

Camil Ménard analyzed the Canadian health care system using Browning's categories and the questions distributed to members of the seminar during the year. Practitioners have now become private entrepreneurs in a public system; patients are more like consumers; and medicine functions according to an industrial, technological model. The result is increasing dehumanization, especially for the poor and those in remote regions.

The challenge facing health care (and practical theology) is to rethink the meaning of health. Is it a right or a privilege? Is it an individual possession or a communal responsibility? Is it totally dependent on technology or on a societal quality of life? Each question implies theological values which practical theology needs to articulate and contribute to the public discussion.

To continue exploring through practice the meaning and method of practical theology, the group decided to use a variety of case studies next year focused on the theme of suffering as it is experienced in health care, societal conditions, and perhaps the Church.

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THE KARL RAHNER SOCIETY

PERSPECTIVES ON RAHNER'S CHRISTOLOGY

Presenters: Geoffrey B. Kelly, La Salle University
Robert A. Krieg, University of Notre Dame

The Karl Rahner Society divided the time of its academic gathering between a discussion of Geoffrey Kelly's paper on " 'Unconscious Christianity' and the 'Anonymous Christian' in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Rahner," and a consideration of the paper by Robert Krieg entitled "A Fortieth Anniversary Reappraisal of Karl Rahner's 'Chalcedon: End or Beginning?' "

Kelly finds a similarity between Bonhoeffer's idea of an "unconscious Christianity" (that a form of Christian faith exists for the nonreligious and non-Christian person who, however unmindful of it, realizes in his or her own life the pattern of the "living for others" found in the life of Jesus Christ) and Rahner's deployment of the idea of "anonymous Christianity" to hold together the seemingly exclusivist claim that all salvation is Christic with the doctrine of the

universality of God's will to save. In fact, it is the assertion of Kelly's paper that Rahner's theory of anonymous Christianity "adds a theological coherence" to Bonhoeffer's ethical sense that there had to be a "wider range of God's salvific gracing of people beyond the externalized, religious perimeters set in explicit declarations of faith in Jesus Christ."

Kelly makes clear that Bonhoeffer crafts his notion of "unconscious Christianity" in the face of the doublesided crisis he experienced: on the one hand, he knew the numbers of nonreligious persons who formed the resistance to Nazism in Germany; on the other hand, he was distressed over the ineffectiveness of the Christian religion to motivate the majority of Christians in Germany to similar resistance. At a time in which he saw nonreligious persons living in a more "Christian" way than many Christian churchgoers, Bonhoeffer searched for a way in which Christ could become the Lord of the religionless (unconscious) Christians. He pegged his hopes for a rebirth of Christianity in Germany on Christians becoming nonreligious in the sense that more effective Christian living seems possible for religionless, secular "Christians" who are freed from the trappings of religion.

The "theological coherence" which Kelly believes Rahner's theory of anonymous Christianity adds to Bonhoeffer's idea arises from the richly sacramental hermeneutic informing Rahner's theology. Creation itself is sacramental, incarnational. To all creatures is offered the self-communication of the infinite Mystery which renders them "capable of relating to the unsurpassable absolute in their search for meaning even before they can positively identify the object of their insatiable yearning." Discussion of this point centered on disagreement among participants as to the Christic character of Rahner's view of creation. To what degree is the entelechy towards the conceptual dimension in Christianity, towards explicit faith in Christ, operative in Rahner's theory of anonymous Christianity such that it truly affords a coherence to Bonhoeffer's suggestive phrase "unconscious Christianity"?

Robert Krieg's paper focuses on the role which Rahner's seminal essay, written for the fifteenth centenary of Chalcedon, played in the collapse of the neo-scholastic conceptual framework undergirding Catholic theology prior to the Second Vatican Council. The impetus for Krieg's paper is the need he sees for helping younger theologians understand and appreciate the context in which Rahner worked prior to Vatican II. Much of the interesting discussion that followed Krieg's summary of his paper further illuminated this context.

Krieg makes his argument in five steps. First, he charts some distinctions which help to clarify the field of theological options in the early- and mid-twentieth century. He understands neo-scholasticism as a broad umbrella under which some variants of modern Thomism would fit, namely, "traditional" or "liberal" Thomism represented by a figure like Garrigou-Lagrange. Other types of modern Thomism do not find as easy a home in scholastic method, for example, "historical Thomism" as adhered to by theologians like Gilson, Chenu,

Congar, and de Lubac, or the "transcendental Thomism" developed by Maréchal and elaborated by Rahner and Lonergan and a host of others. In fact, Krieg shows, while all the forms of Thomism have much in common, Rahner judges that scholastic method and transcendental thought are incompatible.

Secondly, Krieg teases out the theological situation of the period by discussing the impact of three papal encyclicals: *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), *Humani Generis* (1950), and *Sempiternus Rex Christus* (1951). Various perspectives wore against each other, creating a time of conflict within Catholic scholarship.

The third and fourth moves of Krieg's argument are constituted by the analyses, respectively, of Garrigou-Lagrange's book *Christ the Savior* and Rahner's essay "Chalcedon: End or Beginning?" The former concludes to the inappropriateness and even "impossibility of Christology's depending upon contemporary notions of person." The latter opens the path for fresh reinterpretation of Chalcedonian faith by introducing a dialectical notion of freedom into our understanding of the "divine Person" and illuminating the mystery of Christ within the general categories of the God-creature relation.

This discussion sets the stage for Krieg's final section which is to compare the "literal Thomism" of Garrigou-Lagrange with the "transcendental Thomism" of Rahner. Several conclusions are drawn. The main point affecting Christology follows from noting that while both scholars uphold an epistemology of realism, they nevertheless differ as to the role played by the human subject in knowledge. Garrigou-Lagrange does not qualify his commonsense realism, leaving it unrelated to the role of the knowing subject. The human intellect appears wholly passive. Rahner, on the other hand, adopts a critical realism that recognizes not only the place of the external world in human cognition but also admits the role of the active intellect. Given the centrality of the agent intellect for Rahner, he can be aware that language and culture do indeed influence human cognition. In reference to christology, then, Rahner can see Chalcedon's formulation as a beginning which can stand as a point of reference for new formulations of the same truths, whereas Garrigou-Lagrange sees the formulation of Chalcedon as the end of the discussion about Jesus Christ.

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