

In the discussion which followed, all participants (approximately thirty-six), traded ideas and information on a variety of topics: (1) what works in making the students read the material and be responsible for it; (2) what works when people use group processes; (3) what works when people use high tech resources; (4) what works in different types of assignments; (5) how people teach subjects like the resurrection and the birth of Jesus; (6) what books were helpful.

Three summary observations can be made. First, it was clear that the presenters and participants take seriously continued research into teaching pedagogy and the communication of the best of current theological developments. Secondly, a vibrancy and vitality exists in the theologian-teacher when theology enters the arena of people's lives, both traditional and nontraditional students, some of whom come for a variety of motives, sometimes adversarial towards theology. Thirdly, creative theology is being done in teaching. Our best judgment is, that in the classroom where the theologian teaches, the best in theology, communication, and pedagogy concretely merge.

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WOMEN'S SEMINAR IN CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY

ELIZABETH JOHNSON'S *SHE WHO IS*

Presenters: Christine E. Gudorf, Florida International University

Diana L. Hayes, Georgetown University

Julia A. Upton, St. John's University

Respondent: Elizabeth A. Johnson, Fordham University

This year's discussion of Elizabeth Johnson's *She Who Is* was a fitting indication of the distance covered in women's efforts in constructive theology since Johnson presented a segment of the book to the seminar as work in progress five years ago. Since its publication in 1992, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* has been the recipient of numerous awards and the subject of nearly countless reviews. Presenters considered Johnson's work from the point of view of ethics (Christine Gudorf), systematics (Diana Hayes), and pastoral theology (Julia Upton), pointing to areas for future development.

Gudorf indicated paradoxical aspects of the reception of Johnson's work from admiring reviewers who have praised it as traditional, apolitical, and irenic, while overlooking the feminist liberationist method from women's experience underlying its concerns and structure, the political impact of the systematic introduction of restoration of traditions congenial to women's concerns, and the positive anger which burns for the sake of justice. She asked whether feminine-gendered God language would re-situate the role of Mary, and she applauded Johnson's refusal to succumb to a neat solution to the problem of evil. Hayes found aspects of Johnson's feminist theology as congenial to the womanist and mujerista theology: emphasis on an understanding of self in community; use of the Spirit as the point of departure of trinitarian theology; inclusion of the concept of the power in God's suffering with humanity to create anew. Upton reflected on the need to incorporate imaginatively the results of Johnson's feminist reflection on the Trinity into words, symbols, and actions resulting in new liturgical forms and renewed language of prayer.

In her response Johnson described her effort to define herself as a feminist within a Catholic tradition which has Aquinas as a main source. Her intended audience are women and men who are concerned to remain within the Catholic tradition and who want to bring it forward to equality for men and women. She took issue with those who used the Catholic frame of her work to drive a wedge between herself and other feminists. In the hour-long discussion period stress was placed on the need to achieve coherence in gender justice throughout the theological system. Johnson observed that Aquinas' principle of analogy was at the root of her understanding of the mediating nature of God language. Similarly she saw a connection between a Thomistic understanding of natural theology as a basis for women's appeal to women's experience as a source for theology. A revision of Mariology was suggested which would relieve Mary from holding up all goddess titles and would reevaluate her as a disciple. Ramifications of the turn to a Spirit-grounded trinitarian theology in spirituality, ecology, art, and liturgy were explored.

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