

Respondent Michel Andraos, a Lebanese-Canadian, reflected on how Cavazos's perspective can assist others who find themselves in the position of being a minority race or culture. As an Arab newly residing in the U.S., he has seen how the difficulty of survival can lead to either a "rigidification" or a fragmentation of one's native culture. Cavazos's presentation provides an example of the benefits when a minority culture can articulate its own "heart" and bring that as a challenging gift into dialogue with the dominant culture. One cannot avoid being changed, but it can be a change guided by the priorities of one's own heart rather than by those of a hostile environment.

In the lively discussion that ensued, it was pointed out that in reality these processes of dialogue and inculturation are more often than not marked by pain and violence. Inculturation is costly, and requires great courage and forgiveness—especially on the part of the poor and marginalized who in fact do not enter the dialogue on an equal basis. Another comment was that in the U.S. all cultures are massively "colonized" by the consumeristic values promoted in media and advertising. How can we develop a spirituality that effectively inoculates people (especially children and youth) against this insidious cultural disease? The "dialogue of cultures" model may be one piece of this, but by itself it may not be sufficient to meet the gigantic challenge that presently faces Christian mission in the U.S.

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MISSIONOLOGY AND MISSION THEOLOGY

- Topic: *Missio ad Gentes*: The Interfaith Dialogue—
Beliefs Articulated and Lived
- Convener: Lou McNeil, Georgian Court College
- Moderator: Jeanne Evans, Marymount Manhattan College
- Presenters: Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Boston College
Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., Cardinal Stritch University

Francis X. Clooney's paper was entitled "*Mission ad Gentes*: Reason, Rhetoric, and Revelation in Roberto de Nobili." Roberto de Nobili was, like Mateo Ricci, one of the most influential of the early Jesuit missionaries; like Ricci, he showed great sensitivity to and respect for the culture of south India, and he believed in working for the greatest possible adaptation of the Gospel to that culture. De Nobili adapted the lifestyle and dress of an Indian holy man, and studied as well some of the classics of the Hindu tradition. Like Ricci, he also remained a steadfast missionary dedicated to the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. He enacted his missionary agenda in part by positing a sharp distinction between "Indian culture" and the "Hindu tradition," arguing that the

former was a fine and sound foundation for the Gospel, while the latter was a superstitious overlay, which obscured the culture and led to intellectual confusion and moral turpitude. He believed that a reasonable analysis of religious ideas and language would yield a consensus position, which all reasonable people could agree on, and also demonstrate how Hindu beliefs fail the test of reasoning. De Nobili's combination of maximal cultural adaptation and consequent vigorous argumentation gave him some credibility in the Indian context, and he did persuade Brahmins to become Christians; he was, however, limited in his success, and severely criticized by other missionaries who were skeptical about the distinction between culture and religion. The three treatises translated in *Preaching to the Wise* ("Report on Indian Customs," "Dialogue on Eternal Life," and "Inquiry into the Meaning of God") demonstrate de Nobili's principles on reason, culture, and religion, and give numerous examples of his own implementation of the principles. Admitting the numerous factors which distinguish us from the early seventeenth century, the question for theologians, missiologists, and students of culture and religion today is whether his claims about reason, culture, religion, and the value of religious arguments (apologetics) can still be plausible and of use to us in the twenty-first century. Clooney suggested that religious arguments could be useful in the interreligious context, though our expectations about the effect of such arguments must be more modest than de Nobili's.

The second presentation by Angelyn Dries was entitled "The Experience of American Catholic Women Missionaries and *Missio ad Gentes*." Her specific focus was on the life and work of the medical missionary, Anna Dengel. Within the context of U.S. Catholic approaches to world religions from 1893 to 1965, Dries examined the contribution and sources Anna Dengel used to develop her theological perspective toward non-Western religions. Dries's thesis was that Anna Dengel's views provided an underlying framework for a positive reception of knowledge and attitudes about non-Western religions subsequent to Vatican II and its teaching.

The context for Dengel's approach to missionary activity in India had been set in the ideas and attitudes that emerged from the "Americanism," Modernism, and the religion and science debates that had developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the Catholic community. Dengel received the currents of thought that emerged in these movements/moments through her familiarity with the work of missiologists Joseph Schmidlin and Pierre Charles. More importantly she was greatly influenced by the "Americanism" of Bishop John Keane and by the Orientalist philosopher, Charles Aiken and anthropologist, John Montgomery Cooper.

Dengel was born in Austria, but in her persistent efforts, as a woman, to receive a medical degree, she attended Medical School in Ireland, receiving her degree in 1919. After spending some time as a lay missionary doctor in India, she attempted to found a religious community of women medical missionaries, but was met with ecclesiastical resistance to the notion that religious women

could perform such roles. Again her persistence was rewarded and her community, the Medical Mission Sisters, was canonically established in 1936.

In 1945, she published the first written work on mission theology by an American Catholic woman. The mission theology of this work is marked by its holistic and incarnational emphases. She was insistent about the interrelatedness of the body and spirit, and of social analysis and spirituality. Among the striking contributions to mission theology in that work is Dengel's observation that while people were to see the goodness and compassion of a self-giving and all loving God reflected in the sisters' services to the people of India, yet, "The people must never get the idea that conversion and baptism are necessary to reward your devoted care" (*The Mission Apostolate* [New York: Paulist Press, 1945] 3-4). Also, not to be overlooked was Dengel's careful connecting of injustice, illness, and poverty with the religious critique of social structures. She wrote that the medical missions were an act of restitution by the "white race," who owed a debt "to peoples subjected and exploited by our forefathers." (Dengel, 5).

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METHOD IN THEOLOGY

- Topic: Rahner and Lonergan on the "Natural-Supernatural" Distinction
 Conveners: M. Shawn Copeland, Marquette University
 Richard M. Liddy, Seton Hall University
 Presenter: J. Michael Stebbins, Gonzaga University

Karl Rahner's theory of divine grace is generally considered the standard account. Nevertheless, J. Michael Stebbins finds Bernard Lonergan's less well-known writings on the topic "more adequate and compelling" and with more practical applications. For Rahner, God has created the world in order to share himself with it. This divine initiative cannot be conceived as having merely juridical or moral force; it must make a real, intrinsic difference in those beings who are called to union with God. The immanent, ontological difference this makes to human nature is what Rahner calls the "supernatural existential." This gift is "conscious" not as an object but as a modification of our transcendentality, an aspect of the unthematic subjectivity that accompanies all of our spiritual acts. This is strictly a gift; it does not belong to and is not demanded by nature as such. Nonetheless, it is an intrinsic constituent of concrete human nature as it actually exists in history. Rahner's well-known analysis of nature as a "remainder concept" follows from this analysis.

For Lonergan grace is also primarily the divine self-gift. From this gift there results in persons a "created communication of the divine nature" allowing creatures to relate to God in himself through the habit of charity and the light of