial crises in America. Drawing on the work of James Cone, Carpenter suggests that Blackness is an appropriate christological title for white Christians in an age where white silence is the predominant ecclesial response to white supremacy. According to Carpenter it is not rational argumentation but symbols (art, literature, and music) which have the capacity to call forth prophetic action and responsibility among white people.

In “Slum Ecology, Gehenna, and Life in Christ,” Peter Joseph Fritz argues that our present economic system is *gehennagenetic*, generating slums which, like *gehenna*, function to annihilate those who enter them. Drawing insight from the work of Jon Sobrino, Fritz argues neoliberalism creates an anti-Kingdom, which is contrary to life in Christ. Read through a christological lens, those who live in slums are sacrificed as a ransom to a market economy that devours supposedly defective market actors for the sake of the salvation (success) of relatively few.

In her paper, “From Resurrection to Resistance and Back Again: Christian Hope and Social Transformation,” Anna Floerke Scheid explores resources within the work of Edward Schillebeeckx, James Cone, and M. Shawn Copeland for constructing an embodied transformative political Christology. In Schillebeeckx, she highlights the significance of the contrast experience as making injustice visible. Scheid then looks to Cone’s interpretation of the cross and resurrection as giving rise to Christian hope. Finally, she turns to Copeland as a resource for emphasizing the embodied aspects of resistance.

The session was well attended and an important discussion about the significance of race and the economy followed the paper presentations.

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