

morality is a major, though unstated, basis for the pope's anxiety. Patrick affirmed the pope's call to exercise freedom within limits, observing that this has helped her (in parish settings) introduce such topics as gun control. Finally, she warned against fighting subjectivism with an equally misguided authoritarianism.

Mary Elsbernd gave several examples of how *Veritatis Splendor* misuses citations from *Gaudium et Spes* to support points inconsistent with the latter document. For example, *Veritatis Splendor* presents a relatively dualistic and individualistic anthropology, supporting it with truncated or inaccurate quotations from *Gaudium et Spes*. A similar move occurs in the encyclical's use of the latter text to emphasize a morality of law and precept. For Elsbernd, close intertextual study shows that *Veritatis Splendor*, though using conciliar documents, moves away from their spirit.

Subsequent discussion ranged from claims that the encyclical inappropriately condemns all developments in moral theology since Vatican II to claims that it rightly reiterates a moral tradition which is a pastoral necessity today. Specific points were also raised concerning the text's interreligious insensitivity and the lack of nuance in its "call to perfection" drawn from the parable of the rich young man.

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NORTH AMERICAN THEOLOGY

DOING CHRISTOLOGY IN A NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT

Presenters: J. J. Mueller, St. Louis University
Terrence W. Tilley, Florida State University

The North American Theology group addresses the issues of theological inculturation by attempting to come to terms with the dominant culture in the United States through dialogue both with the classical North American religious philosophy and issues and problems of importance in contemporary North American culture.

J. J. Mueller¹ began our session by sharing some brief insights into his own effort to develop a Christology in dialogue with the North American culture. He saw his task as twofold: (1) to develop a hermeneutic of the Christian message; (2) to develop a hermeneutic of the American culture. To accomplish the first task Mueller drew on a wealth of contemporary scholarship and culled from it eight main themes that seemed to most fully represent the Christ event. These eight themes are all grounded in the idea of discipleship. The critical question each theme addresses is "What does it truly mean to follow Jesus?" To develop the second hermeneutic Mueller turned to the Declaration of Independence as that source in the tradition that defines both goals and language of the dominant ethos. He believes that the tripartite phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" best encapsulates the American cultural ideal. Mueller in turn then tried to interpret each of these American themes (life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness) in terms of the eight dominant themes of the Christian message, and in a way that highlighted the practical consequences of each for Christian discipleship in the American context.

Terrence Tilley² began his presentation with a short review of the four "basic principles and guidelines for contemporary Christology" expertly outlined by John Calvin in his article on Christology in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*.³ While Tilley lauded Calvin's scholarship he claimed that none of this theological erudition fully and concretely answers the question posed to Peter in Mark 8:27: "Who do you say that I am?" Tilley believes that this fundamental question, addressed to all disciples, begs a more fundamental question, "Who and how are we truly disciples worthy of being addressed as such by Jesus Christ." This leads Tilley to the insight that discipleship is the hermeneutical key for Christology.

Tilley then briefly outlined three central themes in American christology. (1) The centrality of discipleship. Because we never come at the question "neutrally" but from within the "company of disciples" this implies a "positional requirement" or "positional theology" as foundational to any Christology. But this in turn raises the question as to how we truly *know* or how we are in a position to truly see him clearly. This leads to Tilley's second major theme: (2) the necessity of narrative. Narrative is the primary style and mode for doing christology because "real" theology must be concrete and local if it is to be meaningful. In this sense the narrative of Christ and the narrative of his disciples are mirrors: they help us to identify not only who Jesus is, but who we, as disciples, are—

¹Author of *Practical Discipleship: A United States Christology* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

²Author of *Story Theology* (Wilmington DE: Michael Glazier, 1985); reprint: *Theology and Life* series 12 (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1985).

³Two vols., ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John Calvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

narratives shape and form our own identity. This leads to Tilley's final major theme: (3) the primacy of soteriology. We need to know our own identity, because our relationship to Jesus Christ is not only mimetic but salvific. This raises the question of not only how Jesus saves us, but who can Jesus save. Who is *in persona Christi* is a central question for all Christology in our time. Unless the company of disciples is fully and completely inclusive then the narrative of Jesus Christ cannot be a saving narrative in our culture.

So for Tilley Christology in a North American context implies an interlocking triangle of three central themes: discipleship, identity, and soteriology.

Some of the issues raised in the ensuing discussion included the following: Given the privatization of religious experience in our culture, the recovery of the "we" is very important as the context for doing theology. This implies that, as both Mueller and Tilley contend, the process of doing Christology in a discipleship context is extremely important. There was also much discussion of and consensus on the significance of soteriology in the U.S. context. The question in this culture seems to be "What do I/we need to be saved from that from which we cannot save ourselves?" There was also an important discussion on American culture itself and how we analyze and evaluate it as theologians. The loss of history and memory, the impact of mass media, the globalization of American culture, the point of entry into the culture, and the extent to which the culture both reveres and ignores religion and faith simultaneously all pose significant issues for further analysis and discussion within our group.

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PATRISTIC THEOLOGY

WILL AND PERSONHOOD: THE MONOTHELITE THREAT TO THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Presenter: George Berthold, St. Anselm College

Respondent: Peter Casarella, The Catholic University of America

Berthold described the history of the monothelite controversy highlighting Maximus' theological originality. The monothelite challenge had underlined the pressing necessity of clarifying theological, and even psychological terms. Having