

## ECCLESIOLOGY

### TOWARD A WORLD CHURCH INCULTURATED

Presenter: Eugene Hillman, Salve Regina University

Hillman identified ecclesiology as essentially missiology. Instead of saying that the Church has a mission, however, he insists that the incarnational mission of Jesus has a Church as its instrument. Consequently the meaning of the Church is not found in itself, but in its missionary outreach which is to incarnate the Gospel in diverse cultural settings. He noted, however, that this has not been allowed to occur in any significant way; instead a European Christianity has been imposed on other cultures. This leads to a deep dichotomy between a professed Christian faith and the concrete day-to-day life in these cultures. He cited Bishop Bonifatius Haushiku of Namibia that "Christ walks too much among them in a European garment," and insisted that inculturation be carried deeper than "just music, drums, and clapping of hands."

The focus of missionary activity is not on aggregates of individuals, but on peoples as such within their respective historicocultural contexts. Hillman cited Paul VI (*EN 20*) in this regard as identifying cultures as the object of evangelization. Evangelization is not accommodation or adaptation, but according to John Paul II the "intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity, and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures" (*RM 52*). In short, the Gospel must be incarnated in other cultural worlds.

Applications of this incarnational principle require that evangelization not introduce foreign ways of being human and religious that destroy the cultural worlds of other peoples. The word of God must be expressed through the cultural forms and structures, the linguistic symbol systems, even the traditional religions of these peoples. Evangelization adds new meanings to these cultural structures. Hillman excluded only personal sin and sinful social structures as incompatible with Christianity.

Contradictions to these principles of inculturation cited by Hillman include the 1994 document on inculturation and the Roman liturgy which identified the Roman rite rather than the gospel as the object of inculturation. He also cited the training of priests and religious which turn them into "imitation Europeans and Americans," the universal code of canon law, "mostly based on pre-Christian Roman law," and the universal catechism. Hillman questioned whether the

analogical connection of inculturation with incarnation has been replaced by a translation model of inculturation.

Hillman concluded by questioning if the Incarnation were taken seriously as a principle of action by persons engaged in crosscultural ministries, whether this might prove to be a transforming leaven even more illuminating and revitalizing than the current dialogue among separated Christians.

In the discussion which followed Hillman's presentation, participants raised the issue of the relationship between the universal and local church citing limitations of an emphasis on each.

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## HISPANIC/LATINO THEOLOGIES

For the seventh consecutive year, the workshop on U.S. Hispanic/Latino theology met during the annual CTSA convention. Orlando Espín of the University of San Diego, again served as convener and moderator.

This year the workshop centered on two recent books by Latina theologians: María Pilar Aquino's *Our Cry for Life* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), and Ada María Isasi-Díaz's *En la Lucha / In the Struggle: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1993). Two well-known non-Latino theologians were invited to review the books during the meeting and start the discussion among the participants. The two theologians were Lisa Sowle Cahill and David Hollenbach, both of Boston College. (The just-published book by Jeanette Rodríguez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women*, was not available in time for review by the panelists.)

After presentations from the reviewers and authors, the floor was opened for discussion. The presentations and discussion revolved, first, around the emphasis placed by Aquino on the need of Latina/feminist theologies to challenge liberation theologies (and, indeed, all mainstream theologies). Feminist theology is not an appendix but a necessary epistemology for all theology. An interesting discussion followed on the discovery and role of causality and its implications for liberation from oppression.

Isasi-Díaz's book led to a conversation on the role of moral agency and protagonism in social, ecclesial, and familial contexts. Participants emphasized that, by retrieving the theme of "agency," the author showed the link between Latina