LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

FILIACIÓN-FRATERNIDAD:
THE HOPE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE IN LIGHT OF GLOBAL DISPARITY.
EXPLORING THE THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGIES OF
KARL RAHNER AND JOSÉ IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ FAUS.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THEOLOGY

BY
SCOTT M. MYSLINSKI
CHICAGO, IL
MAY 2011
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation project can be characterized as a journey that began sixteen years ago when I was accepted into the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). I owe much of my current vision of the world and human existence as well as my commitment to the poor and marginalized to the Jesuits. As a Jesuit I was given the opportunity to accompany the poor and marginalized of society on many occasions and it was in these experiences of accompaniment that I began to see human existence and Jesus Christ’s mission of the kingdom of God in a new light. I am further grateful for the many individual companions of Jesus who have become brothers to me along the way and who I continue to call my brothers.

This journey was given direction ten years ago with an interesting graduate class taught by Dr. Jon Nilson on contemporary Christian anthropology. One year later, that interest was nurtured and directed toward a particular path in a course on Latin American liberation theology taught by Fr. Daniel Hartnett, S.J. It was in that class that Fr. Hartnett introduced me to the works and thought of José Ignacio González Faus, S.J. and encouraged me to pursue his thought further. Two years later, Fr. David Stagaman, S.J. introduced me to, and gave me an appreciation for, the foundational work of Karl Rahner, S.J. To these three dedicated teachers, mentors, and friends I owe immense gratitude. I especially want to thank my director Jon Nilson for his guidance and mentoring throughout this long process. He was always there to encourage me along the way. He is
truly a person who exemplifies the Jesuit adage *cura personalis*. In addition to my committee, I want to extend a note of gratitude to Fr. González Faus who faithfully remained in correspondence with me during the research and writing stages of this project. He was kind enough to answer my many questions while I flooded his e-mail inbox.

In addition to my dissertation committee, I want to thank the many individuals and communities that gave me encouragement and support along the journey. I want to thank the members of the faculty, my fellow graduate students, and the staff of the Theology Department at Loyola University, especially Catherine Wolf and Marianne Wolfe whose hard work, dedication and humor made the process much easier than it could have been. I am also grateful for the Theology Department at Loyola Academy Jesuit College Preparatory where I truly experience a community “on-the-way” to *filiación-fraternidad*.

Most importantly, I want to thank my family for all of their love and support. The real journey began with the faithfulness and love that I experienced in the life of my parents, Ruth and Peter (d. 1999), and my siblings, Michèle, Teresa, Thomas, Paul and Kelly. From them I learned the value of faith and the truth of *agapic* love. I also want to thank my wife’s family for their encouragement and love along the way. But above all, I want to show my deepest gratitude to my wife, Lourdes, whose love, understanding, patience, and many sacrifices made this project possible. This dissertation is just as much as hers as it is mine. *Te quiero, Lourdes*. To her and to my two children, Rebecca and Adam I dedicate this dissertation.
I realize that there are many who have not been acknowledged here but have contributed to this project in many personal and special ways. Your love and care have not gone unnoticed.
For Lourdes, Rebecca, and Adam.
El hombre es creado por Dios para alabar, hacer reverencia, servirle y así llegar a la salvación. Todas las cosas, fuera del hombre, están creadas en relación con el hombre para ayudarle en este plan de Dios. Por lo tanto, el hombre ha de usar de las cosas tanto cuanto le ayuden dentro del plan de Dios, y debe abstenerse de las cosas tanto cuanto le apartan de ese plan. Esto implica que debemos procurar estar interiormente libres de todo apego desordenado, de tal manera que, de nuestra parte, antes de conocer la voluntad de Dios, no valoricemos más la salud que la enfermedad, la riqueza que la pobreza, el honor que el deshonor, la vida larga que la corta…Solamente hemos de desear y elegir lo que más nos conduce para cumplir el plan de Dios.

_Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio_
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

ABSTRACT ix

CHAPTER ONE: SITUATING THE PROBLEM 1
Globalization, Global Disparity, and Global Awareness 3
Responses to Global Disparity 9
Why Theological Anthropology? 22
Concluding Remarks 31

CHAPTER TWO: SITUATING THE THEOLOGIANS 33
The Challenge of Modernity and the Response from the Catholic Church 34
Karl Rahner: Context and Theological Foundations 42
José Ignacio Gonzalez Faus: Context and Theological Foundations 58
Concluding Remarks: The “Ignatian Vision” 78

CHAPTER THREE: DESCRIPTION OF THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT 83
Rahner: Human Existence as Transcendent Spirit and Created Being 84
González Faus: Human Existence as Creature and Divine Image of God 96
Rahner: The Fragility and Vulnerability of Human Existence 109
González Faus: The Project of Enmity (Rupture of the Filial; Corruption of the Fraterno) 118
Concluding Remarks 135

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SAVING ACTIVITY OF GOD 139
Rahner: Grace as the Gift of Divine Self-Presence 141
González Faus: The Radical Gifts of Filiación and Fraternidad 161
Concluding Remarks 186

CHAPTER FIVE: ECCLESIAL IMPLICATIONS 190
Dulles’ Ecclesial Models 192
Root Metaphors and Implications of Rahner’s Ecclesiology 204
Root Metaphors and Implications of González Faus’ Ecclesiology 220
Concluding Remarks: Filiación-Fraternidad as the Transformation of Globalization 249

APPENDIX A: LIFE CHRONOLOGIES OF KARL RAHNER AND JOSÉ IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ FAUS 252

BIBLIOGRAPHY 256

VITA 265
ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that there is a need for Christian theology to critically re-examine human existence through social and structural categories in response to the current direction of globalization which threatens the humanization of human existence. Specifically, there exists a need for a contemporary Christian theological anthropology that is in dialogue with the social sciences and that attempts to develop an understanding of human sin, grace, and redemption in structural and social categories in order to offer an alternative vision of what it means to be human in light of the prevailing anthropology that is at the heart of the current trajectory of the globalizing world. This alternative vision of human existence will have to meet the challenge of a globalizing world that is creating greater dependency and interconnectedness among peoples and nations and a globalizing world that cultivates and encourages an anthropology of egocentrism and radical individualism.

In order to contribute to contemporary theological anthropology which meets the challenge of a crisis of being human within the complex context of a globalizing world, this dissertation will draw on the theological anthropologies of two Jesuit theologians: Karl Rahner and José Ignacio González Faus. This dissertation attempts to bring these two theologians into a dynamic dialogue and ultimately offer a critical analysis of the nature of sin, grace, and redemption in their respective understanding of human existence in order to offer a more adequate theological anthropology for contemporary Christian theology.
In order to accomplish this task, this dissertation will be presented as follows. Chapter one will first outline the situation of the current trajectory of globalization, with particular concern about the underlying anthropology of the current form of globalization, and of the problem of global disparity, and present various explanatory frameworks which attempt to address the problem. It will then present various responses to the problem from Catholic theology. It will finally conclude with the claim that Catholic theology, and specifically Catholic theological anthropology, can offer a viable response to the situation and problem by presenting an alternative vision of human existence.

After situating the problem in chapter one, chapter two will show how the theological anthropologies of Karl Rahner and José Ignacio González Faus developed out of their own historical contexts. It will do this by first presenting how the Catholic Church responded to the challenges of modernity of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It will then outline how the theologies and anthropologies of Rahner and González Faus were shaped by the challenges of modernity.

After situating the problem and situating the thought of Rahner and González Faus as sources to which this dissertation draws upon, chapters three through five form the heart of this dissertation. First, chapter three will explore how Rahner and González Faus address what Christian theological anthropology sees as the human predicament and how they understand the theological category of sin in order to begin assessing the theological anthropologies of both theologians in light of the current trajectory of globalization and of global disparity. Then, chapter four will focus upon both theologians’ soteriology. The fundamental guiding question of this chapter is whose theological anthropology can best address the problem of historical and social salvation.
Finally, chapter five will explore the root metaphors of church that would arise from these two distinct, but complementary, theological anthropologies.

Ultimately, I contend that the theological anthropology of González Faus best offers an alternative anthropology to the prevalent anthropology at the heart of the current direction of globalization, and can, therefore, adequately address the unsettling reality of global disparity.
CHAPTER ONE  
SITUATING THE PROBLEM

In 1963 Bob Dylan wrote the following lines to his album *The Times They Are a-Changin'*.

The line it is drawn  
The curse it is cast  
The slow one now  
Will later be fast  
As the present now  
Will later be past  
The order is  
Rapidly fadin'.  
And the first one now  
Will later be last  
For the times they are a-changin’.¹

These lines, which have often been used at protests and rallies for social justice, speak of a radical shift in the structure of society. This shift is often understood as an ‘interruption’ whereby the poor and powerless are no longer poor and powerless.

This shift, however, has not occurred. Rather, poverty, and powerlessness due to poverty, is still a grave problem today, and has reached global proportions. Though the question of whether poverty has increased or decreased over the last four decades is

¹ Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are a-Changin’,” *The Times They Are a-Changin’*, 1964, Columbia Records.
debatable, the disparity\(^2\) between the powerful and the powerless seems to have only gotten deeper and wider.\(^3\) Yet, even though Dylan’s apocalyptic message may not have come to fruition, the times, in fact, are a changin’.

Massive changes are occurring within the forms of human interaction, human organization, and the utilization of power by particular persons and communities.\(^4\) For example, information is disseminated more quickly, and to a greater amount of people, due in part to the rapid growth of cable and satellite television in developed countries, the extent of international media, and the growth of the internet. Also, new innovations in technology and medicine transcend nations, and are, to an extent, shared among nations and countries. Educational systems and curriculums throughout the world, starting with primary education, are also being affected by the massive changes in the world. Furthermore, the health of local economies is more contingent upon global markets than ever before. Finally, the possibility of environmental degradation is no longer a problem of local communities, but can now affect all peoples. These are just a few examples of a world in the process of transformation, and are the earmarks of a “globalizing” world.

From this context of a globalizing world, four concerns can be raised. First, is the increasing interaction and interconnectedness of peoples throughout the world facilitating

---

\(^2\) For this dissertation, the term “disparity” will refer specifically to economic disparity in the form of extreme poverty and the social ills that come with extreme poverty (e.g., lack of education, poor sanitation, malnutrition, social unrest).

\(^3\) In terms of absolute, or extreme, poverty, there is general agreement that the gap between the richest and poorest of the world has increased over the last decades of the twentieth century. See, for example, “Divided World, Divided Nations?,” in *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate* 2\(^{nd}\) edition, eds. David Held and Anthony McGrew (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 421. See also David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 79. Hereafter, this literature will be cited as GTR and G/A-G.

\(^4\) Throughout this dissertation I will use the term “power” to designate the ability of human existence to create structures, systems, personal and social relationships, and human history.
a greater sense of human dignity, equality and solidarity? Second, how is the world going to be structured, with greater equality and opportunity or less? Third, how will these structures define what it means to be human? Finally, whose interests are being served, the global community or only the particularly strong and competitive communities? In other words, how will human power be used, to enter into the struggle for justice with those in society who suffer from powerlessness, or to dominate and exploit those who are powerless?

It is stemming from these concerns that this dissertation contends that a re-examination of human existence through a Christian lens may offer a potential framework to assess the current form of human interaction, human organization, and human power. This point will be argued further in the last section of this chapter.

**Globalization, Global Disparity, and Global Awareness**

**Defining Globalization**

The term “globalization” is often used to name the process of a transforming world. However, what exactly is globalization? David Held and Anthony McGrew offer a workable definition of globalization that links the term to the current global order. They claim that “globalization represents a significant shift in the spatial reach of social relations and organization towards the interregional or intercontinental scale.”

They elaborate on this claim by pointing out that:

- globalization denotes the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction. It refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach

---

5 *GTR*, 3.
of power relations across the world’s major regions and continents. However, as the rise of the anti-globalization protests demonstrates, it should not be read as prefiguring the emergence of a harmonious world society or as a universal process of global integration in which there is a growing convergence of cultures and civilizations.6

From this extended definition, two points of interest for this present project emerge.

First, this definition makes the claim that there are real changes taking place in the world with respect to the manner in which human persons interact and relate to each other, to how human communities are organized and being organized, and to the way human power is being utilized.

Second, it illustrates the fact that there is real concern about the direction of these global changes, and that it cannot be assumed that the global changes are benefiting, or are meant to benefit, all persons and communities. In other words, it cannot be assumed that all peoples are benefiting from this global transformation, and that it is in fact a possibility that there is an increase in extreme poverty, inequality, and injustice.7 It is this last point that is most relevant to this present project. This dissertation is concerned with the question of what can be done, or what new approaches can be explored, in order to address this disparity.

6 Ibid., 4.

7 In the introduction to part five of their reader, Held and McGrew point out that the extract from the 1999 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report offers the best evidence for the argument linking growing world inequality and poverty with globalization. Even if the causes of global poverty and the increase in the gap between rich and poor are debatable, “the UNDP extract produces evidence to show that the numbers of people living in absolute poverty...have increased over the last decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, it asserts that the gap between richest and poorest in the world is now at historic levels,” Ibid., 421.
The Globalization Debate

The global phenomenon of change and the term ‘globalization’ are raising complex questions and thoughtful debates. An overly simplified assessment of the issue would divide the debate among ‘optimists’ and ‘pessimists.’ However, though the extreme positions do exist, any productive evaluation of the present global condition will not attempt to simplify the problem.

Held and McGrew present a helpful overview of the complexity of this globalization debate. They argue that the globalization debate can be mapped around two ideal-type constructions: the ‘globalists’ and the ‘sceptics.’ They argue that globalists “consider that contemporary globalization is a real and significant historical development.”

There are, however, skeptics on the other side of the debate who “conceive [globalization] as a primarily ideological or social construction which has marginal explanatory value.” In other words, the skeptics view globalization as an ideological construction, or a “necessary myth,” that legitimizes the neoliberal agenda, whereas on the other hand, the globalists view globalization as a real “set of interrelated processes operating across all the primary domains of social power.”

This debate between these two ideal-types is not a winner-take-all argument. For Held and McGrew, much can, and should be, learned from both sides of the debate.

---

8 Ibid., 2.

9 Ibid., 2. Along with these two groupings, there is also a third group. This third group denies the very existence of any real substantial changes taking place in the world, and see the talk over ‘globalization’ as pure rhetoric and nonsense. For the sake of the argument and scope of this project, I will follow David Held and Anthony McGrew’s lead, which attempts to engage in those positions that hold that there does exist some real substantial changes taking place in the world and that these changes are intensifying daily.

10 Ibid., 5-6.
Held and McGrew utilize these ideal-type constructions for heuristic purposes in order to shed light on this very complex, and contentious, debate. As illustrated in their reader, this classification of the debate into two general camps does not simplify the matter at all, and it does not attempt to create any static positions. Instead, they underline the complexity of the debate by pointing out that there are multiple sub-groups and sub-positions that overlap and share similar stances.

**Common Ground and Agreement**

Along with the debate, there is also common ground and general agreement among most theorists. Held and McGrew illustrate this common ground by highlighting five points of convergence:

1. there is increasing “economic interconnectedness” in the world
2. global competition “challenges old hierarchies and creates new inequalities”
3. the reality of transnational problems raises the question of the nature and role of national government
4. “the expansion of international governance” raises the question of what sort of new world order is being created and whose interests will this world order serve
5. creativity and imagination are needed to respond to this new global development

These five points of common ground point to the fact that there is a growing world-wide web of relationships and interaction, that some longstanding human institutions and structures are being challenged, and that human power may be used in a

---

11 Ibid., 38-39. For the purpose of this dissertation, I am interested specifically in points 1, 2, 4, and 5. Even if point 2 is left out of the equation, and it is argued, as in the case from neoliberal circles, that the economic standards of people's lives are improving on a global scale, the question for this dissertation still remains, does economic stability equate to greater humanization? Even arguing on pragmatic terms, does economic equality, or even economic welfare, create a humanization that is illustrated in the biblical form as the *imago* and *similitudo dei*?
way that could create new injustices and promote a global form of social Darwinism in which only some interests will be served.

There is also considerable agreement on the fact that disparity, in terms of extreme poverty, exists in the world. This phenomenon of disparity takes the form of people suffering from extreme poverty while simultaneously other people and regions of the world, and particular sectors of society, enjoy a surplus of wealth far beyond their basic needs.

Finally, there is considerable agreement on the fact that because of the deepening and speeding up of social interactions on a global scale, there is greater awareness of the reality of this disparity. Perhaps a hundred years ago it could have been argued, on the basis of pure ignorance, that extreme poverty did not exist. However, with the advances in global communications, and the facility and efficiency of moving ideas, images, products, and peoples across the world, this can no longer be the case.

It is the combination of these two points of agreement that is most morally troubling. The question is raised, if globalization has created greater awareness of the disparity that exists in the world, why isn’t the eradication of extreme poverty a moral priority? It is my contention that the reason for this discrepancy can be found in the anthropology inherent in the current form of globalization. Throughout this dissertation, the underlying anthropology that I believe needs to be unmasked and ultimately dealt with in order to fundamentally address the current trajectory of globalization is one that (1) sees the individual person as an autonomous self that is fundamentally egocentric, (2) promotes perpetual consumption as an offer of hope and fulfillment, (3) sees the need for
instant and constant stimulation and gratification as the authentic way to happiness, (4) creates deception in order to preserve the self and its own interests, (5) values other persons insomuch as they benefit the maximization of profit and material wealth, and ultimately (6) defines the person’s worth by their material possessions and economic status.12

This question and claim should not lead to a pessimistic outlook on the current state of global affairs. Rather, as noticed in the last point of common ground offered by Held and McGrew, there exists the possibility for a real positive response through ‘creativity’ and ‘imagination.’13 In other words, what is needed is a constructive solution.

Conclusion: Where Do We Go from Here?

Before constructing a possible approach to address the current problem, the following section of this chapter will explore, and briefly outline, the various explanatory frameworks of the ethical implications of this global disparity. These frameworks are

---

12 See Daniel G. Groody for a similar list. “Globalizing Solidarity: Christian Anthropology and the Challenge of Liberation,” Theological Studies 69 (2008), 266.

13 After clarifying the positions, and pointing out the common ground, Held and McGrew offer their interpretation of the current global phenomenon. They attempt to avoid limiting their theory to either a skeptical argument or globalist one, but rather press both positions, and attempt to go beyond them. They argue that there are valuable and compelling ideas that stem from both groups, and that both groupings can aid in developing a different interpretation to the debate. Though they do attempt to develop a constructive theory, their position on the matter appears to be much more reserved and ‘agnostic’ than many of the other positions. In G/A-G, they claim that since the direction of the patterns of global change “remains uncertain,” this interpretation “makes no claims about the future trajectory of globalization; nor does it evaluate the present in relation to some single, fixed ideal-type ‘globalized world,’”(126). Ultimately, their “transformationalist” position argues that what will be needed in the future to address this global phenomenon is a “cosmopolitan outlook…characterized by overlapping communities of fate and multilevel/multilayered politics,” GTR, 42.
relatively recent philosophical reflections on the questions of poverty and economic injustice, and the necessary moral responses by individuals and/or institutions.

The structure of this brief outline will be ordered on a sliding-scale from an analysis that places moral responsibility solely on the individual to an analysis that places moral responsibility solely on social structures and systems.

This section will then conclude with a brief look at how the Roman Catholic Church has responded to this question of global disparity, and it will give the rationale for the use of Catholic theology as a valuable and productive contribution to a solution.

The last section of this chapter raises the question of whether a theological anthropology offers a necessary contribution to the solution to the problem of global disparity. This question will take the form of two parts. First, what can theology offer as a response to the problem? Second, why address the current problem via an examination into the human condition?

**Responses to Global Disparity**

Explanatory Frameworks

In light of the change in human interaction, human organization, and human power, and in light of the concern of global disparity and suffering, this section will briefly outline a spectrum of philosophical frameworks of theories of justice. I will not spend considerable time in the details of their arguments. The goal is to illustrate a few possible methods of responding to the global disparity problem. In order to clarify the diverse responses, I will present these various theories on a sliding scale beginning with a ‘neoliberal’ libertarian position, which places responsibility solely upon the individual,
and concluding with a socialist position, which places responsibility upon social structures and systems. The last framework that I will outline is that of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the Church’s responses to globalization and global disparity are multiple and complex, the outline on the Church’s response will not be an exhaustive one.

Robert Nozick

The first framework that offers a possible response to the situation of a globalizing world and the problem of global disparity is that of the American philosopher Robert Nozick. Nozick’s theory comes out of a response to the theory of justice promoted by John Rawls. He attempts to address Rawls’ theory of distributive justice, and replace it with a theory of entitlement.

In his chapter on distributive justice in *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Nozick argues that any distributive theory of justice is misleading. He points out that in “[h]earing the term ‘distribution,’ most people presume that some thing or mechanism uses some principle or criterion to give out a supply of things” and that “[t]here is no central distribution, no person or group entitled to control all the resources, jointly deciding how they are to be doled out.”

According to Nozick, a distributive theory of justice that fundamentally attempts to make the poor of society no longer poor requires a redistribution of wealth through the form of taxation or other means. This redistribution of wealth would be an injustice because it impinges on an individual’s freedom and right to own property. This redistribution would also require restrictions to be imposed on

---

individuals’ liberty. Also, a distributive theory is misleading because there is no one central power that ‘distributes’ wealth for all persons.

In response to Rawls’ distributive theory of justice, Nozick argues for a theory of “entitlement.” Nozick lays out three principles in this theory. First, in a free society, shares of wealth are acquired by individuals by way of entrepreneurial means or by other just means of appropriation of “non-held things.” Wealth is fundamentally generated by individual creativity and market competition. Individuals who acquired these holdings are morally entitled to this wealth because they have freely acquired it.

Secondly, an individual may choose to exchange this wealth for something else by transferring this wealth to another individual, or the individual may freely give it to someone without gaining anything in return. An individual has the right to do this because it is his or her property.

Lastly, if any injustice occurs in either the act of acquiring wealth (e.g., stealing), or in the transaction between individuals, then this violation needs to be set right. This is the principle of rectification. These three principles fundamentally rest on the notions of freedom, rights, and entitlement. When these three principles are maintained, then justice in society is upheld.

Nozick’s theory of entitlement promotes a theory of justice based on self-interest, individual freedom, and individual responsibility, and a theory whereby moral obligations are relegated to the individual’s responsibility not to infringe upon another individual’s rights to property or wealth. There exists no moral responsibility if some persons lack in some form of property or wealth. It is solely the responsibility of the individual person to
appropriate wealth. Any moral obligation to help the poor is non-existent. An individual can help the poor if he or she so desires, but he or she is not obligated in any way.

In a globalizing world faced with global disparity, a theory of entitlement will only perpetuate the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest of the world.

**Peter Singer**

The next framework is the theory of justice advanced by Peter Singer. Unlike Nozick, Singer does make the case for helping others on moral grounds. Singer develops his theory in his essay “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” by challenging certain assumptions within contemporary moral theory.

Singer first raises the question of distance. He points out that in society there exists the assumption that an individual’s moral obligations lessens the further away the individual is in relationship to another individual. I am morally obligated to help the needy, but that help is relative to my nearness to that person. In other words, as the argument goes, I am more morally obligated to attend to the needs of my own child than to the child that lives in another country. However, as Singer points out, the logic of distance cannot be argued due to the changing nature of communication and transportation.

After addressing the distance argument, Singer makes the claim that it is universally reasonable to derive a duty of non-interference, that is, that an individual has a moral duty not to harm another individual. From this rather reasonable claim, Singer deduces that this moral duty can be extended to assisting another individual if that individual’s life is in jeopardy. Therefore, for Singer, individuals ought to do what they
can do to prevent any bad from happening to others without sacrificing anything that is “morally significant.”\textsuperscript{15} This is the well-known “Child-in-the-Pond” case. Individuals “ought to give as much as possible, that is, at least up to the point at which by giving more one would begin to cause serious suffering for oneself and one’s dependents.”\textsuperscript{16}

Singer also challenges the assumptions made in the traditional argument of distinguishing duty from charity. He points out that “because giving money is regarded as an act of charity, it is not thought that there is anything wrong with not giving. The charitable man may be praised, but the man who is not charitable is not condemned.”\textsuperscript{17} For Singer, the person living an affluent life is not being charitable by giving food or money to a starving person. Rather, it is the affluent person’s duty to give to those in need. Furthermore, as a duty, the affluent person ought to give as much as possible without falling into the same impoverished state. If the affluent person does not give to the extent that he or she can, then that would constitute an injustice.

Singer’s theory of justice clearly moves beyond Nozick’s notion of justice. However, the moral obligation to help the poor is still found with the individual person’s response to those in need. In other words, this theory may encourage individuals and nations to give aid to the poor, but the reasons for the perpetuation of global disparity are never addressed. This framework does not inquire into the causes of poverty nor the


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 234.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 235.
possible correlation between poverty and the structure of society, but remains at the level of response by the individual person.

**Martha Nussbaum**

A transitional explanatory framework that can be employed to address the problem of global disparity is the “capabilities approach” developed by Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum is critical of theories of justice that address poverty by way of material resources. Furthermore, she is critical of economic-utilitarian approaches to the issue of poverty that make generalized statements about impoverished nations and people. These approaches are deficient, according to Nussbaum, because they overlook distinct qualities of each individual person. Instead of understanding poverty as a lack of things, Nussbaum advocates a more integral way of looking at poverty. Rather than asking what the poor need in terms of material resources, Nussbaum reformulates the question in terms of what a person is capable of doing and becoming.

In order to arrive at the question of human capability, Nussbaum, with the help of the economist Amartya Sen, developed a formal anthropology, constituted by certain human qualities that, she believes, transcend particular cultural, religious, and national biases. These qualities come from an intuitive notion of the natural dignity of the human being. Though they are formal, she argues that these qualities “are set in the context of a type of political liberalism that makes them specifically political goals and presents them in a manner free of any specific metaphysical grounding.”[^18]

These formal human qualities are: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought;

emotions; practical reason; affiliation; concern for and be in relation with other species; play; and control over the environment.

Ultimately, the capabilities approach aims at getting individual persons, and groups of people, to reach their capability “threshold.” Though there is a social element in this theoretical framework to justice, it does not probe into the possibility that certain social systems and structures could be unjust.

**Jeffrey Sachs**

The next explanatory framework of a theory of justice moves beyond the individual as focal point for moral responsibility, to the responsibility of social structures. Jeffrey Sachs, in his work *The End of Poverty*, places the moral responsibility to address dire poverty upon the structures of national and global governing bodies.

Sachs’ theory is distinct from the others in that he seeks to uncover the causes of extreme poverty, and finds these causes in structures and systems of society. He argues that impoverished countries are stuck in a “poverty trap,” whereby factors beyond the person’s ability to choose, play a decisive role.¹⁹

As a possible solution to disparity, Sachs argues for a progressive economic development of impoverished nations and regions, stimulated by help from wealthy nations. Rather than advocating for traditional aid-relief that was prevalent two decades ago, Sachs wants wealthy governments to focus on structural investments in poor countries (e.g., investments in energy, transportation, communication).

He argues that wealthy countries could provide the necessary help that the poorest nations need. However, these wealthy countries have only allocated a portion of what they actually have promised and could offer in order to help eradicate poverty.\(^{20}\) For development to work in impoverished countries, wealthy countries need to substantially help poor countries make practical investments in their own countries, not just say that they have helped or will help. This will provide the poorer nations the ability to break from the poverty trap, and move towards economic development.

Sachs’ theory clearly breaks from the previous frameworks and reformulates the issue. By arguing for the responsibility to be placed on structural entities, Sachs moves his theory closer to a solution to a *global* problem. However, his theory remains at the level of practical self-interest. He argues that for reasons of security it should be in the interest of wealthy nations to help the poorest nations. According to Sachs, the major cause of social instability and global terrorism is extreme poverty and inequality. Therefore, a more economically stable world creates a more safe and secure world.

**Thomas Pogge**

The next framework, advanced by Thomas Pogge, continues the attempt to move beyond individual moral theories towards a theory of justice that focuses on the structural and systemic causes of, and solutions for, global disparity. He does this by first addressing the various reasons for its perpetuation. With the reasons clearly presented, he then makes the argument that what is needed is a theory of justice that promotes structural and systemic change within society.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 218.
One cause of the persistence of poverty, according to Pogge, is the form in which help has traditionally been given. Pogge acknowledges the fact that the citizens of wealthy nations tend to help out those who are impoverished. These individuals may even recognize the moral obligation inherent in helping those in need. However, the help that is promoted and carried out comes in the form of donations, aid, and redistribution. Few question the reasons for the perpetuation of poverty.

Another cause of poverty’s perpetuation is that within wealthy nations there persists an assumed belief in the reasoning why poor people are in that economic state. He calls this belief the “Purely Domestic Poverty Thesis.”21 This theory claims that the reason for the existence of abject poverty in countries is due to internal causes (e.g., corrupt governments and the lack of entrepreneurial initiatives by the local people). This theory is attractive to many, according to Pogge, because it offers logical explanations for poverty, as well as practical solutions. However, this theory is problematic and leads to a perpetuation of extreme poverty. One specific problem that Pogge points out is that this theory never asks whether or not wealthy countries could be a part of the cause of dire poverty.

A third cause for the perpetuation of poverty is the various frameworks that have been promoted to address poverty. Pogge specifically sees the theories that are based on positive moral duties, such as the theories offered by John Rawls, Peter Singer, and Peter Unger, as lacking. Instead of arguing on the basis of positive moral duties, he approaches the problem by way of negative moral obligations. Like Nozick, Pogge argues that

wealthy countries do not have a moral obligation to help out those in need. However, wealthy countries do have a moral obligation not to harm others, especially those in need. This negative moral obligation is weightier than positive moral duties, and should be the criterion for addressing the problem of extreme poverty. What is unique about Pogge’s understanding of the principle of negative duties is that it can be applied to individuals as well as institutions and social systems. Taking this negative moral obligation into consideration, and applying it structurally, wealthy countries have a moral obligation not to harm the poorest countries. This translates, for Pogge, into the notion that wealthy and powerful countries have a moral obligation to help out the poorer countries of the world because these wealthy countries have violated the negative duty to not harm others by their political and economic policies.

After giving what he sees as the reasons for the continuation of extreme poverty, Pogge applies the principle of negative moral obligation. He sees the current global structural order as being the key contributor to the persistence of extreme poverty in the world (e.g., the rules set by the World Trade Organization). Applying the negative moral theory to this situation of the global order means that wealthy countries are obligated “not to support and not to pocket gains from an unfair institutional order that foreseeably contributes to severe deprivations.” These affluent countries must challenge the global economic and political policies of wealthy countries that contribute to global disparity and suffering (e.g., unfair trade policies with poorer countries). Instead of providing economic aid or redistribution as in the resourcist model of justice, or addressing the natural disadvantages of individuals as in the “capabilities approach,” what needs to be

---

22 Ibid., 20.
done is a critique and reorganization of the present global order (e.g., creating more just and fair rules for trade and exchange, levying a tax on natural resources in wealthy countries where the proceeds go to the poorest countries).

Of the previous theorists, Pogge’s theory of justice presses moral responsibility beyond individual obligation to structural and social responsibility and change. In a globalizing world, this framework emerges as the more suitable framework for the current situation.

**David Schweickart**

The last framework for a theory of justice is the theory put forth by David Schweickart. Similar to Pogge, Schweickart argues for greater accountability and responsibility on the part of social systems and institutions. However, Schweickart is critical of Pogge for not delving further into the question of the cause of global poverty. Though Pogge brings up important questions of the fairness of the interaction between wealthy countries and poor countries, he does not, according to Schweickart, see the real fundamental cause of poverty. For him, the fundamental cause of, and perpetuating force behind, global disparity is laissez-faire capitalism. His post-script remark in his book *After Capitalism* illustrates his sentiments clearly: “the events of September 11 demonstrate how desperately the world needs a progressive alternative to the ideology of global capitalism.”

---

23 David Schweickart, “Global Poverty: Alternative Perspectives on What We Should Do—and Why” (paper to be presented to the Bertram Morris Colloquium, University of Colorado, Boulder, 6 October 2007), 9-10.

In Chapter 4 of *After Capitalism*, Schweickart claims that capitalism is at core unjust and compromises democratic ideals. In his critique of capitalism, he isolates six particular problems with capitalism that he sees as sustaining an economic system that is unjust. He argues that capitalism creates inequality, unemployment, overwork, poverty, a polyarchy, and environmental degradation. As capitalism becomes the dominant economic system in the world, these six problematic aspects of capitalism are extending beyond particular nations to the global community.

In response to capitalism as the root cause of the increasing global disparity, Schweickart proposes an alternative economic theory which he calls “Economic Democracy.” Economic Democracy, according to Schweickart, is a market based economy. Like capitalism, competitive markets are preserved. However, with Economic Democracy, democratic ideals are brought to the workplace, and social control of investment is advanced.

Prior to this scenario materializing, however, Schweickart argues that reform needs to occur in the economic relationships between wealthy countries and poor countries (e.g., fair trade). This reform would give poor countries “genuine autonomy and freedom from exploitation (i.e., debt relief), control over locally based foreign enterprises, and higher prices for raw materials and other products exported to rich countries.”

---

25 Ibid., 121.
The Response from Catholic Theology

Voices within the Roman Catholic Church have also weighed in on the ever complex debate over the meaning, nature, and effects of globalization, and on the problem of global disparity.\textsuperscript{26}

In more contemporary times, the Church has responded to globalization and global disparity via its social teachings. With Leo XIII’s encyclical \textit{Rerum Novarum} (1891), the Church began to systematically respond to the social problems of economic injustice and poverty due in part to the industrial revolution, the labor movement, and the problems found in capitalism and socialism.\textsuperscript{27} This initial response by Pope Leo led to further papal encyclicals on poverty and social justice, and to various bishops’ documents.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} The responses by the Church have come in varied, and at times fragmented, forms. For example, some have been direct responses to globalization, and to the problem of global disparity, in the form of conferences, ecclesial reports, and theological works: the year-long Institute on Globalization at the Santa Clara University (2002); a report from the Jesuits’ Social Justice Secretariat in Rome (\textit{Globalization and Marginalization}, 2006); The volume \textit{Globalization and Catholic Social Thought}, ed. John A. Coleman and William F. Ryan (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005); Volume 5 of Concilium entitled \textit{Globalization and its Victims} (2001). Other responses have not been directed towards the phenomenon of globalization \textit{per se} but have been a response to global issues and problems. For example, the Vatican’s Jubilee 2000 and the call for debt relief, research institutes (e.g., Cristianisme i Justícia), and the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (e.g., in 2004, Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino hosted a seminar on globalization and poverty for church and NGO leaders). It is interesting to note that currently much of the significant theological literature engaging in the globalization debate can be found in Spanish and Portuguese publications (e.g., \textit{Teologica Xaveriana, Cristianisme i Justícia}).

\textsuperscript{27} As John Coleman points out, Catholic Social Thought has deeper roots than Leo XIII’s 1891 papal encyclical. He argues that “Catholic reflection on what it means to be authentically human in history and culture began in the second and third century with the fathers of the Church. This continued with Augustine, Aquinas, and the Spanish Scholastics,” “Making the Connections: Globalization and Catholic Social Thought” in \textit{Globalization and Catholic Social Teaching}, ed. John A. Coleman and William F. Ryan (Ottawa, Novalis, 2005), 15. Hereafter, this text will be cited as \textit{GCST}.

\textsuperscript{28} In more recent years, John Paul II gave a stinging critique of unbridled capitalism in his encyclicals \textit{Sollicitudo Rei Socialis} and \textit{Centesimus Annus}.
The Church has also responded to the social problems of poverty and injustice via the multitude of political, liberation and popular theologies that took root within the Church in the 1960s. Political and liberation theologies emerged not only as a critique of neo-scholastic theology, but more importantly saw the victims of society as the *locus* for theological reflection.

Out of third world liberation theologies, theologies of popular religiosity developed as a response to the loss of local cultures due to colonization and Europeanization. These theologies challenged the Westernization of religious practices and traditions that had been nearly eliminated by European Catholicism and that had been closely wed to the power structures that kept the poor and powerless at a marginal level.

These developments in Catholic theology can now be utilized to address the problem of global poverty and disparity. Yet, these positive trends need to be further developed beyond their localized vision and move towards a global outlook. However, further development of these trends within the Church requires more reflection on the world and the human person in the world.

**Why Theological Anthropology?**

After having traversed the contours of the contemporary situation and problem, and, after mapping out the various explanatory frameworks and moral/ethical responses, the question can be raised, what can a theological anthropology contribute to the debate? Can a theological, and more particular Christian, anthropology offer anything different than what has already been done?
A globalizing world can benefit humanity greatly, but a globalizing world can also produce much destruction. As peoples become more interconnected and interdependent, and as new social institutions and systems develop, the problem of whether or not this new structuring of the world is going to facilitate the recognition of the dignity of all humans, and whether or not this new structuring will create more equality and solidarity or less equality and solidarity is significant. Therefore, raising the question whether a Christian anthropology can substantially contribute anything to a solution to the problem is essential. This question will have to be addressed in two parts. First of all, why theology? Second of all, why address the problem through an exploration into human existence?

Prior to addressing this two-part question, it is important to note the obvious fact that many theorists see theology as contributing very little to the debate. This deep-seated drive to exclude religion from civic debate has its roots in the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Europe, and this trend continues today. The well-known theorist on social justice, John Rawls, made the claim that it is more productive in any debate on justice to detach the religious response from the debate and argue on the basis of reason.29

For Rawls, the plurality of religious views, as found in modern liberal cultures such as the United States, creates conflicting views on what is moral and just, and thus religious and theological reflection should be left out of public discourse on justice. This position rests on the argument that the most valuable and adequate understanding of

---

29 In Rawls’ original position, he seems to presume that all members of society have equal voice. This assumption does not seem to leave room for the poor and oppressed.
justice can best be attained by way of autonomous reason divorced from any other epistemological modes (e.g., art and narrative).

Richard Falk, however, argues that secular voices and responses have reached a limit and that the divide between politics and religion must end. He claims that “[t]he best of secular thinking falls short of providing either a plausible path to travel in pursuit of humane global governance or a sufficiently inspiring vision of its elements to mobilize a popular grass roots movement for drastic global reform.”

According to Falk, religions can contribute positively to the global problem because “[1] They take suffering seriously, and respond to real people who suffer; (2) They tap into a civilizational resonance, striking deep roots in popular culture; (3) They anchor an ethos of solidarity; (4) They provide normative horizons based on a transcendent ethic; (5) They rely, in overcoming pessimism, on the transformative power of faith; (6) They foster a sense of limits (and human fallibility); (7) They provide rooted identities in a runaway world; and (8) They believe in both justice and the need for reconciliation.”

---

30 An epistemological debate may be in order at this point, but for the sake of not straying from the focus of this dissertation, that debate will have to be taken up elsewhere. For this dissertation, I will assume an epistemology that necessarily incorporates other human influences (e.g., art, culture, religion).


32 Ibid., 26.
Why Theology?\textsuperscript{33}

I fundamentally agree with Falk in his assessment of the relevance of religions in public discourse regarding questions of social justice. What can Catholic theology contribute to the debate and problem? Catholic theology is a needed voice because of seven constitutive aspects characteristic to Catholic theology: its long tradition and history, its authoritative voice, its reflection on suffering and its preferential option for the victim of society; its prophetic nature, its reflection on sin, its imaginative and creative approach to reality, and its radical vision of human existence.

The first reason Catholic theology can offer a valuable perspective on the debate and problem is because of its long history and tradition. The long and deep history of Christian theological reflection, especially found within the Catholic tradition, on human life and the human condition grants it a special place in the history of ideas. It has not only reflected on perennial individual and social questions, it has been the precursor to many contemporary Western ideas on the person and society.\textsuperscript{34}

The second reason is that Catholic theology offers an authoritative voice. Though some argue that religious thinking perpetuates societal and global problems, rather than offering valuable responses and solutions (e.g., Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens), Catholic theology, since it is located within a global institution, still maintains

\textsuperscript{33} To remain more focused, I will limit this question specifically to Roman Catholic theology. This does not mean that other Christian, or non-Christian, theologies cannot offer a similar or even better response to the current problem of global disparity than that of Catholic theology. Rather, limiting my argument to Catholic theology will stay consistent with the logic of the entire dissertation since this project is exploring the theological anthropologies of two particular Roman Catholic theologians.

an authoritative role for a substantial amount of people in the world (i.e., at least a substantial portion of the Catholic Church’s one billion members). It is not only authoritative in the sense of commanding respect due to its religious nature, and offering some ultimate meaning to a person’s life, but it is also an authoritative voice in the way that rigorous academic disciplines that authentically search for responses to problems raised by persons and society constitute an authoritative element.

Third, the Church offers a concrete reflection on suffering, and it is now committed to taking the side of the victim of society. The Church’s reflection on suffering takes the crucifixion of Christ as its primary and ultimate model. Though Catholic reflection on suffering has at times focused too narrowly on individual atonement for the sins of the world, political and liberation theologies have challenged the individualistic understanding of suffering and extended the vision of suffering to the social sphere of human being.

The fourth reason why Catholic theology is pertinent to the problem is that it is a prophetic discipline. It is prophetic in two ways. First, Catholic theology can challenge assumed ideological worldviews of cultures and peoples. It is obvious that ideologies are intimately connected to, and influence, political policies, and economic and social systems and structures. Many of these ideologies go unrecognized or unchallenged. As a prophetic exercise, theological reflection can challenge the assumptions, the logic, and _raison d’être_ of these ideologies.

Secondly, theology offers a prophetic voice to those in society who go unheard. It can, and often does, speak on behalf of the marginalized, and the “non-persons” of
Apart from political and liberation theologies, the “official” theology of the Magisterium claims to be at the defense of marginalized and oppressed peoples.

A fifth reason why Catholic theology is a valuable resource in addressing global disparity is its reflection on the concept of sin. Unlike secular theories of justice, Catholic theology can explicitly and reasonably speak about sin and the role it plays in the current global problem. Within contemporary secular theories of justice, the nature and role of sin in the world is either ignored outright or subsumed into categories of civic law. Even if the notion of sin is permitted to enter into the conversation by secular theories of justice, it is likely understood strictly as an individual offense against God rather than understood in historical and social categories as presented in the theologies of liberation.

The sixth reason is that theological reflection is a creative and transformative act. Theology, by its nature, offers a transformative way of envisioning the world.35 Theology is in fact a disciplined process of creative (i.e., poietic)36 reflection on, and interpretation of, the Christian scriptures and history, and of a contemporary situation in hope of personal, social, and global transformation.37 This form of interpretation invokes

---

35 Gerhart B. Ladner makes the claim that an idea, especially a scripturally based idea such as the *imago dei*, can reform and transform a civilization. He points out that “some of the great events which truly transformed history ultimately depended on changes, often only slight and subtle, in the realm of ideas,” *The Idea of Reform* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1967), 35. Again, in arguing for the transformation of the Byzantine world by theology, Ladner argues that “A mystical theology…can under certain circumstances quicken the heartbeat of a whole civilization,” 82.

36 I use the term ‘poietic’ in the way Charles Taylor understands it. Taylor uses the notion as referring to the human person’s epistemological capacity to be productive and constructive in a way in which persons can express meaningful frameworks that form the moral sources of society. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 197-98.

creative thought and imagination about how the world and human existence could be. It can be argued that many of the atrocities found within human history could have been avoided with the creative imagination that theological reflection evokes. A lack of poietic imagination, and resigning a vision of the world to an instrumental realism, could in fact lead to the rationalization and justification of atrocities.38

Finally, theology, because it reflects on the transcendent, sees the human person in terms of the ‘more,’ and because of this, speaks of the possibility of God acting in the world (i.e., an articulation of a theory of grace and a pneumatology). Theological reflection, by its very nature, challenges any reductionistic theory of the human person. Often times, reductionistic views of human being lead to some form of social Darwinism. In addition, many contemporary “scientific” theories of human existence either struggle to reconcile the theoretical predicament of either understanding the person as self-defining and determining or understanding the person as defined or determined by society, or presenting an either/or dichotomy. In other words, there is a danger in the reduction of the human person to being either an individual who serves the demands of the person’s own interests or an individual who is born into a society of other persons, and influenced by social customs and norms. However, theological reflection on human

38 A scene from Roland Joffé’s film The Mission (United Kingdom: Enigma Productions, 1986) effectively illustrates this point. After the slaughter of a multitude of Guarani people and Jesuit missionaries by Spanish soldiers, a concerned Papal emissary, Bishop Altamirano, challenges the Spanish caudillo Señor Cabeza for ordering this genocide. In response, Señor Cabeza’s Portuguese counterpart points out that there was no other option, and that “we live in the world, and the world is thus.” With tears in his eyes, Bishop Altamirano responds, “No, Señor Hontar. Thus have we made the world, thus have I made it.” This powerful scene illustrates the argument that human history is made by certain visions of the world, and that with these worldviews certain choices are bound to be made.
existence can offer something more to this problem as it acknowledges the characteristically personal, and thus divine, nature of human existence, and articulates a theory of the possibility of God’s self-communication to this creature through the life and history of a community.

**Why Theological Anthropology?**

If theology can be an adequate resource in addressing global disparity, the question remains, why address this problem by way of an exploration into human existence? Perhaps a reformulation of the current social theory and teachings of the Catholic Church would be a better approach to the problem.\(^3^9\) Perhaps Catholic theology can move towards greater collaboration with the construction of a global ethics (e.g., Hans Küng’s work on the “Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic”) which would better suit the current problem.

It could also be argued that an exploration into human existence as a potential response may only lead to the construction of an ontological anthropology of a disengaged self, which would then perpetuate an individualistic framework that undervalues or ignores any call to challenge global structures and systems in the pursuit of global justice. This is a very important point that should be visited often when articulating a theory of human existence, but it should not deter the theologian from pursuing a re-articulation of Christian anthropology.

An examination into contemporary Catholic Social Teaching and the construction of a global ethics are definitely necessary pursuits in today’s globalizing world.

---

\(^{3^9}\) This is the main argument of *Globalization and Catholic Social Teaching*. 
However, social theories oftentimes assume that a social theory can stand alone in its investigation into questions of human relationships, human structures, and human power without a foundational investigation into the human condition. Without acknowledging that there is an implied anthropology in any ethics or social teaching, a reinterpretation may be purely superficial. Catholic Social Teaching in particular must acknowledge the fact that God’s Word became incarnate in human history as foundational to any Christian teaching, and that God’s Word continues to take root in human existence and corresponds to human values and human hope.

Furthermore, concern that an anthropological approach to the current problem may lead to further individualistic ideologies that already exist and that are exacerbating the current problem is also important. A dialectical tension between anthropological (i.e., a philosophical exploration into the human person) and social inquiries must always be maintained if any form of theoretical “gnosticism” or ghettoization is to be avoided. This dialectical tension between an understanding of the human person as embedded in history and interlocked in social relations is essential to Catholic theological anthropology in particular with its attempt to be empirically sound (i.e., that humans are historically constituted, social creatures), biblically authentic (e.g., Gen. 2:18), and careful to avoid any anthropologies that represent an ontologically disengaged, and individually constituted spiritual or metaphysical self or social theories that disregard the individual person. Therefore, any inquiry into the human person from the perspective of a Christian anthropology should necessarily include the historical, social, and interrelational spheres of human existence. In other words, a viable Christian anthropology recognizes an

**Concluding Remarks**

In recent years, there have been many grass-roots initiatives to address the economic, political, and social crises that are present in poor countries. I argue that a real grass-roots initiative would begin with a radical (i.e., \textit{radix}, root) analysis of the root of society (viz., human existence). Among the plurality of approaches to an understanding of human existence, I maintain that a theological anthropology can offer a creative and productive approach to the problem. More specifically, I believe that a Christian anthropology articulated from within the Catholic theological tradition can be beneficial. However, the current theology of human existence within Catholic theology needs to be re-examined and re-articulated.

What is first needed within theological anthropology is a conversation with the social sciences and the appropriation of the social sciences’ methods of analysis. Though many Catholic theologians are engaged in a critical dialogue with the social sciences and are using methods from the social sciences, there is still much unfamiliarity among many Catholic theologians with the social sciences and how they might be fruitfully employed...
in theology. This move towards a real and serious in-depth dialogue with the social sciences will be an essential step in addressing the crisis that humanity faces.

Karl Rahner and José Ignacio González Faus are two Catholic theologians who have taken up the challenge to engage in conversation with the social sciences. However, it will be shown that their social scientific methods are quite different. The following chapter will offer a brief biographical sketch of both theologians. This sketch will highlight the differences and similarities in their theological projects due to their particular context and background, and the good reasons for choosing these two will be addressed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER TWO
SITUATING THE THEOLOGIANS

Karl Rahner, in a 1979 interview with Leo J. O’Donovan, stated, “I am, if you want to put it that way, like every other human being, the product of my environment, but really more the product of a diverse, a perhaps anonymous and symmetrical environment that worked on me from different sides.”¹ These words by Karl Rahner speak of the importance of situating any influential thinker in their proper life-context.

The aim of this present chapter is to outline the contexts out of which Karl Rahner and José Ignacio González Faus developed their theological projects. It will attempt to situate their thought on the human condition within a larger theological history, and more particularly it will illustrate how their anthropologies were influenced by their particular life-situation.² This contextualization will serve as the background for a dialogue between these two theologians on the topic of their theological anthropologies, and the


² I have devoted much more detail to an analysis of the context and background of González Faus’ life and influences than I did to that of Rahner’s. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is due to the massive amount of secondary sources and information on Rahner’s context and background, and philosophical and theological influences. I did not want to go into more depth than what was needed for the argument of this dissertation. Any further examination into Rahner’s context and background would only stray from the main goal of this project. The second reason is that there has been very little information published on the life of González Faus, and most of what is published about his life and influences is written in Spanish. As a result, I believe that in order to do justice to his thought, it is necessary to devote a substantial amount of time in introducing his life and his philosophical and theological resources. At the end of this chapter, I have included a brief life chronology of both Rahner and González Faus.
adequacy of their anthropologies in light of the contemporary situation of globalization and the growing global disparity.

The Challenge of Modernity and the Response from the Catholic Church

To grasp the theological projects of these two Jesuit theologians, it is important to have some understanding of the intellectual challenges that the Catholic Church and Catholic theology faced in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These challenges arose out of the intellectual revolutions spanning from the 17th to the 18th centuries; a time that is often called modernity. One particular challenge that the Church faced came from the thought of Immanuel Kant with its epistemological turn to the self, and its challenge to classical metaphysics.³

The Catholic hierarchy, and many Catholic theologians, responded to the emerging ideas of modernity in varying ways. On the one hand, the Church hierarchy viewed modernity with suspicion, and developed a manualistic form of theology in an attempt to counter the rationalism of modernity and to justify many of the Church’s teachings. On the other hand, some theologians engaged in modernity constructively, and found creative ways to address the questions and issues raised by modernity.

Immanuel Kant

Kant’s critique of classical metaphysics, and more particularly the critique of theoretical and rational theology, began by challenging the foundation of classical metaphysics. By shifting the starting point of philosophical inquiry from ontology to epistemology, Kant’s thought not only shook the foundation of Western philosophy, but it shook the philosophical underpinning of the Catholic Church’s scholastic theology.

Kant’s “Copernican Revolution” in philosophy began with his work *Critique of Pure Reason*. This ground-shattering work was a response to David Hume’s epistemological skepticism. Hume forced Kant to awaken from his philosophical slumber, and his skepticism pushed Kant to reformulate the problem of human cognition.

Instead of resigning to a Humean skepticism, Kant found the key to the philosophical impasse between Cartesian rationalism and Lockean empiricism by shifting the question from the objectivity of the being of things to the subjectivity of the thinking person. Rather than asking the question *how* the human person can arrive at objective knowledge about the external world, the question for Kant became how the subjective person *perceives* and judges the world. In other words, the operative question was, what can the human subject know about the world, and by what means does this subject come to know this world?

This epistemological shift put the observer in motion with regard to human knowing. Kant recognized that the appearance of the external world depends, in some measure, upon the position and perception of the human subject. According to Kant, the person can only know the world “as it appears” (i.e., the phenomena), not “as it is in
itself” (i.e., the noumena). The person comes to know this world through a cognitive process of intuition, understanding, and reason. The ‘transcendental’ structure of the active mind perceives sense data of the phenomenal world, and actively conceptualizes and categorizes the data.

This inquiry into the human subject led Kant to probe the very conditions for the possibility of any human knowing. This became the basis for his transcendental critique of classical epistemology and metaphysics, and the construction of his transcendental idealism. The radical nature of this transcendental critique was not just that it placed the human subject at the center of reality, but that it placed constraints on all human knowing. The notion that human cognition is limited challenged the classical belief that the human intellect can have some knowledge of the ontology of beings. Thus, for Kant, any questions probing into the nature of things beyond human existence (e.g., God, sin, revelation) is beyond the powers of reason, and therefore impossible to be known and spoken of.

With this challenge in place, Catholic philosophy and theology needed to respond.4

The Response from the Catholic Church

The Church’s response to the rise of modernity and the Kantian critique of metaphysics was anything but uniform. The responses varied depending upon the

---

4 Many Protestant theologians took up Kant’s challenge in creative ways without appealing to traditional metaphysics (e.g., the appropriation of modernity’s turn to the self by Schleiermacher, and the counter challenge to modernity by Kierkegaard). Not until the 20th Century would Catholic theology in general find other means of addressing Kant rather than by way of classical metaphysics.
country, diocese, religious order, bishop, cleric, and theologian. The responses also differed depending on the time period. By the 19th century, the responses by the Church created the context for the theologies of Rahner and González Faus.

One response that was relatively uniform was that of the Vatican. The responses by the Vatican came in the form of outright resistance to the ideals of modernity, as well as a renewed interest in reviving the intellectual integrity of Catholic theology by returning to earlier theological sources. Many of the popes of the 19th century and early 20th century formulated official documents as a response to the spread of the modern spirit. Three of the most dominant responses came from Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X.

The first official Vatican response came in 1864 when Pius IX introduced the Syllabus of Errors within his encyclical Quanta Cura. This document condemned much of the philosophical ideals of modernity. It was concerned specifically with three themes: Pantheism and naturalism, “the various forms of rationalism that tended to identify the act of faith with the processes of human reason,” and “the fruits of political liberalism as they affected the civic prerogatives of the Church.”

The second official response was Leo XIII’s encyclical Aeterni Patris (1879). This encyclical offered a renewed look at scholastic theology, especially the thought of Thomas Aquinas. It presented the Church with an alternative method to engage the

---

5 For example, in general, the Church in Germany during the first half of the 19th century looked upon modernity more favorably than did its counterpart in the second half of the century. C.f. Thomas O’Meara, Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology, 1860-1914 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).

6 However, even this generalization falls short with particular popes and the particular responses to modernity by these popes (e.g., Leo XIII and John XXIII).

culture of the time rather than employing the philosophies of modernity to engage the
culture. This encyclical mandated a renewal in Thomistic philosophy and theology, and
mandated the formation of seminarians, ecclesial officials, and Catholic philosophers and
theologians in the thought of Thomas.

The third official response came from actions by Pius X. In 1907, Pius X
condemned certain ideas associated with modernity with the decree *Lamentabili* and the
encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis* insofar as he saw them present in the Church itself.
In 1910, with another stab at modernity, he introduced an oath against Modernism by
which all theology teachers and clergy had to swear. This oath was an effort to quell the
spread of what Pius saw as a mounting heresy within the clerical ranks.

Together with these papal efforts to tame modernity, ultramontanism was another
response to modernity that was closely tied to the official responses by the Vatican. It
became the dominant force within European Catholicism during the latter half of the 19\(^{th}\)
century. The rise in ultramontane piety, and the strict adherence to classical scholastic
theology, was due in part to the uncertainty arising from new political movements and
new ideologies. Ultramontanism had a great influence on mapping out the constitution
*Pastor Aeternus* at Vatican I.

These attempts by the Vatican, and the growing ultramontane trends, seemed to
seal the fate of any dialogue between Catholic thought and modernity.\(^8\)

\(^8\) Despite the various moves of the Vatican to condemn modernity, the Catholic Church in Germany was
free, to an extent, of any Papal constraints to a positive engagement with modernity. Thomas O’Meara’s
work on the life of Erich Przywara offers a good study of the relationship between the Catholic Church and
modernity in Germany during the late 19\(^{th}\) century and early 20\(^{th}\) century. Michael Fahey argues that
Przywara, inspired by Ignatius Loyola, “learned ‘to find God in all realities,’” and that “He learned not to
be afraid of philosophers who thought differently from himself.” *Erich Przywara, S.J.: His Theology and
His World* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), x.
Neo-Thomism

The revival of scholastic theology, initiated by Leo XIII, was a theological response in the Church’s attempt to address the intellectual challenge of modernity. The recovery of Aquinas’ thought, and the research done on his historical context, was meant to restore the integrity of Catholic theology and philosophy amidst a milieu of increasingly secular philosophies. As James C. Livingston points out

The Thomists sought to show that the *philosophia perennis*, as classically formulated by Thomas Aquinas, alone can meet the crisis of modern thought which is the result of subjectivism and relativism. At the same time, these Neo-Scholastics contend that Thomas Aquinas is supple and resilient enough to incorporate those genuine truths which modern philosophers have brought to light but have either exaggerated or have failed to integrate into a larger and more adequate conceptual scheme.9

This neo-Thomism that Catholic theology generated was not a monolithic system of thought, but rather consisted of varying interpretations of Aquinas.10 Within this broad neo-Thomistic movement, three Jesuits, Pierre Rousselot (1878-1915), Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944), and Erich Przywara (1889-1972), are particularly noteworthy. These three theologians were influential in the changing atmosphere within Catholic theological circles of the early 20th century, and eventually influenced the thought of Karl Rahner, and, via Rahner, José Ignacio González Faus.

---

9 *Modern Christian Thought*, 344. Hereafter, this text will be cited as MCT.

10 *MCT*, 342-353. C.f. Thomas O’Meara, “Thomism,” in *Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1254-1255. It is important to note that out of this Thomistic revival, two differing philosophical trends emerged, and have since evolved into two considerably different theological approaches (viz., the theological approaches that have their roots in Marechalian Thomism and the theological approaches that have their roots in the theology of De Lubac and the *Nouvelle Théologie*). The distinctions between these two trends have been widely researched and will not be presented here.
The chief contribution of Pierre Rousselot was his reintroduction into Catholic theology of the medieval themes of the mystical and experiential. He claimed that these themes had been lost with the neo-Scholastic theological trends of his time, and that they should be re-appropriated back into theology.\textsuperscript{11}

Along with the re-appropriation of these themes, Livingston points out that the novelty of his thought came by way of three endeavors. He attempted to argue for the credibility of the subjective experience of faith, for the unity between human reason and the content of faith, and for the significance of love and human knowing.\textsuperscript{12} These endeavors are also clearly discernable in the thought of Rahner and González Faus.

In the neo-Thomism of Joseph Maréchal, there is an attempt to respond to Kant’s epistemological constraints to human knowing, and Kant’s critique of special metaphysics and rational theology through a reinterpretation of the epistemology of Aquinas, and employing the thought of Maurice Blondel.

According to Francis Schüssler-Fiorenza, Maréchal argued that Kant’s critique of metaphysics fell short in its probing for the very condition for possibility of human knowledge because of an epistemological oversight with regard to human judgment, and human judgment’s ontological characteristic in which it “anticipates the unconditional reality of God.”\textsuperscript{13} Maréchal saw, in Kant’s epistemology, the beginnings of a dualism of phenomenal and noumenal spheres of being. For Maréchal, this dualism could possibly

\textsuperscript{11} MCT, 200.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 200.

result in an understanding of being that is, in essence, contradictory. Being, if it is to be absolute being, cannot comprise of duality.

To respond to this potential dualism in Kant, Maréchal argued that in Aquinas’ epistemological arguments, human knowledge of the phenomenal world presupposes a grounding structure in being. The human intellect actively makes judgments about the world. In this activity of judgment, the human intellect actively seeks for statements of truth, and it is this pursuit of truth that presupposes a foundation in truth and being. This Marechalian Thomism will ultimately be the inspiration for the young Karl Rahner to write *Spirit in the World*.

The last notable neo-Thomist was Erich Przywara. His interpretation of Aquinas offers a different response to modernity’s challenge to metaphysics and the question of God. One important influence that Przywara had on the neo-Thomism of his time was his emphasis upon the role of mystery in theology, and highlights the notion of the incomprehensibility of God in Aquinas’ thought.

A second important influence of Przywara’s theology was his distinct way of synthesizing a theory of analogy and a theory of the dialectic when speaking of God. It is in his most recognized work, *Analogia Entis*, where he uses this synthesis of an analogical approach and a dialectical approach in order to address the relationship of God and creation. For Przywara, this method is essential in establishing a reasonable “bridge between the human and the divine.”

---

14 *Erich Przywara*, 16.
In addition, the dialectical nature of Przywara’s theology allowed him to enter into conversation with the thought of Augustine, Aquinas, John Henry Newman, and many of the German phenomenologists. As O’Meara states, “One characteristic of his intellectual life is the arrangement of thinkers into types and directions, a search for the relationships of philosophers and theologians over two thousand years to illuminate contemporary directions in the life of faith and intellect.”

Along with seeing theological statements as analogical ones, and using dialectic as a theological method, Przywara was able to bring Ignatius Loyola into conversation with the great thinkers of Western tradition. This effort by Przywara influenced many Jesuit thinkers who followed him, especially Rahner.

Each of these theologians responded to the challenge set forth by Kant, and to the call of the retrieval of Aquinas by formulating a critical conversation and dialogue with Aquinas, Kant, and contemporary problems and questions. They did not, however, remain content to see Thomas as the panacea for contemporary problems. Instead, they offered constructive critiques of neo-Thomism. These critiques laid the groundwork for Rahner’s transcendental Thomism.

**Karl Rahner: Context and Theological Foundations**

The spirit of critical and creative dialogue with a contemporary situation (viz., modernity) did not end with the theologies of Rousselot, Maréchal, and Przywara. Karl Rahner became one of the most prominent of the next generation of theologians to face a

---

15 Ibid., 52.

16 Ibid., 16.
contemporary situation in a way that was not reactionary. His theological program points to the fact that he highly valued the idea that theology and the theologian must engage in, and be relevant to, any contemporary situation. This idea was one of the many contributions he made to post-Vatican II Catholic theology.  

To better understand how Rahner engaged in his own contemporary situation, and constructed his own theological project, it is important to gain some insight into his German Catholic context. His own theological project can be situated in a larger German context of creative dialogue between Catholic theology and the emergence of modernity in Germany.

German Context: The Church and Modernity (19th Century)

The German Church of the 19th century was not hesitant to engage in a dialogue with modernity. It at times saw the project of modernity as an amiable partner while at other times a hostile enemy.

Thomas O’Meara illustrates the complexity of the German Church’s response to modernity in the 19th century in his work *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology, 1860-1914*. His book particularly addresses the role that German Catholic theology played during this time of uncertainty. He divides the theology of this period of German history between the “Old Theology” of Catholic Romantic Idealism (dominating

---

17 In an interview, Rahner made the claim that “[a]s a science…theology has the job of a dialogue with the contemporary person’s understanding of self and world”(*KRD*, 324). He also claimed that “the theologian’s obligation, duty, and intent aim at guarding and interpreting the message of Jesus, the revelation of God, and the teaching of the Church, and to make it intelligible and accessible to one’s contemporaries”(353). Furthermore, if theology and the theologian do not engage in their contemporary situation, then theology could develop the “mentality of a sect, which makes its social ineffectiveness and impotence into an ideal and into a sign of its own election”(50).
the first half of the 19th century), and the “New Theology” of neo-Scholasticism (dominating the latter half of the 19th century).

O’Meara claims that by the middle of the 19th century the Church’s shift in approach, from open dialogue with modernity to an embattled stance, came with the growing conservatism within the Church hierarchy (viz., the Vatican), and changes in German politics and society. He points out that by mid-century German Catholicism witnessed “conflicts over modern theology and traditional piety, a Vatican on the offensive, a breakdown in various principalities of the union between throne and altar, an alienation of liberals from religion and of Protestants and Catholics from each other.”

The Church’s amicable relationship with modernity as a whole began to dissolve as both the modern state and the Church hierarchy became more suspicious and cautious of one another.

The growing conservativism in Catholic theology and church life became a wedge driven between the German Catholics and the new modern Germany. This development became most clear with Pius IX’s Syllabus of Errors and the constitution Pastor Aeternus at Vatican I.

The worst of the German Church’s fears arose between 1874 and 1878 with chancellor Otto von Bismarck’s Kulturkampf. This cultural struggle, initiated by liberal officials in Bismarck’s government, was an attempt to minimize the influence of the Church in Germany. This move by Bismarck and his government ultimately backfired.

---

18 Church and Culture, 14.

19 The German Church’s changing relationship with modernity seems ironic considering the fact that it was in Germany where the Catholic Church had the greatest intellectual independence and yet experienced the most severe of persecutions. Ibid., 21.
With the growing conservativism and Ultramontanism within the Catholic Church at this time, Bismarck’s move gave fuel to an emerging reactionary Church within his new Germany.

This mounting division between the Church and the new Germany left many Catholic theologians uncertain of their roles in church and society. As O’Meara points out, “While creative theologians were in danger of being rejected by Rome for any thinking which was not blandly neoscholastic, they were accused by the state as being un-German.”20 This feeling of uncertainty did not, however, quell the creative thought of theologians such as Herman Schell and Carl Braig.

By the latter half of the 19th century, two theological trends emerged within the Catholic Church in Germany. One trend was a romantic idealism based on transcendental philosophies and represented by the universities of Tübingen, Munich, and Freiburg. The other was the neo-Scholasticism represented by the universities of Münster and Mainz.

By 1900, a new German Catholicism began to form. With mounting pressure from the Vatican, and economic and political growth of the new Germany, “Catholic dialogue with modernity shifted away from the speculative toward the practical, toward the social and the political.”21 A “Reform Catholicism” emerged, which became the response to the ghettoization of Catholicism since the Kulturkampf. Reformkatholizismus was fundamentally a “network of movements espousing engagement with culture,

20 Ibid., 24.
21 Ibid., 143.
advocating presence in society and culture, and modernity’s intent upon reforming the
church.”

It was out of this unique context that the seeds for Rahner’s theological program
were sown.

Biographical Sketch: Theological Foundations

Karl Rahner was born into this German milieu on March 5th, 1904 in Freiburg-im-
Breisgau. As Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines point out, “[h]is family was middle
class and thoroughly Catholic, though not overly pious.” His father worked as a
professor at a local teacher’s college, and his mother cared, and created a positive
Catholic environment, for her husband and their seven children.

Karl entered the Society of Jesus in 1922, three years after his older brother Hugo
entered the order. During his first two years within the order, Rahner was immersed in
the Ignatian tradition of the Jesuits by making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and
becoming familiar with Ignatian ideals and spirituality. Philip Endean, in his seminal
work *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, argues that it was at this time that the
foundation for Rahner’s theology was created. He claims that this early familiarity with

---

22 Ibid., 162.


Ignatian ideals and spirituality was more foundational to his theology than the thought of Maréchal or German phenomenology.25

Between 1924 and 1927 Rahner studied philosophy at Feldkirch and Berchmanskolleg in Pullach near Munich. Most of his studies at this time focused on the officially sanctioned neo-Scholastic philosophy, though he was also introduced to the thought of Kant and to German idealism. He soon became captivated by a rethinking of Aquinas through the new philosophical methods that Rousselot and Maréchal developed. It was at this time that Rahner became specifically interested in Maréchal’s transcendental methodology.

After philosophy studies, Rahner studied theology at Valkenberg in Holland from 1929-1933. The theological formation that he went through at this time was based on a late neo-Scholastic method that addressed contemporary problems by way of doctrinal manuals. For Rahner, as well as many of his contemporaries, this way of doing theology was unsuitable for the modern world. It did not lend itself to helping Rahner formulate a response to contemporary problems and questions. Instead, for Rahner, it led to stale propositions divorced from human life. With this concern in mind, Rahner set out to rethink theology in a manner more relevant to his contemporary situation.

In 1932 Rahner was ordained to the priesthood, and in 1934 he began doctoral studies at the University of Freiburg. It was at Freiburg that much of the philosophical foundations for his later theological program took root. Here the conversation between Catholic theology, contemporary philosophical currents, and the contemporary situation that Rahner was looking for began to form.

Influence of German Phenomenology

Though Rahner’s philosophical thought was first and foremost influenced by the neo-Thomism of Rousselot, Maréchal, and Przywara, the German phenomenological tradition at the University of Freiburg also contributed, to an extent, to the uniqueness of Rahner’s thought. One particular thinker in this tradition who stands out the most is Martin Heidegger.26

In 1934, two years after his ordination to the priesthood, Rahner began graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Freiburg. It was during this time that he attended four of Heidegger’s semester seminar classes in philosophy. While attending Heidegger’s seminars, Rahner began writing his dissertation with the aim towards exploring the metaphysics and epistemology of Aquinas in light of questions raised in contemporary philosophy, particularly those raised by Kant and Heidegger. His dissertation was ultimately rejected by his director Martin Honecker for his interpretation of Aquinas through a Marechalian approach, and “for being too inspired by Heidegger.”27

There is much debate on whether or not Rahner’s philosophical underpinnings are, in nature, Heideggerian. What is undisputable is that Rahner, by attending Heidegger’s seminars, gained a questioning spirit. In an interview, Rahner acknowledges that it was the early Heidegger of Being and Time (perhaps a Heidegger who was, at this

26 The extent and scope of Martin Heidegger’s thought on Rahner has been much debated over the years, and this debate will not be taken up here. However, it is important to take note of some possible general ideas and frameworks that Rahner may have appropriated from Heidegger. O’Meara points out that only “broad influences” from Heidegger can be seen in the thought of Rahner, specifically the philosophical categories of the phenomenological, the existential, and the historical (O’Meara, 26). Though these may be “broad influences” they are still quite relevant.

time, sympathetic to metaphysics) that influenced him. He states, it was this early Heidegger with whom I learned to think a little bit, and for that I am grateful to him. Insofar as it is philosophical, my theology does not really show the systematic and thematic influence of Heidegger. What he communicated was the desire to think, the ability to think… I would say Martin Heidegger was the only teacher for whom I developed the respect that a disciple has for a great master. That had little to do with individual questions or individual formulations of my theology.28

What Rahner also learned from Heidegger was a hermeneutical framework that helped him interpret a text and the context of earlier thinkers. In his words, what Rahner learned from Heidegger was “how to read texts in a new way, to ask what is behind the text, to see connections between a philosopher’s individual texts and his statements that wouldn’t immediately strike the ordinary person…” 29 Rahner was now able to contextualize the text in a way that offered him insight into the world of the writer. This interpretive move allowed Rahner to speak of the thinker’s existential historicity in relation to all of reality. This new method of interpretation that Rahner adopted from Heidegger contributed to Rahner’s own reading of the whole of Christian tradition and Christian thought.

The early influences of neo-Thomism and German phenomenology are clearly noticeable in Rahner’s theological program. He did not just reformulate the themes and methods of these influences in a Rahnerian way. Rahner’s work is truly distinctive. These influences ultimately gave him the inspiration and a framework to enter into conversation with his Catholic Christian tradition, contemporary philosophical trends,

28 KRD, 257.

29 I Remember, 45.
and his contemporary context, and allowed him to construct a theology that was distinctive to his thought. In other words, as much as he learned from his predecessors, the uniqueness of Rahner lies in the extent to which he pressed these conversations further in directions that his teachers did not take.

Epistemological Shift: Rahner’s Transcendental Method

Like his neo-Thomistic predecessors, Rahner responded to the challenge set forth by Kant by creating a conversation between Aquinas and Kant through a transcendental method. It was in Rahner’s seminal work *Spirit in the World* that this conversation took place.

With the help of Marechal, Rahner found in Kant a method that could respond to Kant’s critique of classical metaphysics, and argue for the possibility of metaphysics. However, unlike Marechalian Thomism, Rahner did not attempt to appeal to “those philosophical positions which maintain that a metaphysics of transcendence is possible because of a special innate idea or because of a specific and immediate intuition of a metaphysical object, be it an eternal truth or an objectively conceived absolute being.”

In other words, Rahner did not recreate a Marechalian transcendental theology, which appeals to a metaphysics that posits some objective concept or knowledge of God, as though that objective content about God can be understood separate from the questioning

30 Francis Schüssler Fiorenza “Method in Theology” in *CCKR* argues that it is important to situate Rahner’s use of the term “transcendental” in the context of Rahner’s understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology. He points out that Rahner is often read as using the term in a Kantian manner, and that this way of understanding Rahner is a misreading. Rather, according to Schüssler Fiorenza, Rahner’s use of transcendental is a combination of a Medieval and a Kantian use of the term, and is in fact closer to a Heideggerian anthropological understanding of the term (77).

person. Rather, according to Schüssler-Fiorenza, Rahner went beyond Maréchal’s critique of Kant, and his defense of metaphysics, by way of the insights of Heidegger.\textsuperscript{32}

The uniqueness of Rahner’s transcendental method is its anthropological turn. Rahner’s transcendental method offers “a transcendental understanding of God, who is not known by man as an object of reality, but as the principle of human knowledge and reality.”\textsuperscript{33} Thus, for Rahner, the ground of all human knowing and reality is God, and the starting point for any philosophical inquiry about reality, and about God, is the human subject. It is the human person, as a questioner, that is fundamentally constituted towards being and thus constituted toward God. In other words, theological inquiry must begin in human experience, rather than in cognitive propositions. This insight that any knowledge of the incomprehensible God is grounded on the questioning subject rather than on human judgment moved Rahner beyond any Marechalian transcendental Thomism.

In this move to the human subject, Rahner was not attempting to do away with centuries of theological tradition that had contributed to the arguments set forth by neo-Scholasticism and neo-Thomism. In fact, Rahner believed that the theology of Aquinas is indispensable for contemporary theology. He saw Aquinas as holding a “unique” role within theology.\textsuperscript{34} For Rahner, the questions and problems that Aquinas addressed were not unlike those of Rahner’s time. More importantly for Rahner’s own project, he

\textsuperscript{32} Spirit in the World, xli-xlii.

\textsuperscript{33} Spirit in the World, xlv.

claimed that Aquinas’ importance lies in the fact that he “is one of the initiators of the anthropocentric approach.”

This epistemological shift that Rahner undertook, from reified propositions to the structures of the human person, became the foundation for his transcendental method in doing theology. It also allowed him to reconnect theological inquiry with ordinary human experience, and to talk about the reality of God, grace, and sin without falling into any theological extrinsicism.

Changing Contexts and New Challenges

After Vatican II, the various theological trends that built on Rahner’s theology are testaments to the fact that Rahner had achieved his endeavor to make theology relevant to the Church’s contemporary context. However, the new context of a drastically changing world presented Rahner with new challenges.

In the wake of World War II and the Holocaust, a new generation of Catholic theologians began to question the nature, role, and method of theology. This generation raised further questions as they witnessed the emergence of new problems in the socio-political sphere with the eruption of student protests, and popular revolutions and movements in Europe and Latin America.

By the late 1960s and into the 1970s, as Rahner’s theology became more widely accepted, this new generation of theologians began to critique his theology as an inadequate response to the emerging questions and problems. Though some felt that his theology went too far beyond Catholic doctrine, and therefore succumbing to the

---

contemporary situation (e.g., H. U. von Balthasar), others attempted to press his theology in new directions in order to better respond to the contemporary questions and problems.

From these changing contexts, two particular challenges confronted the thought of Rahner. The first challenge was the emergence of a pluralism in Roman Catholic theology. The second challenge was an outgrowth of the first. The political and Latin American liberation theologies that appeared after Vatican II offered the strongest challenge to Rahner’s theological program. One particular theologian, Johannes Baptist Metz, Rahner’s former student and friend, not only helped Rahner emphasize certain aspects of his theology that remained latent but also offered a corrective to Rahner’s theology.

**Pluralism in Theology**

After Vatican II, theologians in Latin America, Africa, and Asia saw the need for Catholic theology to move away from its Eurocentric tendency. They believed that this necessary shift would help Catholic theology respond more adequately to the changing world context. These theologians began to construct theologies that appropriated the ideas and concepts inherent in their own cultures and traditions. They also saw social justice as theology’s main issue with which it had to grapple.

At the same time that these non-European theologies began to emerge, many Catholic theologians in Europe and North America began to dialogue with non-Scholastic philosophies. For example, some European Catholic circles in the 1950s and into the 1970s began to find relevant philosophical methods in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and in Marxist social analysis.
Rahner saw this growing pluralism within theology with both concern and hope. In Volume 21 of his *Theological Investigations*, Rahner addresses this apparent problem of pluralism in Catholic theology. After mentioning the deficiencies of neo-Scholastic theology, and what the “new theology” (i.e., the transcendental theologies of Rahner’s generation) offers, he discusses the current problem of pluralism in Catholic theology. He characterizes this current state of theological affairs as the “second period” of the new theology.36

This second phase of the new theology raises some concerns for Rahner. He states that in this new phase “everything has become a little pallid” and that “there is a little less brilliance in this stage.”37 Also, many priests, bishops and theologians, who could be contributing to an already established Catholic theological tradition, are instead leaving behind the scientific discipline of theology altogether in the pursuit of other academic disciplines.

In the face of these challenges, Rahner attempts to outline a solution to the problem. First, he articulates what he sees as the task of theology. He argues that theology “must serve as a science of proclamation of the gospel and must serve the people of our time.”38 Furthermore, he states,

Without becoming rationalistic, theology must expound ever anew and for every question of dogmatic theology that the article of faith in question is indeed credible and can be lived out in a genuine way; that it truly fits into


37 Ibid., 74-75.

38 Ibid., 76.
the fundamentally simple structure of faith, and that it is part of an authentic answer to those questions which human beings find in the center of their existence without the ability to answer them of their own accord.39

In other words, theology must consist of a dynamic conversation between what the Church teaches and a contemporary situation, and in that conversation theology must be able to articulate, in a believable way, an adequate response to the problems and questions that arise in that contemporary situation.

After establishing the task of theology, Rahner raises the question of how theology can maintain the unity of Christian faith in light of a theological pluralism. First, he argues that this theological pluralism is not necessarily something detrimental to theology. In fact, this phenomenon has always existed in the Church, and the Magisterium has even at times officially tolerated competing theories. Therefore, any pluralism within Catholic theology can be seen as a part of the Catholic tradition.

This pluralism, though, does not mean that there is no flagship theology that guides all the rest. Rahner claims that there is a theology that unifies and guides all of Catholic theology. He calls this theology “European Theology.” What Rahner means by this is the “concrete theology of the concrete Roman teaching office.”40 Though there may be many theologies in the world, “the fact remains that Europe along with its theology is the ‘elder daughter’ to most of the other churches in the world and their theologies.”41

39 Ibid., 76-77.
40 Ibid., 86.
41 Ibid, 89.
Furthermore, Rahner claims that it is likely that this European theology has contributed to the contemporary problems in the world, and thus has an important role to play in engaging these problems. Rahner states that

> It is beyond question that this modern global civilization with all the threats it poses to an authentic realization of humanity owes its origin and its existence to the European mentality and history in which Christianity has been and continues to be an essential factor…European theology must ask itself if it has not perhaps contributed to these developments – culpably or inculpably – by presenting a view of humankind (along with its ideological distortions) which in truth can find no legitimation and acceptance in Christianity.42

One of the aims of theology, then, according to Rahner, is for it to be self-reflective. This is the goal of political theology. When it comes to political theology, its proper task is to reflect on the sociopolitical implications of the whole of Christian theology and in the light of the pure gospel message to make a critical inquiry as well into the social and cultural realities which a false ecclesiastical conservatism passes off in an all too facile way as genuine Christian achievements.43

### J.B. Metz and Latin American Liberation Theologies

The second major challenge that Rahner faced in his later years was the growing critiques of his theology by the new political and liberation theologies. Critiques of Rahner’s theology were nothing new. Hans Urs von Balthasar had critiqued Rahner’s theology as overly anthropocentric and reductionistic to the point of compromising the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity. He fundamentally attacks the use of the

---

42 Ibid., 92-93.

43 Ibid., 93.
transcendental philosophy of Kant as merely a theological form of Kant’s transcendental philosophy.  

The critique that concerned him the most came from Johannes B. Metz. In the Foreword to *Spirit in the World*, Metz first points out that this present work of Rahner’s “uses a Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge explained in terms of transcendental and existential philosophy to define man as that essence of absolute transcendence towards God.” He lauds Rahner’s effort to take an “anthropologically oriented theology out of the forest of scholastic objectivism.” However, he raises the question, “does not such a transcendental-existential approach concentrate the necessarily historically realized salvation of man too much on the question of whether the individual freely accepts or rejects this constitution of his being? Is there not danger that the question of salvation will be made too private and that salvation history will be conceived too worldlessly, breaking too quickly the point of the universal historical battle for man?”

Metz’s critique goes right to the heart of Rahner’s transcendental theology. For Rahner, the human person is fundamentally constituted by what he calls human

44 As pointed out in an earlier section of this chapter, Rahner does draw on Kant’s epistemological argument that the conditions for the possibility of knowledge are found within the perception and categories of the knower. However, Rahner’s argument moves beyond that and dispels any critique of the use of transcendental philosophy by pointing out that “As a matter of history this transcendental theology may find its point of departure in such a philosophy (i.e., transcendental philosophy), and in fact it would have nothing to be ashamed of precisely in this. But the true score of any transcendental theology is itself genuinely theological. For the question theology inquires into is properly speaking this and nothing else: the salvation of man to the extent that this consists in the self-bestowal of God, and therefore the consummate wholeness which man can achieve.” Karl Rahner, “The Possible Courses for the Theology of the Future,” TI 13, trans. David Bourke (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 46.


46 Ibid, xvii.

existentials (e.g., subjectivity, freedom, dependence, historicity) that orient and open the person towards God. It is from these existentials that the person has the possibility of an immediate experience of God. Metz sees this immediate experience as fundamentally bypassing the mediation of history.  

Rahner’s theology does uphold the historicity of human existence as an existential within the human being. However, Metz and many liberation theologians have critiqued this understanding of human historicity as a formal, and less concrete, understanding of historicity.

José Ignacio González Faus: Context and Theological Foundations

As with Rahner, a contextualization of González Faus’ life will be helpful in order to grasp his theological project. The early influences on his theological project can be traced to a period of transition in Spanish politics and life, and in the Spanish Church during the latter part of the 20th century. He is from a generation of Roman Catholic theologians who benefited from the new theological direction set forth by the thought of Karl Rahner and his generation.

---

*48 Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality, 55.*

*49 This same critique is made by González Faus. In an e-mail correspondence responding to this critique of Rahner, he states “we must go beyond his lack of social categories and lack of reference to history (even though he does speak of historicity, it is always an abstract and formal notion of historicity),” October 12, 2006. Unless otherwise noted, all e-mail correspondence was with me. Many Rahnerian scholars acknowledge this critique, but likewise point out that Rahner’s attention to a more concrete and particularized notion of historicity becomes more notable in his later works (CCKR, 6).*

*50 Rahner, Congar, and the earlier Ratzinger are a few notable Catholic theologians of the previous generation who were particularly influential on González Faus. It is interesting to note that during his theological studies in Tübingen, González Faus took two courses in systematic theology taught by the then Professor Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI). He recalls a class lecture in which Ratzinger posed the following question of the class: “Who loves the church more, the one who risks being critical of it or the one who takes it for granted?” Francisco Javier Vitoria Cormenzana, “Conversaciones con J.I. González Faus,” *Iglesia Viva: Revista de Pensamiento Cristiano*, No. 213 (ene-mar 2003), 86. Hereafter, this literature will be cited as “Conversaciones.” It is obvious in his writings that González Faus could easily be*
Spanish Context: The Church and Modernity (19th and 20th centuries)

González Faus was born during a tumultuous time in Spain. It was a time in which, since the emergence of modernity in Spain in the early 19th Century, the relationship between Church and State reached a breaking point.

The role of the Catholic Church in Spain is one of the richest and most controversial histories of the Church and of Europe. Since the early days of the Church in Spain, the lines between Church and State were blurred. Even during the 18th century, when the ideas of modernity began to challenge the status quo in European nations, the Spanish Church enjoyed stability and clarity in its role in Spanish life.

However, with the rise of modernity in Spain in the early 19th century, the Church’s role in Spanish politics, culture, and life became ambiguous at best. Fissures in the relationship between Church and State began to form. The tensions between Church and State, especially over the emerging liberal ideas nascent in modernity, eventually reached its highest level with the Spanish Civil War. With the rise of Francisco Franco to power, and the emergence of a new form of National Catholicism, the Church would once again collaborate closely with the Spanish State, and would have a significant part in Spanish life. Ultimately, with the death of Franco and the death of National Catholicism, the Church would once again have to redefine its role in Spanish life.

placed with the former group of critics. He seems to now have brought these words back to life and directed them to Cardinal Ratzinger in his paper “La cruz de ‘Dominus Iesus,’” Christianisme i justicia 58 (Nov. 2000); available from http://www.fespinal.com/espinal/realitat/pap/pap58.htm; Internet; Accessed on 5 July 2007. See also his letter to Pope Benedict XVI entitled “Carta al nuevo Papa,” El País (20 April 2005); available from http://webs.ono.com/pag9/teodoro/carta_al.pdf; Internet; Accessed on 5 July 2007. All Spanish translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

51 The phenomenon of National Catholicism in Spain was the identification of the Catholic Church with the Franco government, and the government’s apparent embodiment of its ideals and values. William J.
It would be an oversimplification to state that the Church was a monolithic force of conservative thought that felt threatened by, and closed itself off from, the growth of modernity in Spanish politics, culture, and life. Some theologians, bishops, clergy, and influential laity within the Church responded positively to modernity’s presence in Spain. It would not be an oversimplification, however, to point out that the Church in Spain was much slower and more hesitant in appropriating the values of liberal modernity than in other Western European nations.52

This somewhat ambivalent and cautious response by the Spanish Church to the expansion of modern ideas fundamentally changed to a reactionary one in the 1930s with the appearance of more radical forms of liberalism. This was the beginning of a new relationship between the Spanish Church and the Spanish culture, one that ultimately became the context for González Faus’ theological project.

In 1931, just two years before González Faus was born, the seeds of the deep divide between the modern Spanish State and the Church were sown with the rise of the Second Republic. Callahan points out that the Second Republic “disestablished the Church, destroyed its financial and legal privileges, and converted the State into a powerful agent of secularization and cultural change.”53 Strong anticlerical sentiments began to appear among the supporters of an absolute separation of Church and State. As

Callahan, in his detailed work *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000) points out that National Catholicism under Franco was nothing new in Spain. What was new was “the militancy with which it was projected to the Spanish public and the world” (383). Hereafter this text will be cited as CCS.

52 CCS, 116 and 127.

53 CCS, 274.
animosity towards the Church grew, the Church became more entrenched and suspicious of anything reflecting liberal or modern ideas.

In 1932, the liberal government took strong actions against the Church. It secularized cemeteries, legalized divorce, removed religion as a subject in public schools, and substantially reduced the portion of the state budget that went to the Spanish Church. Even more significantly, and perhaps as a strong symbolic strike against one of the most influential institutions within the Spanish Church, the Spanish government suppressed the Jesuit order and nationalized its property.\(^{54}\)

By May 1933, the Republic passed the Law on Religious Confessions and Congregations, which enforced an absolute separation of Church and State. This law not only created an absolute separation of Church and the modern State, but it also appeared to justify the anticlerical sentiments found among liberal leaning parties.\(^{55}\)

These anticlerical sentiments were met with suspicion and admonition by the Spanish Church. As Callahan points out, because of continual attacks on the Church, “Socialism and Catholicism were seen as fundamentally incompatible.”\(^{56}\) Anything appearing to contain Marxist ideas was considered, at best, antithetical to Church

\(^{54}\) CCS, 296. The suppression of the Jesuits by a Spanish government was nothing new. As Callahan points out, the hostility towards the Jesuits goes back to the suppression of the order in the eighteenth century and that the Jesuits had been viewed by liberal governments as conservative obstacles to the State’s exercise of authority. The Jesuits were also suppressed as an order in 1820, 1836, 1854, and 1868, (CCS, 289). The majority of Spanish Jesuits during the nineteenth century supported the Carlist cause, which was an attempt by many conservative clergy and lay people to restore an absolute monarchy in Spain (CCS, 53n120).

\(^{55}\) For the Socialist, Communist, and anarchist wings of the government, this law represented the successful break with an oppressive institution. For years these parties viewed the Church with suspicion as “a direct agent of counterrevolution and capitalism” (CCS, 372).

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 312.
teaching, and, at worst, a danger to the salvation of the soul of Catholic Spain. Thirty years later, the Church hierarchy’s greatest fear came true with the amicable relationships and collaborative efforts emerging between a small group of Spanish clerics and theologians, and Socialists, Communists and Marxists.

Ultimately, the battle-lines between the Church and the modern State solidified during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). This became the setting for the Church’s future collaboration with the Nationalists.

Many within the Church hierarchy saw the Spanish Civil War as embodying a cosmic battle between absolute good and absolute evil, and as thus having “transcendental importance.” The Church hoped that the Nationalists would not only end any anticlericalism present in Spain, and eliminate all forms of Marxism, but that the Nationalists would help re-Christianize Spain and legitimize the political role of the Church in Spanish political life.

The reunification of the Church with the Spanish State was once again complete due to anticlerical violence, and enormous destruction done to religious buildings and symbols, in Republican territory.

**Franco, National Catholicism, and Signs of Change**

The history of the relationship between the government of *El Caudillo* (Franco) and the Spanish Church is a complex, as well as a highly contested, one. There are as many opinions and theories about this time in Spanish history as there are written works.

---

57 Ibid., 351.

58 Ibid., 349-353.
on the topic. For González Faus, this was an embattled time for democracy and social justice.59

According to Callahan, Franco believed that his ascendancy to national *Caudillo* was a call from God to save both the Spanish nation and the Catholic faith.60 He points out however, that “[a]lthough Franco’s religiosity was sincere enough, it took the form of that popular, ultramontane piety characteristic of Spanish Catholicism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”61

During early years of Franco’s leadership, the supporters of a National Catholicism felt a sense of jubilation due to the Church’s freedom from anticlerical attacks and the attempt by the State to eradicate the spread of liberal ideas. They felt that the Church could now freely set forth to re-Christianize Spain and move aggressively towards the eradication of all that was considered liberal.62

However, by the late 1940s and early 1950s, this feeling of triumph would begin to die down as there were growing signs of rupture within the National Church. Ideas born from modernity began to creep into the Spanish Church by way of clerics and theologians who were introduced to these ideas during their studies in France and Germany. Many of these clerics and theologians became highly critical of National

59 José Ignacio González Faus, SJ., *Notas Biográficas*, submitted to Juan Bosch for publication in 2000 (publication unknown); received electronically from María Teresa Dávila, June 2006 (2).

60 CCS, 372.

61 Ibid., 372.

62 One example of the Church attempting to eradicate liberal thought from Spain was the censuring of the writings of intellectuals like Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset. Ironically, both of these thinkers eventually became very influential in the thought of many progressive theologians in Spain from the 1960s up until this day.
Catholicism, and they began a struggle to reform the Church from within. What these young progressive clerics and theologians called for was a commitment on the part of the Church to social justice issues, and a recovery within theology of the social gospel.

This new generation of priests and theologians saw the need for the Church to redefine its relationship to the working class. Catholic organizations aimed at ministering to, and working with, the working class began to form. Many of these Catholic labor groups began to organize strikes and work towards social change. The HOAC (Hermandades Obreros de Acción Católica) and the JOC (Juventud Obrera Católica) were two of the most influential Catholic labor groups of the time. Also at this time, there emerged clandestine Catholic labor activist groups that moved towards the idea of class struggle as essential to responding to social conflict and cooperated with other trade unions.

Other changes within the Spanish Church during the middle part of the 20th century began to slowly chip away at the edifice of National Catholicism. Progressive theological journals began to appear. The writings of Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset could now be found in theological works. There emerged greater collaboration with the laity on the part of clergy and bishops. These changes, among others, all became clear efforts that led to the ultimate demise of the National Church in Spain. The changes

---

63 This was nothing new within the Church in Spain, but what were new were the goals of these labor groups, the ways in which these labor groups were organized, and the close ties between these groups and the non-Catholic secular labor groups, many of which espoused socialist and communist ideologies and which were clandestine groups (CCS, 420). Regarding their goals, many of these groups went beyond purely religious and educational activities, as in the past, to organizing labor strikes and protests, and to outright critiques of the government’s social and economic policies.

64 CCS, 505-506.
taking place within the larger Catholic Church with Vatican II only legitimized the slow breakdown of the National Church.

The final thrust against National Catholicism came between 1966 and 1969. During this period a wave of protests aimed at Franco’s government and the Church hierarchy emerged from among young idealistic clergy and theologians who were concerned about issues of civil rights and social justice. The clerical marches and demonstrations that appeared were most prominent in regions that sought independence from the government in Madrid (e.g., the Basque and Catalan regions). In 1966, hundreds of clergy in Catalonia, during two separate instances, demonstrated against the Franco regime and the Church hierarchy. This, and the death of Franco in 1975, was a clear sign that change within the Spanish Church was inevitable.

The Spanish Church after Franco

For the Church, the political and cultural changes after Francoism presented both challenge and opportunity. The move towards greater democracy occurred at an opportune time for the Church. With the end of National Catholicism, and the desire for political as well as ecclesial reform on the part of the majority of bishops, priests and laity, the Church became a legitimate contributor to the changing cultural landscape.

The Church also faced new challenges that it had never before confronted. As Spain began to move closer towards the new millennium, it began to mimic other Western European countries in its cultural shifts. Capitalism became the dominant economic paradigm in Spain, and played an important role in the shift in the culture of

---

65 CCS, 516.
Spain. A dominant youth culture looked towards new ways of being Spanish. At the same time, the traditional notion of what it meant to be family began to change, and a privatization of individual life and faith became more widespread.

Within the Church, a clear divide grew between conservative and traditional clergy and theologians who became nostalgic for a Spanish Church that once claimed a significant part over the formation of Spanish culture and life, and progressive clergy and theologians claiming a reformed vision of Spanish Catholicism within an ever growing pluralistic and globalizing society.

The most notable of groups that pressed for radical changes within the Spanish Church was the Society of Jesus. For centuries the Vatican had seen the Jesuit order as one of the Church’s strongest defenders against attacks on the Church. However, with the reforms initiated by the Basque Father General Pedro Arrupe, and the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1974-75), the order was now being watched closely by Vatican officials. The radical shift within the Jesuits created fertile ground for González Faus’ theological project to take root.

Biographical Sketch: Theological Foundations

It was within this tumultuous context that José Ignacio González Faus was born and developed his philosophical and theological ideas. He was born on December 27th, 1933 in Valencia one month after the last parliamentary elections of the pre-Civil War Republic. His family was a traditional Catholic family from the lower middle-class.

His father, José González Huguet, worked as a telegraph operator during the day, and at night worked as a Math teacher at the local Jesuit colegio. As with most Spaniards
who associated with the Jesuits of this time, José Ignacio’s father was “very Catholic, and conservative.”

His mother, Josefa Faus Fenollera, stayed at home to care for their five children.

It was in this conservative Catholic climate that the González Faus children were raised. However, like many Spanish children who lived through Francoism, two of the daughters became atheists. They remain atheists today due to the identification of the Church with the Franco government. The third daughter, José Ignacio’s twin, was strong in her Catholic identity until her death from cancer in 1951.

As a young man, José Ignacio attended the Jesuit colegio in Valencia. It was there that he became familiar with the Society of Jesus and received a classical Jesuit education that was guided by traditional Catholic teachings. He attended this school until he entered the Society of Jesus in 1950.

González Faus entered the Society of Jesus at the beginning of a major turning point within the Spanish Church. As Callahan points out,

The 1950s saw the inevitable emergence of the inner contradictions of Spanish Catholicism made dormant for a time by the special circumstances prevailing in the years immediately following the Civil War. In retrospect, the decade of the 1950s formed a prelude to the intense conflicts that developed within the Church during the 1960s, when the contradictions that had already emerged burst into a full-blown internal struggle the like of which was unknown in the Spanish Church’s modern history.”

---

66 E-mail correspondence with González Faus, June 25, 2007.

67 The family’s traditional piety would not have been anything unusual for the time, for, as Callahan points out, the devotional and pastoral side of Spanish Catholicism at the time was traditional and “ultramontane,” CCS, 334.

68 E-mail correspondence, June 25, 2007.

69 CCS, 439.
Though change was underfoot in Spanish Catholicism, González Faus’ early philosophical and theological studies as a Jesuit were neo-Scholastic in content and in form. This was not unusual for scholastic studies at this time. Like Rahner’s generation, González Faus’ theological training consisted in the familiarity with the neo-Scholastic manual theology. It was this theological method that became the only resource he had to respond to contemporary questions and problems.

For González Faus, this way of doing theology was something lifeless, and therefore useless. At a time when he was going through a “crisis of faith,” this form of theology provided him with no answers and thus proved to be inept.\(^70\) This confirms Callahan’s claim that,

\[\text{the academic preparation given candidates for the priesthood did little to equip them for work in the pastoral trenches….Neo-scholasticism dominated a formal curriculum largely untouched by the new theological currents already circulating within Catholicism elsewhere, especially in France and Germany, while traditional ideas of spirituality based on the models of Saint Ignatius and the great masters of the sixteenth-century Spain emphasized a heroic, personal asceticism more in accord with a monastic life than with the difficult contemporary world that future priests would face in urban and rural parishes.}\(^71\)

By the 1950s and 1960s, the new theological trends coming out of France and Germany appeared in the seminaries and theologates of many religious orders in Spain. The Jesuit theologates and house of studies, despite their long tradition of conservative neo-Scholastic thought, were no exception.

González Faus was first introduced to these new theological trends, specifically the thought of Karl Rahner and Yves Congar, informally during his first theological

\(^{70}\) “Conversaciones,” 74.

\(^{71}\) CCS, 448.
studies at Sant Cugat del Vallès (1960-1963). It was during this time that he “had been suffering from a serious crisis of faith.” In the writings of Rahner and Congar, he was able to find a solution to this crisis.\textsuperscript{72}

Immersing himself in these new theological trends, González Faus recognized the need for a \textit{teología nueva} in the Spanish Church. It was out of this need for a ‘living theology’ that the theological review \textit{Selecciones de Teología} came to fruition in 1962 with González Faus as its first secretary. As he recalls, this review was founded not only to help others but to show that another theology, beyond the officially recognized theology, existed.\textsuperscript{73}

As he began to explore these new theological trends as a new way of doing theology in a Spanish context, González Faus found the thought of Rahner particularly appealing. He recalls that Rahner was particularly influential on three levels. First of all, Rahner had a particular “way of moving beyond a useless scholasticism that we studied, and to critique it with authority.” Second of all, he “was never afraid of engaging a problem, because he not only did theology in context, but he did it with his own tradition as a response to the context.” Finally, Rahner was influential on González Faus “because…he brought spiritual experience to theology.”\textsuperscript{74}

Beyond the new theological trends of the time, González Faus also began to explore non-Scholastic philosophies of the time. He became particularly interested in the thought of Maurice Blondel, Albert Camus, and the Spanish philosopher Xavier Zubiri.

\textsuperscript{72} “Conversaciones,” 74.

\textsuperscript{73} “Conversaciones,” 74.

\textsuperscript{74} E-mail correspondence, October 12, 2006.
The insights of these thinkers provided him with new philosophical questions and methods.

After Third Probation in 1965, González Faus was introduced to the extensive research done in biblical and Patristic studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.\(^{75}\) He saw in this new research another way to move beyond the medieval neo-Scholasticism so prevalent in Spanish theology at the time. It was through this new reading of scriptures that he became “existentially” familiar with the God of revelation. As Josep Vives points out, “faith in the God of revelation made him discover that God is passionate about us, and that that discovery points to the fact that we are faithful to God only insofar as we participate in God’s passion for us.”\(^{76}\) In other words, González Faus came to the realization that the God of revelation is fundamentally concerned about concrete problems in the world, and that to believe in that God means to also be concerned about concrete problems.

From 1966 to 1969, he became more familiar with the new theological trends in the Church while doing graduate studies in theology at Tübingen and Innsbruck. Having found interest in the new biblical and Patristic research, he began to write his doctoral dissertation on the Christology of Irenaeus of Lyons, which later became the foundation

---

\(^{75}\) Third Probation is the term that is used within Jesuit formation, also known as Tertianship, which comes about three to five years after ordination. It is a time to reconnect with the mission of the Society of Jesus and prepare for final vows.

\(^{76}\) Members of the Centre d’Estudis Cristianisme i Justícia. *De ‘Proyecto de hermano’ a Agradecimiento de hermanos* (Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, 2002), 34.
for his own work on Christology, and later, his theological anthropology.\textsuperscript{77} It was from these new theological trends and research, as well as the influence of a young professor named Joseph Ratzinger, that González Faus found new life in Catholic theology and Christian faith.\textsuperscript{78}

As much as González Faus benefited from, and appreciated, this new direction in theology, he believed that these bold and original thinkers did not go far enough. He looked critically upon the accomplishments of the previous generation of theologians, and hoped to press these accomplishments further.

González Faus’ thought may have been marked by the new trends in theology emerging from the 1950s and 1960s, but it was his own personal experiences of social and political upheaval, and witnessing the suffering of many due to social injustices that became the primary force behind his ‘epistemological shift.’

Epistemological Shift: Experience of the Poor and Oppressed and a Turn to the Victim

Similar to Rahner, González Faus’ own understanding of the nature of theology, the nature of being a Christian, and the nature of being human, came with an epistemological shift in his theological foundations. Like Rahner, the theologian must

---

\textsuperscript{77} His dissertation was ultimately published as \textit{Carne de Dios} in 1969. It became the basis for his work on Christology entitled \textit{La Humanidad Nueva}, and his later work on theological anthropology entitled \textit{Proyecto de Hermano}.

\textsuperscript{78} “Conversaciones,” 74. In another interview, González Faus recalls that Ratzinger at that time was more of a liberal thinker. He states that “Then he (Ratzinger) was more to the left. One day, speaking about the Christology of the first centuries and of the two schools (the more left-leaning Antioch school and the more right-leaning Alexandrian school), Ratzinger asked himself about Rome’s theology and he himself responded, ‘All of you know that in Rome, good theology is not done.’ All of us applauded.” “Jesus me hizo ser de izquierdas”; \textit{Redes Cristianas}; 14 November 2006; Available from <http://www.redescristianas.net/2006/11/14/jose-ignacio-gonzalez-faus-jesus-me-hizo-ser-de-izquierdas/>; Internet; Accessed on 4 January 2008.
begin theological reflection with his or her context and historical situation. However, going beyond Rahner, González Faus attempted to make this context and situation more concrete and particularized. 

For González Faus, the theologian must begin theological reflection with the politically concrete turn to the marginalized of society. In other words, González Faus’ theological project begins with the particular experience of poverty, oppression, and exclusion. This shift in theological starting-points was an open challenge to the officially accepted methods in Catholic theology. Thus, for González Faus, the challenge to Christian theology is not strictly a theoretical nor a pastoral one, but rather a socio-political one. The theologian is not faced with the question of how to do theology after Kant or in light of atheistic existentialism as was typically the concern of European Catholic theology. Rather, for González Faus, the challenge to theology and the theologian comes from the daily life of those who struggle with poverty, social marginalization, and political oppression.79

This conviction that theology must begin with the poor and oppressed arises out of three defining experiences from González Faus’ life. The first experience was his experience of the life of the economic poor and the socially excluded, and the

79 This theological challenge is not easily overcome, and there are no simple solutions. Even González Faus found this to be a personal challenge. In an interview by a fellow Jesuit and friend, González Faus is taken to task on this matter. González Faus is challenged with the fact that his theology speaks of a starting point from the poor and marginalized, and yet he lives in the wealthy neighborhood of Sant Cugat. González Faus responds openly that this has been a recurring challenge to his own conscience. He confesses that he is not sure whether or not they (scholars and academics) “can experience this reality (the reality of the poor and marginalized) that is so painful.” However, he does go on to say that academics and scholars should at least have some regular contact with this reality of the suffering of the poor (“Conversaciones,” 77). In other words, it is not that the academic and scholar needs to become poor and marginalized to do theology, but rather, the academic and scholar needs to have regular contact with these victims of society for it is there that the gospel message of Jesus speaks most clearly.
introduction to the idea of social justice during his first studies in philosophy as a Jesuit
scholastic. The second experience was the awareness of the corrupted expression of
power in the political sphere, and witnessing the responses to corrupted expressions of
political power by social and political protests in the late 1960s. The third experience
was seeing the lack of adequate response by the official Church to the growing social
problems in Europe and in Latin America.

His first experience of the poor was during his early philosophy studies from 1956
to 1960 at Sant Cugat del Vallès in Barcelona, and at the Facultad Civil de Barcelona. It
was during these years that he taught ‘catechism’ to immigrant workers from the southern
part of Spain in the poor neighborhood of Torre Romeu in Sabadell. This was an activity
of which many of his Jesuit professors disapproved. Also during these years, he was
given the analytical tools to make sense of this experience by the Jesuit rector Pedro Vila
Creus.80

Later, after theological studies in Tübingen, Innsbruck, and Rome, González Faus
returned to Sabadell to become a member of a local base community for the next ten
years. His commitment to the poor eventually solidified during those years, and became
much more heightened with his travels to Latin America and his growing relationships
with the theology of liberation.

The second defining influence on González Faus’ thought was his experience of
the corrupted expression of power in the political sphere, and of the political protest
movements throughout Europe during the 1960s. His experience living under the Franco

---

80 González Faus recalls that it was Pedro Vila Creus who first got him interested in social justice. For
González Faus, Vila Creus was an “authentic pioneer” of his time in the area of social thought, and because
of this Vila Creus was ostracized by many of his contemporary Jesuits. “Conversations,” 75-76.
government in Spain, and witnessing the student revolts in Germany in 1968, formed a lasting awareness of the political nature of the gospel and of Catholic theology.

His involvement in the anti-Franco struggle began during the early 1960s while studying theology in Barcelona. It was in the base community of Sabadell where he came in contact with many sympathizers of the anti-Franco movement. He points out that everyone in this base community was politically and socially active. Even the priests of the community were members of “clandestine political parties” that fought against Francoism. This experience of associating with a politically and socially active Christian community left a definitive mark on his life and his theological project.

The last experience that defined his theological project was the lack of adequate response by the leaders of the Church, and by official Catholic theology, to the growing social problems of the time. He witnessed a divided Church on matters of social justice in Spain’s National Catholicism of the 1940s and 1950s, and the rupture within the National Church during the 1950s.

During his final years of studies in Germany, González Faus witnessed the student protests of 1968. These protests were responses to a century of conservative and authoritarian tendencies within university life, and responses to the growing awareness of injustices in German society.

For González Faus, this active engagement in society via protests and demonstrations by the students contrasted with a theology that appeared to disregard social realities. This chasm separating academic theology and its historical context

---

81 Ibid., 74.
82 Ibid., 76.
needed to be bridged. He believed that the status quo in theology could no longer be acceptable as a response to the changing times. He became critical of many of his professors who he believed had forgotten the imperative question for theology, namely, “How can we do theology after Auschwitz?”83 This axiomatic question became applicable, for González Faus and others of his generation, to the reoccurring genocides throughout the world, and more generally to the slow and often less discernable genocide of social and economic injustices. For González Faus, forgetting “Auschwitz,” (i.e., forgetting about the victims of society) is like forgetting the gospel message of salvation.84

These three important experiences were formative in his theological project. It became apparent to him that there was a growing need to create a dialogue between Catholic theology, the social sciences, and the victims of oppression in order to construct an adequate response to the changing nature of the world. He found elements of this response within the emerging theology of liberation, and the Frankfurt School of critical theory.85

**Socio-Political Critique as Method**

González Faus’ formal encounter with the philosophies of social and political critique can be traced back to his early theological studies at Tübingen. Having been introduced to the philosophies of Hegel and Marx, and to the emerging Marxist-Christian

---

83 *Notas Biográficas*, 3-4.

84 Ibid., 5.

85 Though González Faus is often categorized as a liberation theologian, he seems to shy away from that classification. He is grateful for this classification, but to him it appears a bit excessive. Ibid., 4.
dialogue, González Faus found Ernst Bloch’s “philosophy of hope” as particularly appealing and helpful in making sense of the reality of marginalization and oppression. He recalls once having attended a particularly interesting ‘roundtable discussion’ between Bloch and Wolfhart Pannenberg. This interest in these three philosophers and the Marxist-Christian dialogue grew stronger with his return in 1969 to the Spain of Franco.

The critical nature of Marxist social analysis took on a new dimension of meaning for him as he found himself in contact with underground groups whose goal was to subvert the political power of Francoism, and who hoped for a more just Spanish society. Out of this context, the dialectic of *theoria* and *praxis* came to fruition for González Faus.

In 1969, as Professor of Systematic Theology at the Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya in Barcelona, González Faus was introduced to the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory by one of his German students. This new philosophical insight resonated with his own thought and experience that he eventually dedicated a year to studying it more completely. It was through his reading of Horkheimer and Adorno that he constructed a critical conversation between contemporary social and political reality, and Catholic theology. The use of the critical theory continues to influence his work with his recent interest in the thought of Walter Benjamin.

---

86 E-mail correspondence, June 28, 2007.

87 Most of the groups that González Faus came in contact with were Marxist in nature. However, as dissatisfaction over Franco’s government grew within Catholic circles, many of these groups included Catholic priests and laity.

88 E-mail correspondence, June 28, 2007.
An equally important mark present in González Faus’ theological project comes from Latin American liberation theology. Fostering friendships with Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, and his first visits to Latin America in 1977 and 1979, left lasting marks on his theology.\(^89\) From this encounter with liberation theology, he has seen his own project as a bridge between European theology, especially political theology, and Latin American liberation theology. He makes the claim that “Liberation theology has recovered...the best, and the most Christian of European Christianity that we had forgotten: Bonhoeffer, Mounier, Simone Weil...(and, at least for Spain, Bartolomé de las Casas).”\(^90\) Furthermore, what liberation theology has done has been to bring others into solidarity with the oppressed victims of society.\(^91\)

In his own theological project, González Faus has attempted to bring into fruitful dialogue various philosophical and theological perspectives in an attempt to incarnate what the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed: to know God is to practice justice.\(^92\) Currently, as director of the Centro de Estudios ‘Cristianisme i justícia’ in Barcelona, and through many articles, television, radio and internet interviews, and books, he continues to struggle for justice, and to opt for the victims of society. His dialectical method of the experiential and the narrative with the analytical and systematic allows for his work to challenge modernity’s attempt at glorifying instrumental reason, and postmodernity’s attempt at deconstruction.

---

\(^89\) Since 1977, he has visited Latin America about another dozen times, and calls these experiences a real “grace,” and an awakening. *Notas Biográficas*, 3.

\(^90\) *Notas Biográficas*, 3.

\(^91\) Ibid, 4.

\(^92\) Jeremiah 22:16.
Concluding Remarks: The “Ignatian Vision”

As Jesuits, the theologies of Rahner and González Faus are marked by the theology and spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and the “Jesuit tradition." There are many noticeable Ignatian themes present in the thought of both theologians. For example, the themes of the experience of God; the experience of grace as gift; the mysticism of everyday life; the notion that God is *semper maior*; the notion of Ignatian “indifference” as leading to the possibility of finding God in all things; the incarnation of Christ; contemplation in action; and Ignatian election and discipleship can be found in the theological projects of both theologians.

On a personal level, González Faus states that he has learned three things from Ignatius. First, it is “the advice that we humans should have some sense of self-knowledge, because we often fool ourselves about our real motivations.” Second,
Ignatius in the *Exercises* discloses “the mystical identification [of the excercitant] with ‘the poor and humble Christ.’” Finally, González Faus has learned from Ignatius how he held “in tension” in his later life the two incongruent realities of “the radical nature of the gospel and the patient strength to make that radicality a possibility in the structures of this world.”

Isolating the “spirit” of Ignatius in the thought of these two theologians is a daunting task. However, I believe that there are two clearly obvious Ignatian themes that are essential to their theological anthropologies: the mystical immediacy of God in Christ, and Christian discipleship as a call to transform one’s self and the world. Both of these themes are fundamentally grounded in what both Rahner and González Faus see as the goal of the *Spiritual Exercises*: freedom.

The first Ignatian theme that is essential to their theological anthropologies is the idea of the possibility of a person’s mystical immediacy to God in Christ. This influence most clearly comes from Note 15 of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In an interview, Rahner points out that, in the words of Ignatius, the *Spiritual Exercises* are concerned with “letting the Creator and the creature…deal directly with each other.” He goes on to say that Ignatius “presupposes as both possible and actual” an experience of God and an immediate encounter with Jesus. This Ignatian theme is stressed in his essay “Ignatius of

---

96 “Conversaciones,” 81.

97 *KRD*, 175. Rahner’s reference to Ignatius’ words come from note 15 of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The original Spanish was “dexe inmediate obrar al Criador con la criatura, y a la criatura con su Criador y Señor.” *Obras completas de san Ignacio de Loyola*, eds. Ignacio Iparraguirre S.J. and Candido De Dalmases, S.J., vol. 86, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1977), 211.
Loyola Speaks to a Modern Jesuit." In this essay, Rahner takes on the persona of Ignatius himself to speak to a contemporary Jesuit. The Ignatius portrayed by Rahner is one who has experienced God directly and who names this experience as an experience of grace and of God’s very self. For Rahner, this non-mediated encounter with God in Christ is the experience of grace. It is, in scholastic terms, an experience of uncreated grace. It is in this experience of an immediacy of God in Christ that Rahner situates his Christology and anthropology.

This notion that the human person can have an immediate experience of God in Christ is also fundamental to the theological anthropology of González Faus. For him, this experience of God in Christ is an experience of gratuidad (gift), and justice. In his reflections on the Spiritual Exercises, González Faus sees misericordia (mercy, compassion) at the heart of experiencing God’s self in Christ. This experience of God, through an experience of misericordia, is an experience of divine love. This is the last contemplation of the Fourth Week of the Exercises, known as “Contemplation to Attain Love.” Out of this experience of love emerges the Christian praxis of accompaniment with the poor and marginalized.

The second Ignatian theme that is essential to the theological anthropology of Rahner and González Faus is that of discipleship. This theme emerges from the Second

---


99 CCKR, 25.

100 CCKR, 114.

101 De “Proyecto de hermano” a Agradecimiento de hermanos,” 26.
Week of the *Exercises* with a meditation on the Kingdom of God and the “Call of the King,” and ends with an annotation on discernment called the “Election.”

In his essay on “Ethics” in Rahner’s thought, Brian Linnane makes the claim that “the concept of choice is at the heart of both [Rahner’s] transcendental anthropology and the Ignatian spiritual tradition.”102 This idea of choice in Rahner’s theology is not “the mere capacity to select among various objects,” but rather “the possibility of saying yes or no to oneself, the possibility of deciding for or against oneself,” which is also always a decision for or against God.”103 It is this “definitive choice” and “fundamental option” that leads to what Linnane sees as Rahner’s “ethics of discernment or discipleship.”104 For Rahner, the person’s fundamental option is participation in the death of Jesus, which “represents Jesus’ complete acceptance of the divine will and his unsurpassed love of neighbor.”105 Contrary to the critiques that Rahner’s anthropology lacks a concrete dimension, Linnane argues that Rahner’s understanding of the concept of Christian witness, which flows from the participation “necessarily involves a public, social, and historical proclamation.”106

For González Faus, the meditations on the Second Week are meant to lead the exercitant towards a reflection on the human person’s mystical identification with the

---

102 *CCKR*, 158-59.
103 *CCKR*, 158.
104 *CCKR*, 159.
105 *CCKR*, 166. Most, if not all, of the English translations of Rahner’s works utilize gender specific language. To remain faithful to the original translations and to avoid the overuse of *sic* I will leave the translations as they stand without using *sic*.
106 Ibid., 168.
poor and humble Christ. To enter into this contemplation, he points out that the person needs to have that First Week experience of sin and *misericordia*, which are “two focal points of the ellipse that constitutes our reality.”\(^{107}\) For González Faus, this experience of *misericordia* is a mystical experience of the person of Jesus, who calls us to transform our lives into “channels of *misericordia*.”\(^{108}\) Our self knowledge of mystical union with the Christ of *misericordia* then presents us with the possibility to choose Christ’s personal project of transforming persons to become persons of *misericordia* or the kingdom of God.\(^{109}\)

The transformative nature of an Ignatian vision is clearly notable in the thought of both Rahner and González Faus. The anthropologies of both Jesuits are indebted greatly to this worldview that proclaims the conversion of the person to the incarnate Christ, and the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God. The following chapter will begin an exploration into their theological anthropologies as two possible alternative anthropologies for a globalizing world with an initial analysis of the human predicament.

---

\(^{107}\) *Adiestrar la libertad*, 45.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 46.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 47.
CHAPTER THREE
DESCRIPTION OF THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT

“The death of the Son of God was the most direct offense to God and the greatest act of human injustice. That is the paradigm of all sin.”¹ This claim by González Faus may appear to be a rather obvious and simple assertion. However, these words contain much significance beyond their obvious meaning, and I contend that this “paradigm of all sin” can offer Catholic theology the necessary framework to approach the contemporary problem of global disparity and the current direction of globalization through a re-vision and re-articulation of a Christian theological anthropology.²

All anthropologies ask one fundamental question that consists of two aspects: What constitutes human fulfillment, and what hinders or damages that fulfillment? The second aspect of this question illustrates the fact that any exploration into human existence must address a real predicament within that existence. This chapter will attempt to address this predicament by way of Karl Rahner’s and González Faus’ understanding of this predicament. The goal of this chapter and Chapters Four and Five is to examine the relative adequacy of these two differing anthropologies as possible

¹ Proyecto de hermano: Visión creyente del hermano (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1991), 405. Hereafter, this text will be cited as Proyecto.

² Throughout this chapter, “anthropology” subsequently means “theological anthropology” unless it refers to the anthropology at the heart of the current state of globalization.
alternatives to a prevailing anthropology at the core of the current direction of a
globalizing world and as responses to the problem of global disparity.³

**Rahner: Human Existence as Transcendent Spirit and Created Being**

Rahner never wrote one single exhaustive work on human existence that was
isolated from other theological questions and problems. Rather, he used anthropology as
an approach to address the pressing theological questions and problems of his time.
Therefore, one way to explore how Rahner understood human existence is from an
approach that methodically examines the development of his thought over a period of
time and that extracts the necessary anthropological elements to present a formal
exposition of human existence. However, what I attempt to do instead is use Rahner’s
work *Foundations of Christian Faith* to examine Rahner’s anthropology and then use his
earlier books and essays to offer any necessary clarifications.⁴ I will do this primarily
because *Foundations* is most often acknowledged as Rahner’s most fundamental and

---

³ It is important to note that this chapter presents a formal survey of the human predicament as understood
by Rahner and González Faus. One particular problem with a formal survey is that it may fall short of
taking into consideration any change that a person’s anthropology may have had over a period of time. I
will attempt to clearly identify any particular changes in each theologian’s thought as they arise. One
element of this concern is the claim that Rahner’s earlier writings do not utilize social categories to
describe human existence, but that his later writings show hints of his growing consideration of the matter.

V. Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). Hereafter, this text will be cited as *FCF*. *FCF* will be used as
a guide to Rahner’s exploration into human existence. However, I will make use of other works by
Rahner in order to provide further background to Rahner’s argument, which may be left out in
*Foundations*. It is important to note a shift in Rahner’s later writings. As pointed out by Stephen J. Duffy,
in *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology* (Minneapolis: The Liturgical Press,
1993) there is a shift in Rahner’s works “after the fifties” from a more explicit use of the term God to that
of absolute mystery, 272-3. I believe this point is relevant to this current project because it offers a
justification for an anthropological starting point in theology. Cf. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, “Method in
Theology,” *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*, eds. Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines
(Cambridge University Press, 2005). Hereafter, this above literature will be cited as *DG* and *CCKR*.
systematic work and because it is one of the most commonly used of Rahner’s texts when teaching or researching Rahner’s theology.⁵

The following section will examine two formal dimensions of human existence as found in Rahner’s anthropology. These two dimensions are the openness of human existence, and the enduring structures within human existence, which Rahner calls “existentials.” However, prior to an exploration into these dimensions, some preliminary remarks need to be made on Rahner’s understanding of the relationship between matter and spirit.

On Matter and Spirit

One on-going challenge within an exploration into human existence is the attempt to avoid any dualism between “body/matter” and “spirit” and offer an integral anthropology. From the early stages of his thought, Rahner was concerned about this classical problem.

In Chapter Five of his work *Hearer of the Word*, Rahner argues that “To be human is to be spirit [*Der Mensch ist Geist*], i.e., to live life while reaching ceaselessly for the absolute, in openness toward God.”⁶ However, as he later argues in Chapter Ten, human existence, as constituting an openness towards God, is being spirit in a particular way. He claims that “Human beings are spirits in such a way that, in order to become spirit, we enter and we have ontically [*seinshaft*] always already entered into otherness,

---


into matter, and so into the world.” In other words, “we are spirit in a peculiar way. Our human spirit is receptive – anima tabula raza – and because of its receptivity this spirit needs, as its own, indispensable means, produced by itself, a sense power through which it may strive toward its own goal, the grasping of being as such. In this sense to be human is to be sense-endowed spirituality [sinnliche Geistigkeit]. Therefore, for Rahner, there is a distinction between matter and spirit, but no real division between matter and spirit within human existence. Though matter and spirit are conceptually distinct, human existence in its entirety is a unity. In other words, there is unity in distinction between matter and spirit. This notion of unity in distinction becomes an important hermeneutical device throughout Rahner’s entire theological program.

Rahner’s concern to assert the unity of matter and spirit within Christian theology in order to avoid any conception of human existence and reality in a one-sided manner is again taken up in his essay “The Unity of Spirit and Matter in the Christian Understanding of Faith.” In this essay, the central problem of materialism (i.e., a reduction of human existence and all reality to merely material existence) is an example of a one-sided framework that absolutizes a particular region of human existence and reality. As he claims “there is today a world-wide materialism which disputes the foundation of the Christian faith.”

---

7 Hearer of the Word, 106-7.


9 TI 6, 153.
In his response to this problem, Rahner asserts that “The Christian faith recognizes a unity of spirit and matter by their very origin, in their history and in their final end.”¹⁰ This point appears to be not only an attempt to avoid any one-sidedness to human existence but also to avoid any real separation between matter and spirit within theological paradigms.

In his argument, Rahner again attempts to establish an anthropology that upholds a unity in conceptual distinction. For Rahner, the relationship between matter and spirit, then, is actualized in the principle of change and becoming. Human existence is in an act of becoming and transformation. Human existence, in its act of becoming, is an “active self-transcendence.” He argues:

We have seen that becoming is really self-transcendence, and this in certain cases even towards a new nature even though this happens, of course, by the power of the dynamism of the absolute being, all of which, however, in its turn does not deny the fact that this is a question of a genuine, active self-transcendence. We have seen furthermore, that matter and spirit are not simply disparate things but that matter is, as it were, ‘frozen’ spirit whose only meaning is to render real spirit possible. Finally, we have seen that the spirituality of the creature always remains spirituality in materiality right up to its absolute perfection.¹¹

These preliminary remarks on Rahner’s understanding of the unity in the relationship between matter and spirit show that Rahner was aware of the dangers of any monism or dualism within a reflection on human existence. This attempt to avoid any form of dualism or one-sidedness within the relationship between matter and spirit is an effort to offer an integral understanding of human existence, and this integral anthropology is clearly found within the first five chapters of Foundations.

¹⁰ Ibid., 154.
¹¹ Ibid., 177.
The Openness of Human Existence

For Rahner, at the heart of human existence is the fundamental openness to all of reality. This fundamental openness is what Rahner understands in the theological sense as the ability to hear God’s message of salvation present within human existence. The ability to hear God’s message is the ability within human existence to encounter the transcendent God immediately in every human experience, as well as the ability to freely respond to this encounter. For Rahner, being a “hearer” constitutes personhood and subjectivity. In other words, the hearer of God’s message is both person and subject.

In *Foundations*, Rahner describes personhood as an experience, and more specifically as “the original experience,” which is “hidden and total” and “silent and unobtrusive.” This is not an isolated experience of an isolated being, but rather an experience of being, and more specifically an experience of being-in-relationship (e.g., being in relationship with the self through self-reflection, or being in relationship with

---

12 In *FCF*, Rahner begins with a particular framework of a philosophical anthropology of personhood and subjectivity. Before doing this, though, he makes the case that a philosophical anthropology does not exclude Christian faith, but is rather the presupposition of Christian faith. More specifically, he makes the claim that Christian faith already presupposes that human existence has the ability to hear God’s message (i.e., receive the message of Christian faith). He argues that “theology itself implies a philosophical anthropology which enables this message of grace to be accepted in a really philosophical and reasonable way, and which gives an account of it in a humanly responsible way” (*FCF*, 25).

13 The notion of “person” has been a debatable concept within Western thought for millennia. One particularly influential interpretation of personhood within Western thought understands the person in terms of a disengaged ego that can be isolated and examined. In *Foundations*, it is clear that Rahner attempts to avoid this approach to personhood.

14 Rahner’s use of the term “person” has a very complex history, which will not be addressed here. Oftentimes he uses the term person in relation to the metaphysical term “nature.” He also uses the term person in his Trinitarian theology. For a more extensive exploration into Rahner’s use of the term “person” see Gerald McCool’s work “The Philosophy of the Human Person in Karl Rahner’s Theology,” *Theological Studies* 22 (1961), 537-62. *FCF*, 24-43 summarizes *Hearer of the Word*, which presents Rahner’s early understanding of personhood.

15 *FCF*, 29.
God, other persons and the material world). He argues “Being a person, then, means the self-possession of a subject as such in a conscious and free relationship in the totality of itself.” On one hand, this description of personhood as an experience, and an experience of relationality avoids reducing the person to a mere object outside of and beyond the other realms of human experience (i.e., physical pain and pleasure).

On the other hand, an interpretation of personhood as an experience allows Rahner to avoid reducing the person to a mere by-product of the individual’s history. For Rahner, the individual’s particular history does not totally encapsulate nor define that particular individual. Instead of being absolutely determined by one’s genes, environment, and particular history, the individual, as a person, can put their very existence into question, and therefore can transcend it. As Rahner puts it, “A finite system cannot confront itself in its totality…It does not ask questions about itself.” This “confrontation” of the person with his or her “totality” is a particular and personal experience.

For Rahner, the particular and personal “experience” that the human being has is an experience of subjectivity. What is meant by an “experience of subjectivity” is the experience of self-reflection and self-questioning. The individual can reflect on his or her life, and place the whole of this life into question. He states that “A person looks inside himself, looks back at his past and looks at the world around him, and he discovers either to his horror or to his relief that he can shift responsibility from himself for all the individual data that make up his reality, and he can place the burden for what he is on

16 Ibid., 30.

17 Ibid., 30.
what is not him. He discovers that he has come to be through what is other than himself.”\(^{18}\) In this questioning of the person’s decisions to authentically respond or not respond, the individual becomes open “to the unlimited horizons of such questioning.”\(^{19}\) This, for Rahner, signifies that the subjectivity of the human person points to the individual’s infinite spiritual horizon. The individual person is only a subject insofar as the person is in a process of “being subject.”\(^{20}\) Therefore, subjectivity is always more than an objective part of the human being. Instead, it is a way of being in responsible relationship to oneself, other subjects, and the world.

**Human Existentials**

The personal experience of subjectivity does not exhaust human existence for Rahner. Human existence constitutes both a subjective, “spiritual” dimension and a dimension of relatedness to what is “other” than itself. This dimension of relatedness to what is other is what Rahner calls the “existential” dimension of human existence. This dimension is constituted by various “existentials,” and is the dimension that mediates personal subjectivity.\(^{21}\) These existentials are experiences or ways of being human that constitute personhood and they are also always-already-present within human experience. They are transcendence, freedom and responsibility, orientation towards the

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 27.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 29.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{21}\) Rahner’s use of the term “existential” is well-known and well-researched. The term “determinations” is at times used in the English translation of *FCF* (e.g., p.26). The use of the term “determinations” seems to help avoid any notions of an absolutized, unfettered self.
incomprehensible mystery, being in history and in the world, and personal relationality (i.e., the human being’s social nature).^{22}

The first existential of personhood that Rahner explores is the experience of transcendence. As Rahner explains, the human person is a finite being with limitations and limitedness. Though the person is bound by finitude, the person is able to recognize and acknowledge this limited nature. The person can raise particular questions about his or her limitations, wonder about one’s particular death, or even ask the meaning of life. These, and further questions, elicit possible answers, and these answers raise further questions. He points out, “Every answer is always just the beginning of a new question. Man experiences himself as infinite possibility because in practice and in theory he necessarily places every sought-after result in question. He always situates it in a broader horizon which looms before him in its vastness.”^{23} Since the human person can recognize this finitude and reflect on it, and can imagine numerous possibilities, the person has already transcended his or her finitude. The person, however, can also ignore the experience of transcendence in various concrete ways in the individual’s concrete experiences.^{24}

---

^{22} FCF, 26. Rahner does not limit himself to only these five experiences. In fact, any universal human experience can be classified as an existential. For example, “toil, ignorance, sickness, pain and death” are existentials made present in human existence and experienced as negative due to the consequence of guilt, (FCF, 115). It is important to note that each of these existentials should be interpreted on the level of conceptual interpretation as “ideas” and as only “an attempt to evoke an understanding of existence” (FCF, 43). In other words, a reflection on human existence by the person is only asymptotically or tangentially possible since any understanding of the self by the self is always open to interpretation and cannot be absolutely contained and defined.

^{23} FCF, 32.

^{24} The possibility of ignoring one’s experience of transcendence is a part of the possibility that each individual person has to radically ignore one’s own existence. This will be taken up further in the section on sin in Rahner’s theology.
At the same time that the person acknowledges his or her finitude, and places his or herself in question, the person can imagine an endless number of possibilities for his or herself. For Rahner, this openness to numerous possibilities is the openness to absolute being. This openness of the human person is prior to any objective experience and is open to being as such. As he puts it, the person is “grounded in a pre-apprehension (Vorgriff) of being.”  

The person “cannot understand himself as subject in the sense of an absolute subject, but only in the sense of one who receives being, ultimately only in the sense of grace.”

A second existential of personhood is the experience of responsibility and freedom. For Rahner, every individual person is able to discern whether one choice is better than another, freely make that choice, and then acknowledge responsibility for that choice taken. In his exploration into the experience of freedom, Rahner distinguishes between two forms of freedom: transcendental (originating) freedom and categorical (originated) freedom. These are not two types of freedom ontologically distinct from each other, but rather “two moments which form the single unity of freedom.” They are two dimensions of a single reality.

As Rahner sees it, transcendental freedom, as a dimension of freedom, is “a person’s ultimate responsibility for himself.” It is an experience in which a “subject

---

25 FCF, 33.
26 Ibid., 34.
27 “Theology of Freedom” TI 6, 178-196.
28 FCF, 37.
29 Ibid., 36.
experiences himself as subject,” as well as “the power to decide about oneself and to actualize oneself.” This actualization of the person is made real in the concrete actions within time and space, and thus mediated through the categorical experience of freedom. Rahner also points out that, as with subjectivity, the “person can evade his responsibility and freedom, and can interpret himself as the product of what is not himself.”

The third existential of personhood that Rahner describes is the experience of dependency. The person experiences this dependency as a dependency on something other than his or her self, whether that “other” is absolute mystery or the historical and created forces that affect that person (e.g., the person’s genes or culture). As Rahner puts it, “In spite of his free subjectivity, man experiences himself as being at the disposal of other things, a disposal over which he has no control.” Furthermore, the person’s transcendentality cannot be understood as that of an absolute subject which experiences and possesses what opens before it as something subject to its own power…Man never establishes his own freedom in some absolute sense, in the sense of a freedom which could make complete use of the material which is given to him in his freedom, or could cast it off in an absolute self-sufficiency…In an ultimate and inescapable way, man even as doer and maker is still receiving and being made.

A closer examination of Rahner’s description of human dependency points to its twofold nature. The experience of human dependency, on one hand, highlights the person’s creatureliness as an account of the person’s relationship to its creative ground

---

31 Ibid., 38.
32 Ibid., 42.
33 Ibid., 42. This quote not only points to the fact of human dependency, but it also is another attempt by Rahner to avoid any Cartesian dualism within his account of human existence.
(i.e., God). Rahner uses the term “creatureliness” to characterize the human person’s relationship to the absolute and incomprehensible mystery of reality (viz., God). Human persons experience their creatureliness immediately, and it is through the experience of creatureliness that the person has an experience of transcendence.

For Rahner, creatureliness is not a datum alongside other data concerning human existence. Rather, like the other human existentials, it is an experience, and it is in this experience that the person encounters God. The experience of creatureliness becomes the mediating factor in which the person encounters and relates to the world and encounters and relates to God.

The experience of dependency also reveals the person’s finite embodied presence in history and in the world. For Rahner, human existence is fundamentally situated in history and in the world. Human existence, as with all of existence, is moving in one direction to a goal and that that movement and finality is meaningful.

The fourth existential of personhood consists in the fact that the “existentiell” human existence (i.e., the concrete experiences of human existence) is moving towards an absolute goal and final consummation. In other words, personhood is constituted with an orientation towards the incomprehensible and absolute mystery, which is the person’s final actualization. Rahner makes the claim that, “If man really is a subject, that is, a transcendent, responsible and free being who as subject is both entrusted into his own

---

34 Ibid., 81.

35 This is not a new idea within Christian thought, nor does this notion of the historicity of spirit diverge from Christian teaching. Rather, as he claims, “The concept of historicity is a most profoundly Christian concept” (“The Unity of Spirit and Matter in the Christian Understanding of Faith,” TII, 6, 171-2).
hands and always in the hands of what is beyond his control, then basically this has already said that man is a being oriented towards God.”

It can be noted from the quote that this orientation is twofold. First of all, there is a movement on the part of the individual person. In other words, as subject, the person, through self-reflection, continues to discover and uncover the mystery that is at the core of the person’s existence. The experience of self-awareness, which cannot be ever exhausted in this life, is a movement beyond the person’s own particular ego and outward into the ineffable mystery.

This quest is not initiated only by the individual person. Rather, this orientation is also already begun prior to the individual person’s freedom. This orientation is the ground and the movement towards that which gives unity and totality to the person, which, for Rahner, is the incomprehensible mystery and which is expressed as “God.” It is also offered as a gift. Rahner claims that the person’s “orientation towards the absolute mystery always continues to be offered to him by this mystery as the ground and content of his being.”

This is “from a theological point of view” called “grace, and it is an inescapable existential of man’s whole being.”

The fifth existential of human existence found in the anthropology of Rahner is the relationality of human existence. This existential is the fundamental interpersonal and social nature of human existence. As already noted, Rahner’s anthropology begins with a personal experience of subjectivity that is fundamentally free and responsible for

---

36 FCF, 44.
37 Ibid., 44.
38 Ibid., 57.
the actualization of the subjective person’s freedom. However, the person never actualizes him or herself in absolute isolation. As Rahner states in Foundations, “Freedom is always the freedom of a subject who exists in interpersonal communication with other subjects.” Therefore, the human subject never experiences its freedom absolutely, but rather through an encounter with another subject.

Though Rahner makes the claim that relationality (i.e., interpersonal relationships) is a human existential, some theologians (e.g., Metz, Brackley) argue that Rahner places very little emphasis on this existential or that it remains too formal and abstract. Metz’s critique that Rahner’s anthropology focuses less upon the interpersonal subject and more upon the individual subject is a critique that many other theologians have used to press further a Rahnerian anthropology. The anthropology of González Faus can also be seen as a similar critique of Rahner’s anthropology. However, I argue that González Faus not only employs a “Metzian-like” critique but that his anthropology actually goes beyond this critique and presses it further.

**González Faus: Human Existence as Creature and Divine Image of God**

The most reliable pathway into the anthropology of González Faus is through his work *Proyecto de hermano: Visión creyente del hombre*. He begins his inquiry into human existence with a reflection on creation and the creatureliness of the human person, and then moves to the unique gift within human existence (viz., the image of God).

---

39 Ibid., 65.

40 As with Rahner, choosing a starting point to explore human existence does not mean to say that one particular characteristic of human existence can be separated and dissected in an absolute manner without any reference to other characteristics, or that one characteristic takes primacy over the others. Both
Typical of his methodology, he will do this by first establishing what the Christian tradition says about a topic and then correlate it to his contemporary context and language.

Creation

Prior to an exploration into González Faus’ understanding of human existence, some preliminary remarks on how González Faus understands the notion of “creation” need to be made. González Faus first of all claims that “the theological objective of the theme of creation is not what is said about creation in itself (metaphysically speaking, or as a concept of unknown causality and without analogy), nor what is said immediately about the world (as scientific information, etc.), but what creation says about human existence and about its anthropological purpose (i.e., in order for the human person to live with a worldview grounded in faith).”41 In other words, the theological objective of the theme of creation is that “creation” is something “given,” that is, a gift, to human existence.

González Faus argues that a Christian theory of creation must begin with an eschatological and soteriological approach rather than an ontological one. He points out that a faith perspective, which is what Christian theology claims, does not begin with faith in a creator God (i.e., as in the Greco-Roman tradition), but rather faith in a saving, theologians will continually attempt to argue that human existence constitutes a unity. As González Faus points out, creatureliness is not an independent entity separated from other dimensions of human existence. Rather, “Creatureliness and the image of God form, in human existence, and indissoluble unity, where it is impossible to precisely isolate what pertains to each of these categories.” However, as he argues, “it is pedagogically necessary to treat human creatureliness separately because it would be dangerous to confuse it with the other dimensions of human existence” (Proyecto, 19).

41 Ibid., 19.
or liberating, God (i.e., the Christian God). A truly Christian theory of creation, then, must approach the problem from a vision of a God who liberates and saves, and speaks of the origins of creation only secondarily after treating the goal and salvation of creation.

A soteriological and eschatological approach to creation, then, better positions creation within a theory of history (viz., the history of salvation) rather than within a theory of causation. For example, the schema “gift-rejection-death-promise” of Genesis 2-3 comes from the particular historical experience of Israel, which is then universalized for all human existence. This understanding of creation as the “creative” act of creating history, and not as a scientific category for the origins of things, plays an important role in González Faus’ anthropology on the whole.

For González Faus, this approach to creation is not new but rather reaffirms the Roman Catholic claim that creation constitutes a “positive and good orientation,” and that

42 Ibid., 24.

43 Ibid., 23-38. González Faus uses the preamble to the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola as a heuristic devise to illustrate this claim. González Faus shows that in the “Principle and Foundation” of Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises, human existence is “created to (para) praise, reverence and serve God, and by doing so to save the person’s soul” (Ibid., 29). The Spanish word para can be translated as “to,” as in “in order to,” or “for.” He points out that this para is para algo (i.e., “to something” or “for something,” as in the sense of human finality, and in the altruistic sense). In other words, the creation of human existence is not a closed system whose individual parts at one point cease to exist, but rather a project of possibilities.

44 Ibid., 31-32.
the final end of all of creation, as proceeding from God, is to help human existence achieve its own end and consequently empower human existence to help creation achieve its end.\(^45\) This final and definitive end of human existence is nothing less than the fulfillment of the covenantal relationship of filiación and fraternidad.\(^46\) This binomial filiación-fraternidad, as the descriptor for the biblical covenantal relationship between human existence and God, is the fundamental framework out of which González Faus constructs his anthropology.

Human Creatureliness

For González Faus, language about creation and human creatureliness lies between “two stumbling blocks.”\(^47\) These stumbling blocks consist in various forms of monism (e.g., pantheism) and dualism (e.g., Manichaeism). Both arise from “two real human experiences, but incorrect in their partiality.”\(^48\) On one hand, when language of creation and creatureliness remains in this partiality, the possibility of extreme interpretations of human existence emerges. On the other hand, when language of

---

\(^{45}\) “El mundo procede de Dios como mundo por acabar, y como tal es entregado al hombre.” He shows that this point is found in the document Gaudium et Spes 34 and 12 (Ibid., 24 and 26). This should not be an affront to the ecological movement. When humans work toward its goal, it will treat the environment with the dignity that it deserves. See pp. 96-7 of this dissertation.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 33-38. Throughout this dissertation I will keep the Spanish terms filiación and fraternidad as they are without translating them into English. The reason for this is that the English version of those terms (viz., filiation or “sonship” and brotherhood or fraternity) evokes different meanings in the English speaking world. Even the closest possible term for fraternidad as I employ it here (viz., solidarity) suggests multiple meanings. Also, incorporating new terms into a vocabulary can offer a newness that may be needed.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 62.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., 62.
creation and creatureliness hold both in tension, the possibility for a more comprehensive and true expression of human existence arises.

González Faus offers three examples of holding language about human existence in tension in order to avoid any form of partiality.49 First, human existence needs to be viewed as “good,” but it is good to an extent. In other words, there is a “relative goodness” about human existence. Having faith in creation affirms that God created all things “good” and that there is goodness found within creation and within human existence. However, this goodness is limited (i.e., it is good to the extent that God see it as good). Second, a comprehensive vision of human existence should maintain the tension between freedom and giftedness. For example, human existence can exercise its freedom through self-actualization and independence. However, human freedom is not autonomous and absolute, but is a freely given gift. Third, a holistic vision of human existence must maintain a tensive vision of reality. In other words, God can be found in all of reality, and reality does reveal a sense of finality. Thus, all of reality is open to more possibilities than the human mind can fathom.

For González Faus, a holistic vision of human existence should assert the fact that human creatureliness not only encompasses the createdness, or limitedness of human existence, but it also asserts the truth that human existence consists in the human creature’s ability to exceed its limited nature. At the same time that creatureliness manifests the limitedness of human existence; the human creature has the potential to exceed this limitedness. Of all created things, human existence is the only being that can know itself and acknowledge itself as different from other created beings. As González

49 Ibid., 62-71.
Faus states, the human person is “the privileged creature, the end and lord of everything, and first analogy of creation.”\(^{50}\) This idea that human existence is a privileged existence is not meant to justify the claim that humans can dominate all other created things. Instead, this privileged existence is the gift of God’s emptying of self, and that this gift bears an element of responsibility towards creation.

For González Faus, this responsibility is a two-fold responsibility to “humanize the earth” and to be in “communion with creation.”\(^{51}\) As the privileged existence in creation, human existence was created as the “subject of the covenant,” and was thus created to create.\(^{52}\) Being the subject of the covenant entails a profound responsibility to create a new earth and a new history. Also, human existence has a responsibility to be in communion with creation. This means that there ought to be respect for creation by way of moderation.\(^{53}\) Creation is not at the absolute disposal of human existence. Rather, creation is a gift for human existence that has intrinsic value. This understanding of creation as a gift for humanity challenges the notion that an individual person or group of individuals has a right to reap the benefits of the earth without any obligation to, or concern for, others or the earth.

The possibility to exceed its limited nature by human existence also points to the universality of all of human existence. As González Faus argues, “the preeminence of

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 72. See also, Ibid., 39.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 41.

\(^{53}\) He cites the story of the manna in the desert from the book of Exodus. As González Faus understands the biblical story, no person or group can possess a surplus of manna otherwise it will turn rotten. This could easily be applied to the idea of a person having a surplus of goods while others suffer and go hungry, (Ibid., 74-5).
human existence in creation would not be as such if it did not apply to all human persons.” 54 He continues that “the particular dignity of human existence is that which grounds the unity of all human kind.” 55 This universal dignity establishes the fundamental ethic for a universal anthropology and the basis for a global justice. 56

Creatureliness, seen from the framework of the covenantal relationship, fundamentally constitutes “an integral and open possibility” to fraternidad. 57 However, for González Faus, a faith-oriented vision of human existence sees human existence as composed of more than merely a finite existence.

Divine Image of God

As seen with Rahner, González Faus will make the case that human experience is not adequately interpreted when the person is solely defined by their historical or biological determinacy. There is within human existence “‘something’ more”; a “spark, a seed, an aura of divinity.” 58 For him, this “something more” is something that has to do

54 Ibid., 77.

55 Ibid., 77.

56 As González Faus argues “if human existence does not have this dignity in the very core of its being, and human existence is only seen as “a lucky ape,” then we can continue searching for this ‘luck’ as we have up to this day.” In making this point, González Faus is not in favor of disregarding the theory of biological evolution and espousing some form of creationism. This would be far from his real point. What he means is that “the real problem of human existence is not a theoretical reduction of the human existence to biological or physical categories, but rather this reductionism transformed into a praxis and form of living” (Ibid., 78).

57 Ibid., 78.

58 Ibid., 83.
with the possibility of human transcendence, and which in the biblical tradition is called “the image and likeness of God.”

Within the biblical tradition, human existence is a unique embodied mediation of the transcendent God. As González Faus sees it, the Hebrew Scriptures make it clear that only human existence can mediate God and that all other forms of mediation (i.e., as found in the prohibition of Ex.20:4-5) are idolatrous. In the Christian Scriptures, this mediation is made definitive in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Beyond the biblical tradition, the question of what constitutes the notion “image of God” within human existence does not have a definitive answer, according to González Faus. However, as with Rahner, he argues that the fact that the question of human transcendence can be raised discloses the openness of human creatureliness. In other words, human questioning and reflection reveals the very possibility of human transcendence.

---

59 Ibid., 83-4. For González Faus, the use of the biblical language of “image of God” situates human existence within the biblical paradigm of the covenant. For him, situating the human within the paradigm of the biblical covenant provides a framework to actualize this dimension within human existence that prevents a reductionism of human existence to mere causal categories, and it allows him to shift to the language of gift. Though the use of biblical and covenantal language may not satisfy the seeker who attempts to find a non-religious description of human existence, González Faus is not apologetic that his project starts from and ends with a position of faith. For him, as pointed out frequently throughout Proyecto as well as in an e-mail correspondence with me, an approach grounded in faith is a reasonable approach to address some of the ills of the human condition. An abstract, disinterested description of human nature and the human condition is not the ultimate goal of González Faus’ theological project. Rather, his impetus for re-articulating a theological anthropology comes from “economic exploitation, oppression of some people by others, and the situation of subhuman living standards of two-thirds of the world’s population” (Ibid., 10). This is an important point to make, and an important point to remember throughout this dissertation because there is always the temptation to safely harbor an argument within the realm of abstraction far from the concerns of the practical realm.

60 This claim by González Faus is not an attempt to reject the possibility of God’s immanent activity in the world. Within the context of his logic, it is an attempt to argue for the dignity of all human persons as being created as the “image of God.” Any arguments against González Faus’ claim would miss his overall argument.

61 Ibid., 94-5.
In order to approach the question of what constitutes this openness of human existence (viz., the image of God) González Faus explores various particular and holistic responses to this question that highlight the fact that human existence strives for totality and wholeness.

First, he looks at the question of what constitutes the image of God from responses that isolate particular features and determinations within human existence. As González Faus points out, the Fathers described the image of God as a risen, rational figure or embodied spirit of God. Some of the Fathers saw this risen existence as consisting in both body and soul, while the more Hellenized Fathers interpreted the image of God by way of a Logos philosophy.\(^{62}\)

Medieval thinkers, in turn, understood the image of God as a divine faculty “only in the spiritual and immortal soul.”\(^{63}\) From this perspective, the image and likeness of God was not perceived as an anthropological fact but rather as something theological. In other words, the image of God within human existence “does not explain anything about human existence but rather it says something about God: namely, that God is Spirit.”\(^{64}\)

More contemporary thinkers, such as Wolfhart Pannenberg however, see the image of God as presented in Genesis 1:26 and Sirach 17:1-3 as constituting the ability to have dominion. In other words, God has created human persons to create.\(^{65}\) He adds that the image of God within human existence also points to the “desire for immortality.”\(^{66}\)

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 95.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 95.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 95.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 95.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 95.
Other contemporary anthropologies, such as that of Karl Barth, understand human existence as consisting in a “communion of persons.” More specifically for Barth, this communion of persons finds its expression within human sexuality.67

Emil Brunner, in turn, offers a description of the image of God that is rooted in the notion of freedom. For Brunner, the best definition of God and of human existence is that of freedom. More concretely, the human person’s freedom is imaged after God when the person confronts the reality of God and says “no.” There is something within this “no” that is “absolute.”68 However, the human person’s freedom is truly like that of God when the person says “yes” to God. This becomes, for Brunner, a “liberated freedom.”69

González Faus argues that all of these descriptions are valid, and that they all point to a certain essential reality within human existence. What they fundamentally point to, for him, is that the image of God is a “universal particularity.”70 This idea of the image of God as a universal particularity is not a definitive description for González Faus. It is, in effect, an abstraction that allows for the possibility of holding together in tension the uniqueness and the commonality of the human person. González Faus argues that this description of human existence is the most adequate because it best discloses “the hard contradiction, the repeated tragedy, and the undeniable greatness of human

66 Ibid., 97.
67 Ibid., 95-6.
68 Ibid., 97.
69 Ibid., 97.
70 Ibid., 98.
existence,” and “because to the extent that human existence strives for totality, it is clearly striving for divinity.”

Second, González Faus approaches the question of human existence by exploring other responses that use more formal language. For example, human existence constitutes a real dignity of the person. This dignity of each person means that every individual person is an “impenetrable mystery” that should not be manipulated and must be respected. This means that there is an obligation towards a practical response by other persons.

Human existence also consists of a “‘restless heart,’ whether restless for love, knowledge, power, or wealth.” Human existence is a movement towards possibility and a hope for the final consummation of history. For González Faus, this restlessness ultimately means that the desire for any human value (e.g., love, and knowledge) is a desire for God.

A final example of a formal response is the idea that the image of God “implies a new way to approach God.” Since human existence constitutes an inclination to an absolute end, God is acknowledged as the goal of and the energy behind this inclination.

In exploring all of these responses, González Faus concludes that the image of God within human existence is a limitless dynamic calling. It is a calling as a task and a

---

71 Ibid., 98.
72 Ibid., 101.
73 Ibid., 101.
74 Ibid., 108.
75 Ibid., 108.
project, and marks the person’s destiny. 76 For that reason, the person is not a thing at rest but rather a reality that is on the way; and on the way upward to an ascent. This notion of ascent is not to be understood in the sense of a heaven. Rather, it is an ascent towards *filiación-fraternidad*. Finally, to avoid any form of dualism infecting his anthropology, González Faus argues that the image of God is not something added on to the person’s creatureliness from beyond, but rather a way of being a creature or a way of living our creatureliness. 77

The question now arises, is the divine dimension found within human existence an immanent dimension within human existence or is it a dimension that is extrinsic to human reality and is “added on” in some abstract way to human existence? 78 As González Faus states the problem, “Is the ‘divine’ human or not human?” If one affirms that the divine is intrinsic to human reality, then we deny that it is a gift from God logically beyond human reality. If one contends that the divine is objectively extrinsic to human reality, then it must be a characteristic that needs to be purged because it alienates the person from their true nature. 79

---

76 Ibid., 123.

77 Ibid., 143.

78 This question has a long history within Christian theology. I will address this question more specifically in Chapter Four in the section on the relationship between nature and grace.

79 Ibid., 111.
On Spirit and Matter

Drawing from transcendental Thomism, González Faus attempts to maintain an integral understanding of the spirit-body binomial in human existence. He argues that the soul is not the “motor” of the body, but rather the “form” of the body. Therefore, without the soul there is no body, and without the body there exists no soul. Any notion of the spirit-body binomial other than this one has the danger to lead towards dualism or monism. Rather, as he put it, “The body is animated material, and the soul is incarnate spirit.” This renewal of the tradition’s understanding of the body-spirit dilemma allows González Faus to correlate it to the problem of the relationship between the individual and the social. In other words, the apparent contradiction between the human person as an individual being and the person as a social being can be addressed by way of the body-soul dilemma. Another way that classical theology looked at the spirit-body relationship was to argue that spirit is the universal openness and familiarity with everything, whereas matter constitutes the principle of individuation. This correlation and use of unity-in-distinction paradigm becomes key to González Faus’ conceptual argument for addressing the apparent contradiction.

After exploring the formal structures of human existence within the anthropologies of Rahner and González Faus, much can be seen as similar. However, the problem of the human predicament must now be directly addressed. More specifically,

---

80 Ibid., 171-178.
81 Ibid., 174.
82 Ibid., 175.
the question of sin must now be considered. This next exploration will point out the fundamental differences between the anthropologies of these two Jesuit theologians.

**Rahner: The Fragility and Vulnerability of Human Existence**

As Stephen J. Duffy argues, Rahner’s anthropology “is anything but naively optimistic. Beyond ‘essential,’ integral, human being Rahner sees the existential human being, whose integrity is won only by moral struggle, threatened as it is by its own fallibility within, and a history of sin and guilt without.”83 In Rahner’s own words, “Guilt and sin are without doubt a central topic for Christianity,” and “any introduction to the idea of Christianity would be deficient if it did not discuss man’s guilt and forlornness, the necessity of deliverance from radical evil, redemption and the need for redemption.”84 Central to his exploration into the question of sin are the notions of concupiscence, guilt, and original sin.85

In *Foundations*, Rahner argues that the contemporary person does not have a “clear consciousness that they stand before God burdened by guilt and blame,” and that “modern social sciences have a thousand ways and means to ‘unmask’ the experience of man’s guilt before God and to demolish it as a false taboo.”86 Furthermore, the contemporary person may not see the human being as a moral agent and attempt to argue that moral norms are merely social constructs. Regardless of how the individual

---

83 *CCKR*, 55.

84 *FCF*, 90.


86 *FCF*, 91.
understands guilt and morality, Rahner claims that no one can deny the fact that the human person is a responsible and accountable being.87

He points out that “at least in certain dimensions of his existence (the person) has the experience of being able to come and of actually coming into conflict with himself and his original self-understanding.”88 Since we are beings whose nature constitutes greater possibilities, and since we can be aware of our own personal lacking in fulfilling these possibilities we experience our own fragility and ambiguity. Furthermore, these possibilities within human existence can be freely actualized or not actualized, and yet the individual person must accept his or her responsibility in making these free decisions.

Concupiscence

A logical place to begin with an exploration into Rahner’s understanding of sin is with the idea of the possibility of sin. A renewed inquiry into the traditional concept of concupiscence gives Rahner the conceptual framework to reformulate a theology of sin by way of the conditions for the possibility of sin.89 It is in his early essay, “The Theological Concept of Concupiscientia,” which originally appeared in 1941, where Rahner attempts to offer this “fresh formulation of this concept” while situating it within

87 Ibid., 91.

88 Ibid., 91.

89 As with all of Rahner’s theology, nowhere does he attempt to construct a formal treatise on sin. Instead, any Rahnerian theology of sin must be placed in the context of his overall project to address particular theological and pastoral issues and problems.
the tradition and “the customary teaching of the theologians.”90 He therefore approaches the question of concupiscence in its “narrowest” or theological sense.91

Throughout the history of Catholic theology, the doctrine of concupiscence has traditionally been understood within the context of the doctrine of original sin. Concupiscence has been understood either as a power that weighs the human person down and induces the person towards sin (i.e., Augustine’s notion that original sin inclines the person to choose evil) or the desire of the lower appetites in the human being (i.e., the Post-Tridentine notion of the disordered orientation towards some created good).92 Instead of approaching the question of concupiscence from within these two paradigms, which may lead Rahner to gravitate towards one theory over the other, he approaches the problem from a transcendental analysis of the problem situated within the contours of human freedom.

Rahner argues that a personal free decision is a “spiritual act” that orients the whole of human existence towards the whole of reality (i.e., God).93 Though it is a spiritual act, this spiritual act is not “purely” spiritual. Instead, the free decision found

---

90 “The Theological Concept of Concipiscentia,” *TI* 1, 349.

91 Rahner makes a distinction between the “broadest,” “narrower,” and “narrowest” sense of the notion of concupiscentia. He understands the broadest sense of the term as the human reaction to some value or good. The narrower sense of the term, for Rahner, is the spontaneous act towards a determinate good or value, which, due to the natural orientation within human existence towards God, “precedes man’s free decision…and is its necessary precondition” (*Ibid.* 1, 359). This transcendental conception of concupiscentia leads Rahner to the narrowest sense of the term, which in the English translation of the text is designated concupiscence.


93 *TI* 1, 360-1.
within human existence is intrinsically connected to the sensible sphere of human existence.\textsuperscript{94}

Understanding the personal free decision within the contours of an overall orientation towards God, and within the contours of the sensible sphere of human existence, Rahner wonders “how far the freely operative subject when he makes his decision succeeds in actually extending this tendency totally to dispose of himself throughout the whole extent of his being.”\textsuperscript{95} In other words, does the human person, in all of his or her free decisions and in the context of his or her created nature, ever surrender the totality of their being to absolute being itself? This does not seem to be a possibility, for Rahner, within created human existence. As he claims: “the dualism of person and nature…has its metaphysical root in the finitude of man; thus ultimately in the distinction between essence and existence, in virtue of which the essence, in its complete unfolding, always remains an ideal capable of being attained only asymptotically by the concretely existent being, even as regards the freedom through which it makes itself what it is.”\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 1, 360. Rahner utilizes the traditional notion of the duality of sensibility (i.e., matter) and spirituality (i.e., spirit). However, the use of this duality by Rahner should not be taken as maintaining an absolute dualism within human existence as pointed out earlier in the section entitled “On Matter and Spirit” of this current chapter. In other words, the duality does not present two realities that are absolutely opposed to one another. Rather, this duality should be seen as a conceptual framework to illustrate the inherent tension within human existence. Part of what Rahner does in his essay on concupiscence is address the real dualism found within the manual theology of his time, which presents human existence as divided between lower appetites (i.e., that which pertains to the material body) and higher appetites (i.e., that which pertains to the spiritual aspects of human existence). Rahner attempts to go beyond this understanding of human existence in order to arrive at a more integral theory.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 1, 362.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 1, 363-64.
Therefore, for Rahner, there is an enduring conflict between the human as a given nature and the ultimate desire of human existence that is never overcome by the created human person. Rahner argues that “There always remains in the nature of things a tension between what man is as a kind of entity simply present before one (as ‘nature’) and what he wants to make of himself by his free decision (as ‘person’): a tension between what he is simply passively and what he actively posits himself as and wishes to understand himself to be.”97 This tension is what Rahner understands as concupiscence in its narrowest (i.e., theological) sense.

The notion of concupiscence, then, is not strictly located within the traditional paradigm of original sin and the personal experience of sin. Rather, for Rahner, concupiscence in its theological sense is best understood within the duality of what the individual human being is as a created finite being (i.e., a given nature), and what the individual hopes to become (i.e., a potentially free person). Concupiscence is not a product of original sin, but is the enduring tension found within human existence as free persons strive to create themselves as persons. Therefore, concupiscence in its theological sense, as a precondition prior to individual free decisions, cannot be designated strictly as evil. Rather, as Rahner argues, “as far as concupiscence (in the theological sense) precedes the free decision…it cannot be characterized as morally evil, let alone as sin.”98 Concupiscence in the narrowest sense is a bivalent, neutral term.

However, the argument in “The Theological Concept of Concupiscientia” continues setting the groundwork for the real possibility for human sinfulness. Rahner

97 Ibid., 1, 362.

98 Ibid., 1, 370.
argues that concupiscence, “can of course be called ‘evil’ in so far as it is only present in man in its concrete existential form in virtue of the Fall of the first man…and in so far as…it can on occasion also drive towards what is morally impermissible contrary to man’s free decision and thus lead to sin.”

This possibility to sin is both already given within human existence prior to free decision (i.e., as in the classical doctrine of original sin), and as what determines free conscious acts.

Sin as a Free and Personal Decision against God

Rahner is clear about the fact that the exercise of freedom by the individual person is “a freedom for something of final and definitive validity, and a freedom which is actualized in a free and absolute ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to that term and source of transcendence which we call ‘God.’”

For Rahner, the freedom that is actualized in the world is never a purely direct “yes” or “no” to God as the unthematic transcendental horizon of the totality of the individual, but rather is always one that is mediated in the concrete world of objects. However, as he argues “Even in the act of such a thematic ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to God, this ‘yes’ is not affirmed immediately to the God of original and transcendental experience, but only to the God of thematic, categorical reflection, to a God in concepts, maybe even only to a God in false gods…”

---

99 Ibid., 1. 370-71.

100 FCF, 97.

101 Ibid., 98.
This possibility of saying “no” to the transcendent and absolute God by saying “yes” to “a God in false gods” does not lead to hopelessness nor does it contradict or negate the fact of human freedom. Rather, when the individual person acts authentically within the realm of their freedom by striving for what is beyond their selves, the person is deciding to respond affirmatively to God’s will. Thus, in every authentic act of freedom that moves the person beyond themselves is an encounter with God “in all the things of the world, and therefore and especially in our neighbor.”  

For Rahner, freedom’s possibility can also consist of a “no” to God through various ways. The person can primarily ignore their experience of freedom and transcendence. This is categorically done by preoccupying and busying oneself with the material world and all of its attractions and diversions. The person can also feel that any real meaningful questions about one’s existence and the meaning to this existence can be postponed to a later date when the busyness stops or when one is financially stable. The person can also ignore the experience by arguing that any questions of ultimate meaning make no sense and are pointless. This sense of meaninglessness in life may emerge from a latent feeling of despair.

This possibility of freedom to say “no” is something “abortive,” “self-destructive,” and “self-contradictory.” It is in statements like this that the significance and seriousness of Rahner’s theology surfaces. For Rahner, there is a sense of radical

---


103 FCF, 102.
decisiveness in the possibility of human freedom and the gravity of human decision. Human existence can definitively choose against human life.

This experience of the lack of integration of human existence in its totality before God arises from a situation and history of guilt existing prior to personal freedom, and from choices and decisions made within that freedom.

Original Sin

After showing Rahner’s foundation for the possibility of human sinfulness, and examining the exercise of freedom as a personal “yes” or “no” to God by the individual, an exploration into his understanding of what traditional Catholic theology calls “original sin” is in order.

For Rahner, in order to talk about the doctrine of “original sin,” it is imperative to lay some groundwork. The premise that he begins with is the claim that an individual’s act of subjective freedom becomes objectified in the world, and that this act of freedom co-determines the situation of other individuals’ subjective freedom. An individual person’s subjective freedom is not disengaged from history, time or society. Rather, the individual “always and inevitably exercises his personal, inalienable and unique acts of freedom in a situation which he finds prior to himself, which is imposed on him, and which is ultimately the presupposition of his freedom.”104 Therefore, the individual’s free acts are affected by the free personal choices and acts of others. Furthermore, the guilt of others becomes a factor in the free choices and acts of the individual.

---

104 Ibid., 107.
Having established the claim that an individual’s freedom is co-determined by the freedom of other persons in the world, he challenges the notion that original sin is something that arises from a single act of freedom, whether by Adam or the first humans, and that is biologically inherited by subsequent generations. He argues that this understanding of the concept is not a Christian one. He states that “Personal guilt from an original act of freedom cannot be transmitted, for it is the existentiell ‘no’ of personal transcendence towards God or against him. And by its very nature this cannot be transmitted, just as the formal freedom of a subject cannot be transmitted.”\textsuperscript{105} The personal free decision of an individual is unique to the individual and that consists of responsible acknowledgement of the consequences attached to the decision.

Original sin, then, is the “original” guilt that is “already imbedded in the origin of this history.”\textsuperscript{106} Rahner claims that the meaning of original sin is based on two factors. He argues that “it is based on the universality of the determination by guilt of every person’s situation, and this factor includes the original nature of this determination by guilt in the history of the human race” and “it is based on the reflexive insight, deepening with the history of revelation and salvation, into the nature of the relationship between God and man.”\textsuperscript{107}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 111.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 110.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 113-14.
\end{flushright}
González Faus: The Project of Enmity

(Rupture of the Filial; Corruption of the Fraterno)

González Faus claims that language about sin has recently had “bad press” and is, in a way, no longer understood. He sees that this bad press has arisen from a notion of sin that is no longer adequate for our contemporary context. Though he does not attempt to elaborate the reasons for this bad press nor does he specifically blame any particular harmatology, it becomes clear throughout his exploration into a new language for sin that he locates the problem in a harmatology that views sin as only a deliberate, conscious, and private transgression against God and God’s eternal law. His task, as he sees it, is to find a new language to describe the reality of sin. He argues that the language of sin for today must be one in which sin is understood as a reality that is hidden and masked, structured in institutions, and as an offense against God, which ultimately damages human existence. An adequate language of sin for today must also address both the personal as well as the impersonal dimensions of sin.

Human Instability

In Proyecto de hermano, González Faus begins his exploration into the notion of sin by pointing out the instability found in human existence. In other words, humans are not just limited and finite creatures that are prone to death, but human existence also constitutes, in its innermost dimension, a form of instability. Drawing from the thought of Paul Ricoeur, human being is a labile being. This unstable nature of human existence

108 Proyecto, 185.
does not cause sin but is the condition for sin’s possibility.\textsuperscript{109} It is an experience that is unique to human existence and is not analogous to the limitedness of being found in other living creatures. In other words, this lability within human existence is the human possibility to hate another person, to be cruel towards and inflict injury on another person, and the potential to systematically eliminate another person.

After establishing the condition of the possibility of sin in human lability, González Faus attempts to discover a more adequate language about sin that is fundamentally rooted in human experience.\textsuperscript{110} He argues that an exploration into the reality of sin must take into consideration the experiential dimension and the fundamental power of sin. As he sees it, within the depths of human experience is a personal experience of alienation. This experience is what González Faus understands to be the most inauthentic experience of human existence and which is at the heart of the teachings of Catholic theology about the human person.\textsuperscript{111}

Employing the scriptures, he points out that the first experience of sin for the Israelites was not Adam and Eve (i.e., a metaphysical description of the “essence” of sin in human existence) or even Cain (i.e., an individual offence against another individual), but rather the Israelites’ experience of alienation in Egypt and of social oppression by the Egyptians. As in the interpretation of creation, it is the Exodus story that reveals the first experience of sin for the authors of the Torah. More concretely, it is not through reason

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 185.

\textsuperscript{110} For González Faus, the language of sin, like all language, is framed in historical categories, and therefore subject to change and interpretation. (Ibid., 285).

\textsuperscript{111} This is what González Faus understands to be the teaching on original sin. This present chapter will further explore this theme.
that the person recognizes sin, but in the concrete experience of sin, inflicted by others, that the human person comes to realize the reality and nature of sin.\textsuperscript{112} The victims of society, not the victors, are those who most acknowledge the reality and existence of sin.

The Masking of Sin

To find an adequate language about sin, González Faus attempts to situate what constitutes the ultimate power of sin. He postulates that this power is constituted by “masking, lying, blindness,” and “unconsciousness” (inconsciencia).\textsuperscript{113} What is essentially masked is the true nature of human existence, which is the covenantal relationship between the human person and God as Father (viz., the vocation of divine filiación) and the covenantal relationship between the human person and others (viz., fraternidad). The idea that at the heart of sin is its ability to mask and hide itself, whether in the form of concrete lies or an unconscious unawareness, and that the true nature of sin must be revealed through an unmasking or disclosure is evident for him in Paul’s letter to the Romans.

In this letter, Paul uses two biblical categories as a rhetorical device to describe the nature of sin, namely the “Gentile” (el pagano) and the “Jew.”\textsuperscript{114} As González Faus argues, as types, they do not represent any specific religious or cultural group, whether past or present. Rather, they are “two ways of living as a human being that is present

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 196-201.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 187.

within each one of us.” Both types of sin illustrate an anti-fraternal posture of human being.

The first form of sin that Paul in his letter describes is that of the “Gentile” or “Pagan.” This form of sin consists in the divinization (i.e., the absolutization) of the “I” or the self. The philosophical starting point for this type of sin is the logic of the statement “I desire, therefore I am.” It has its roots in the practical egolatry (i.e., the divinization of the “I” through the absolutization of desire). Any sort of moral compass arises from the self and the self’s desires. When this type of sin becomes embodied within the individual, it takes the form of personal lies. When this type of sin becomes embodied in the group, it takes the form of ideological, institutional and structural lies.

The consequences of this self-absolutizing and the absolutizing of the ego’s desires is that the truth about human existence and about God is replaced with the lie, i.e., the absolutization of one’s own self and one’s own desires. Also, this form of sin leads to the disregard for others; it is the person’s lack of consideration for all of reality, not just one’s own reality. Fundamentally, the sin of this type is the falsification and perversion of the truth of the most definitive dimensions of human existence (i.e., filiación and fraternidad). Instead of human existence being an image and reflection of God, human existence becomes its own God. In addition, instead of human existence being defined as inherently social, human existence becomes defined as inherently atomistic or individualistic.

115 Proyecto., 202.
116 Ibid., 207.
González Faus argues that the contemporary form of this sin is made manifest in the anthropology of the Western world, which is marked by egocentrism and modern “enlightened” individualism. It is also made manifest in the economic system of capitalism. The nature of capitalism as a system is to maximize profits and bring others to maximize consumption. The system is legitimized by the necessity of some profit as the fruit of economic activity without considering everything else and everyone else. It also becomes legitimized by the maximizing of consumption by individuals. If individuals do not maximize consumption, then the system becomes paralyzed and it eventually collapses.

The second type of sin that Paul’s letter to the Romans describes is the sin of the “Jew.” This second type of sin constitutes the sins of accusation and hypocrisy. The hypocrite sanctions his or her own actions while condemning the other person who acts in the same manner. This person has no patience or sense of forgiveness for the sins or moral transgressions of others, and condemns the actions that they commit. This form of sin has the potential to lead to the absolute condemnation, and, subsequently, oppression of other individuals and communities.

Moving away from first-century Pauline rhetoric, which can be misunderstood and ultimately harmful, González Faus uses the example of the terrorist to describe this form of sin. The terrorist believes that the life of others is expendable in order for, what is in their reasoning, often considered “higher ideals” or justice. The terrorist also

---

117 Ibid., 209.

118 Again, as noted earlier, the term “Jew” does not refer to any cultural or religious group for Paul but is a literary type for rhetorical purposes.
believes that they have been given authority (e.g., by God or through human reason) to make the appropriate changes within a society and that the authority given to them is absolute. The absolute authority subsequently permits any action to eliminate the problem. In addition, for González Faus, the category of “terrorist” in this context is not limited to individuals or small groups of people. Rather, it can also be applied to nations that attempt to “terrorize” others by their economic and military power.

Restoring the Language of Sin: Sin as an Offense against God

González Faus now examines four possible descriptions of sin. He points out that “The reality of sin can be suggested by the language of blemish, described by the language of transgression and can best be defined in the notion of straying from the right path. However, language about sin needs to be religiously transformed through the experience of offense against God.”

First, González Faus looks at the language of blemish or stain. He argues that the language of blemish can suggest the reality of sin but that this type of language is ambiguous. With this language of sin, there are no real criteria of what contaminates the person or the origins of this contamination. However, there is an experience of disgust or dirtiness and suggests the existence of sin in the human person.

Secondly, he explores the language of transgression. This language can describe sin, as in the case with the language of stain, but this language still does not define sin. Transgression is connected to the ethical language of moral obligations and duty. This

119 Ibid., 234. Italics mine.
language objectifies sin, but also abstracts it and externalizes it outside of human existence.

Third, he examines the question of sin as digression or straying from the right path. This form of language about sin characterizes sin better than the previous terms and can be helpful to define sin. However, this language remains in the privatized realm of human existence. The language of digression or straying suggests a personal failure on the part of the individual and does not necessarily incorporate the interpersonal and social consequences of sin. This language needs to be “religiously transformed” in order to express the ultimate dimension of human being and therefore the ultimate dimension of sin. ¹²⁰

Finally, he approaches the question of sin in terms of offense against God or the breaking of the covenantal relationship. This language about sin expresses the interpersonal and social realms of human existence. Language of offense does not necessarily mean a legal offense against a lawgiving God. The use of covenantal language allows for an understanding of offense not as an offense against a master (el Amo) or legislator. Rather, covenantal language transforms the language of offense into a trespass against a beloved or loved one (El Amor). Understanding offense against the covenantal relationship with God is understood by González Faus as an offense against the gift of and call to be the image and likeness of God.

For González Faus, these last two descriptions of sin are more adequate to the reality of sin because they illustrate the real nature and power of sin (viz., the masking of sin). Whereas the first two descriptions of sin view sin as something that can be

¹²⁰ Ibid., 234.
objectified, located, and measured, the last two descriptions do not. Talk about sin must be in terms of broken or corrupted covenantal relationships and not as a thing that can be measured or located outside of human relationality. Therefore, for González Faus, sin is the corruption and damage of the covenants of *filiación* and *fraternidad*.

### Structural Sin

The use of the categories “structural” and “social” by Catholic theologians to describe a certain dimension of sin arises out of the changes within Catholic theology after Vatican II. The direct use of these categories appeared in Catholic theology after the Latin American Bishops Conferences (CELAM) in Medellin in 1968 and in Puebla in 1979. González Faus argues, as would many other theologians who employ these categories, the use of “structural” and “social” to describe a certain dimension of sin does not negate the significance or the seriousness of personal sin. Rather, structural sin can help better make sense of personal sin.

For González Faus, the use of the categories “social” and “structural” help the theologian offer a language to describe the power of sin to mask itself and the context that this power creates within the social dimension of human existence. He argues that “All of us are anonymously situated in, invaded by and infected with anti-*fraternidad*. In other words, human existence exists within and shaped by a context of conflict and enmity. This infection and invasion is the product of a “foreign evil force” in the world

---

121 Ibid., 235.
122 Ibid., 241.
123 Ibid., 241.
that transforms human activity into an instrument of sin.\textsuperscript{124} This force consists of the externalization of sin (\textit{pecado estructurante}) whereby individual egoisms become a part of institutions and systems within a society, the objectification of sin (\textit{pecado estructurado}) whereby sin infects and shapes the social institutions and systems, and the creation of unjust situations and contexts by these institutions and systems whereby all individuals within society become victims of this foreign force.

Taking his lead from the theology of sin of the Dutch Jesuit Piet Schoonenberg, González Faus argues that the early church was familiar with the masking and impersonal feature of sin with the Johannine notion of “the sin of the world.”\textsuperscript{125} He points out that, according to the Gospel of John, Christ took away the sin of the world and not particular sins. \textsuperscript{126} “The world,” in John, i.e., the cosmological-human system, is the world that is created and loved by God. When sin is inserted in this system, then the world becomes a place of self-divinization and enmity.\textsuperscript{127} The “world,” for González Faus, is the relational dimension of human existence inasmuch as it is structured in a way that is contrary to the God and to the human person.\textsuperscript{128} The “sin of the world” is the sin of human existence that constitutes nothing less than that which is diametrically opposed to the person of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. From this “sin,” individual human persons become sons and daughters (i.e., victims) of this world.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 250.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Proyecto}, 243.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 244.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 244.
Externalization of Sin in Society (*el pecado estructurante*)

González Faus argues that a characteristic of sin is its externalization. Appealing to social analysis, he argues that “evil is never merely personal.” Since human persons are inserted into social institutions that precede the individual person’s existence, and human activity is always simultaneously active and passive, every activity has an effect on the society or social institution to which the person belongs. In other words, human persons create society but are also marked and conditioned by society. Therefore, when the human person thinks only about him or herself or acts only for him or herself, fissures begin to form within the bonds of relationships. Ultimately, these fissures form into perceivable cracks within the social system.

Though sin appears within social structures, it is not born from these structures. Rather, sin is found within social structures because of the lability within human existence that establishes the conditions for the possibility of sin. This reveals the fact that sin comes from the human person’s lack of *fraternidad*. Sin comes from the person’s tendency to absolutize their self-interests. The person approaches society with the thought that his own particular good is that of the community’s.

---

129 Ibid., 253.
130 Ibid., 253.
131 Ibid., 254.
132 Ibid., 254.
133 Ibid., 254.
Objectification of Sin in Society (el pecado estructurado)

As persons create institutions within society, they taint these institutions with their sinfulness. These social institutions in turn become objectified entities that shape and form human persons within society. González Faus offers three examples of social structures that become bearers of sin. They are ideologies and values; influences and examples; needs and customs.134

The first example of structured sin in society is the notion of externalized social values (“ideologies”) that become corrupted. As González Faus argues, every society has a system of values and interests. These values, whether just or unjust, are often upheld and assumed natural by systems that are found within a particular society. The strong anti-communist sentiments within the West during the last century and into this century are an example of structural values within a society. When certain values compromise human freedom and dignity, those values become destructive to human relationships.

The second example of structured sin in society is the notion of social influences and examples that become corrupt (the “scandal”). González argues that human persons are situated beings and are formed by that situation. He also argues that human persons attain self-awareness through an experience of the other. He gives the example of education. He argues that education is essential to the human being because of the contradictory nature of the human condition (viz., the contradiction between individual and social, spiritual and material, natural and supernatural, etc.).135 As situated beings, human persons simultaneously learn from others and influence and affect others. When

---

134 Ibid., 256.

135 Ibid., 264.
an individual person strives to fulfill his or her own desires, others become formed by those egocentric actions and attitudes. Scandals “do not just arise contingently as the fruit of a perverted expressed will…rather the whole person in a way shapes the goodness and evil of others and is formed in his goodness and evil by the life of others.”136

The last example of structured sin in society that González Faus proposes is the situation in which certain needs become falsified or corrupted. Certain perceived “needs” become a part of the necessities of a particular society. These perceived needs then become imbedded within the culture as necessary for the proper functioning of the society, and even perceived to be natural needs or needs that have been sanctioned by God. There are many examples in which social “necessities” or “needs” have in fact been social injustices (e.g., slavery, human sacrifices, the Inquisition…). For González Faus, this form of sin is clearly noticeable when an economic system such as capitalism, and its “law of the market” claim, becomes seen as something natural and something necessary. The law of competition is viewed as something natural and necessary, and therefore is, and should be, the law that governs the world and human existence.

When these needs of society become seen as natural and necessary, and become absolutized, all other forms of possibilities become heretical or too idealistic. Anything else is viewed as a natural impossibility (imposibilidad implantada). In other words, there is no alternative to the status quo established by the powerful within society. This form of sin fundamentally threatens human faith and even the possibility of faith or any form of human possibilities. Hope, then, is placed in this world rather than in God.

136 Ibid., 265.
Historicity of Sin

The historicity of sin is also an essential aspect of González Faus’ harmatology. An adequate language of sin must take into consideration the historicity of sin, according to González Faus. Both an understanding of the reality of sin and the categories to describe sin must have a historical dimension.

For González Faus, human evil and sin are not abstractions separated from human history or a onetime event within history. As illustrated in the biblical story of David and Bathsheba, human evil is both progressive and cumulative. In other words, human inequity takes on a spiral effect. Just as it is possible, for González Faus, to analyze the cumulative sins of an individual within their personal histories, so too can the structural nature of sin be analyzed on the level of global history.137

González Faus also argues that any exploration into the nature of sin must realize that the categories that are being employed to describe sin are bound by history. He argues that the use of historical categories does not mean merely asking about the temporal origins of sin but also the attempt to understand the language of sin as a language in flux.138 Ultimately, the process of sin is the frustration of the human promise of filiación-fraternidad.

137 Ibid., 282.
138 Ibid., 285.
Original Sin: The Structured Condition within Human Existence

For González Faus, sin does not only affect the structures of society, but it also affects the structures within the individual person.¹³⁹ This interior structuration of human existence is what Christian theology calls “original sin.”¹⁴⁰

As González Faus argues, adequate language about original sin must include the idea of the condition of the possibility of egoism (egoísmo potenciado) or the notion of a particular egoism (amor sui). This is necessary because egoism is the ultimate source of the masking of sin.¹⁴¹ As González Faus argues, the notion that human existence from the beginning (i.e., the “origin”) is broken and damaged does not mean that there is a simple lack of harmony among particular elements within human existence (e.g., the lower material vs. the higher spiritual aspects of human existence) or a lack of harmony among particular desires. Rather, original damage within human existence is the governing of human instincts and desires by a principle of the absolutization of the ego and a contempt for others.¹⁴²

With the advancements in biological anthropology, González Faus argues that what theology called “peccatum originale originans” (Adam’s concrete act of

---

¹³⁹ In Chapter Six of Proyecto, he offers an historical excursus on various interpretation of the doctrine of original sin with the hope to reinterpret and revise this Christian doctrine. González Faus does not want to explain original sin (this is too abstract and can lead towards an essentialism), but rather to teach about the experience of original sin as the traditional theological language to analogically describe the fundamental damage that is present within human existence. In presenting the traditional language of original sin, he points out that already in Vatican II documents on the Church in the World there is the sense that in speaking about the doctrine of original sin there exists the experiential dimension (361).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 301.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 370-1.

¹⁴² Ibid., 371.
disobedience) can be understood as something “global” and “evolutionary.”¹⁴³ This dimension of original sin is the sin of all of humanity and of all of history. In other words, the notion that all human persons have original sin “means that this humanity (humankind) is that which is deteriorated, separated from God, and self-deceiving.”¹⁴⁴

In correlating the structuration of sin to the doctrine of original sin, he proposes four conclusions about what constitutes original sin. First, he concludes that human existence is damaged interiorly.¹⁴⁵ This interior damage is a condition of “weakness and inferiority.”¹⁴⁶ González Faus argues that “classical theology” called this interior damage “pecado original originado.”¹⁴⁷

Second, he concludes that “this damage is caused by the human person: the structuration of sin on all levels of human life,” and that “this damage already begins at the origin of human history.” González Faus argues that these next two descriptions of human damage are equivalent to what classical theology called “pecado original originante.”¹⁴⁸

Lastly, he concludes that “this damage contradicts the will of God about human existence.” He argues that this last description of human damage “attempts to understand

¹⁴³ Ibid., 375.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 375.
¹⁴⁵ The word in Spanish that González Faus uses is deterioro. It can be translated as “damage” or “deterioration.” He points out that “The word ‘deterioro’…indicates a state, more than an act; a structure more than a mishap; a habit more than a moment” (Ibid., 366). Calling sin “original damage” is to affirm that its depth is the damage of the human person’s relationship to God (379). This is exactly what González Faus means by human lability (i.e., the instability of human existence).
¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 365.
¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 366. The traditional Latin of this concept is peccatum originale originatum.
¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 366. The traditional Latin of this concept is peccatum originale originans.
why classical theology dared to call sin “original” of what was said in the first proposition.”

With these conclusions, González Faus offers his reinterpretation of the doctrine of original sin as constituting the following historical process: first, human existence’s act of willful separation (viz., separation from one another and from the ground and goal of human existence); second, God’s condemnation of this separation; and lastly, the subsequent damaged relationship between humanity and God. This reinterpretation of the doctrine of original sin affirms four points: first, that human history as it has occurred is not what God has willed; second, the globalized and globalizing world as it appears is not what God wants for the human community; third, the individual person has not become what God had intended the individual to become; and fourth, all of these realities continue to grow and reoccur as a fatal dynamic movement away from God.

The Theologal Dimension of Sin

Drawing upon Irenaeus of Lyons, González Faus claims that offense against God is the person’s self-destruction by one’s self, and this self-destruction is the alienation of one’s self from God. This self-destruction is the ultimate dimension of sin.

---

149 Ibid., 366.
150 Ibid., 379.
151 Ibid., 380.
152 The term “theologal” is the English translation for the Spanish theological concept teologal. Theologal is a commonly used theological concept in the Spanish speaking world to refer to the ultimate or most profound dimension of human existence. In Spanish, when referring to the theological virtues of faith, hope and love the phrase that is most appropriate is not las virtudes teológicas but las virtudes teologales. Ultimately, for González Faus, these theologal virtues express, as will be presented in the next chapter, the restructuring of the human person (668).
As González Faus points out, there exists an awareness of guilt and blame within human existence. This consists in the rejection of the truth that human persons ought to live by the “absolutely transformative event that God exists.” When the individual person rejects any ultimate meaning to his or her existence, or any significance of an ultimate meaning for his or her life, then the individual rejects the very meaning of human existence.

For González Faus, the content of guilt and blame is the perversion of the human person’s relationship with God that takes place not only in religious activities but also in worldly activities. He states that “[s]inning against God is not doing harm to God’s divinity, but rather doing harm to the Son’s ‘body’ and the ‘temple’ of the Spirit (i.e., the human being).” Thus, any offense against God is the person’s self-destruction by one’s self.

This self-destruction is the damage that is done to the ultimate ground and structure of human existence. This ultimate ground and structure is the theological dimension of human existence, which is human existence’s “‘supernatural’ destiny” as the divine image and likeness. It is “the form of love and freedom that have been

153 Ibid., 392.

154 The Spanish word culpa is an ambiguous word that can mean either blame or guilt.

155 Ibid., 394.

156 Ibid., 400-01.

157 Ibid., 401.

158 Ibid., 389.
revealed as profoundly human – by being truly divine – in Jesus of Nazareth.”

Thus, the theologal dimension of sin is the ultimate damage of the relationship between human existence and God and the damage of the relationship among persons. It is the disharmony with what ultimately constitutes human and what leads to the deterioration of the covenants of *filiación* and *fraternidad*.

To conclude, González Faus’ claim that the paradigm of all sin is the death of the Son of God points to this theologal dimension of sin. It fundamentally points to the radical nature of sin as the enmity and non-communion of persons in a recurrent process of culpable egoism that ruptures the person’s relationship with God, corrodes solidarity, and inhibits the person’s movement towards the person’s definitive goal of *filiación-fraternidad*.

**Concluding Remarks**

At this point it is imperative to return to the central problem of this dissertation: the need for a re-examination and re-articulation of the current theory of human existence within Catholic theology in order to offer a viable approach to the crisis of extreme poverty and the social ills that come with extreme poverty by way of an alternative anthropology. More specifically to this chapter, a re-examination and re-articulation of a theory of human existence within Catholic theology must present an account of the human predicament and human sin that can best shed light on the problem of global disparity which I claim emerges from the prevailing anthropology at the heart of the current direction of globalization. It is clear that Rahner’s theological anthropology still

---

159 Ibid., 389.
offers a very sound foundation to approach the problem with his transcendental
anthropology that presents the free and responsible subjective experience. However, it is
my contention that the anthropology of González Faus provides contemporary Catholic
theology the necessary shift in understanding human existence that does not do away
with Rahner’s anthropology but rather builds on his foundation and yet presses it in a
new direction and with a new methodology.

More concretely, this chapter uncovered three important points of distinction
between Rahner and González Faus in their exploration into the human predicament and
sin. The first point deals with the human subject. This distinction consists of two parts.
First, Rahner’s understanding of the human subject is based on a Marechalian Thomism
that sees the subject as a dynamic reality that strives for the absolute mystery in love,
knowledge and truth. For González Faus, influenced by the thought of Ricoeur and Latin
American liberation theologians, the human subject is marked by instability and
fallibility. Second, González Faus does affirm the transcendental idea that the subject
strives for the absolute mystery in love, knowledge and truth. However, the reality of this
absolute mystery is its communal nature (i.e., Trinitarian). Therefore, reality is
Trinitarian and it is made manifest within social and relations and community.160

The next point of distinction is found in the use of language to describe human
existence and the human predicament. Rahner’s use of the transcendental method and
Heideggerian categories to describe human existence offers a viable global approach to

160 I will describe further in the next chapter what I mean by communal or Trinitarian nature of reality.
argue for the dignity of all human persons, and therefore the need for global justice.\footnote{Though Rahner does employ Heideggerian categories, it is important to note that the bulk of Rahner’s terms come from Eric Przywara.} Also, a Rahnerian description of the human predicament which depicts the human subject as being radically conditioned by guilt and therefore marked by a potential to reject God and reject other persons offers a reasonable explanation of sin in the world. However, it is my contention that the biblical language of covenant (viz., \textit{filiación} and \textit{fraternidad}) to describe human existence, and the damaging of covenant by sin, especially through the categories of masking and the lie, to describe the human predicament is a more adequate language to employ within the contemporary globalizing context that has enshrined a radically individualistic and egocentric anthropology.

The third distinction is González Faus’ use of the critical-social theory which brings into view the effects of society upon the individual person. His use of the literary and social analysis of the Frankfurt School, especially the literary method of social critique of Walter Benjamin, has given him the necessary methodology to view the nature of sin as constituting an historical process and as affecting the interior and the exterior structures of human existence.

The critique that Rahner’s exploration into sin lacks any social categories holds little ground in light of recent reflection on the evolution of his theology, especially in part to Metz’ challenge. It is clear that the trajectory of Rahner’s anthropology was moving in the direction of greater concern for addressing social sin. Unfortunately, he never did present a complete systematic articulation of social sin. Looking to Rahner for a formal articulation of sin is necessary. However, to remain with that understanding of
sin limits the possibilities for addressing the human predicament that I contend is at the root of global disparity.

The following chapter, then, will explore the themes of grace and redemption within the anthropologies of Rahner and González Faus in order to assess which anthropology offers the most adequate response to the misdirection of globalization, its prevailing anthropology, and the reality of global disparity.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE SAVING ACTIVITY OF GOD

In his book *Divine Revolution*, Dean Brackley asks the question, “What is the relationship of God’s saving action (grace), not simply to subjects (even to social subjects), but to the social relations and institutions, especially to oppressive social relations and death-dealing institutions?”1 In that same work, Jon Sobrino is quoted as contending that “The essential relationship between faith and salvation is not at issue, and in official tradition, we are in possession of a (reductive) understanding of salvation in the line of redemption from sin and of transcendent salvation. The controverted element, then, is historical and social salvation.”2 Both of these quotes clearly point out that the problem in soteriology (i.e., the relationship of God’s saving activity to human existence) is not that of the relationship of God to human persons, which is the common understanding of the Christian notion of salvation, but instead the relationship of God to human communities and to human structures.

The previous chapter of this dissertation made the claim that there is a tension and a predicament found in the structure of human existence. The chapter also made the argument that sin is a reality in the depths of human persons that affect’s human relations

---


2 *DR*, x.
and also human structures, and that it is the radical nature of sin that is at the root of global disparity. Finally, the chapter concluded that the most compelling theory of sin that best connects the notion of sin to the problem of the current global order and the reality of global disparity is one that sees sin as the enmity and non-communion of persons in a recurrent process of culpable egoism that ruptures the person’s relationship with God, corrodes solidarity, and inhibits the person’s movement towards the person’s definitive goal of *filiación-fraternidad*. These conclusions ultimately point to the fact that human existence is radically damaged and in profound need of redemption. This redemption must include all of human existence, which means that since human existence consists of historical and social dimensions this redemption must be a redemption not only of the transcendental and historical dimensions of human persons, but also the redemption of human communities and human structures.\(^3\) The goal of this chapter, then, is to explore the theories of grace and redemption in the anthropologies of Rahner and González Faus in order to address what Brackley and Sobrino see as the main problem in soteriology, and to begin assessing which anthropology will offer a more effective response to the present course of globalization and the inherent anthropology in this current course of globalization.\(^4\)

---

\(^3\) Though non-religious paradigms to address the problem of global disparity are necessary, I contend that they will always fall short by not addressing the root problem, which is the radical consequence of sin. Therefore, sin makes redemption necessary. González Faus argues that “humanists” believe that human persons can change, deal with large problems, and are perfectible. However, humanists do not believe that human persons are sinners. Christian theology, however, does believe that human persons are sinners, but despite that fact, human persons are perfectible. As González Faus contends, it is within this idea of “despite that” where the grace of God is found (*Proyecto*, 425).

\(^4\) For a good summary on the historical context within Christian theology of the notion of grace and the problem of the language of grace in terms of adjectival and substantial usage of the term grace, see Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 6-9.
Rahner: Grace as the Gift of Divine Self-Presence

Rahner’s entire theological program can be considered a theology of grace. Central to his theological anthropology is the notion that all of creation, and particularly human existence, is saturated with grace. For Rahner, grace is not something that is other-worldly and that is added to the world or to human existence. Rather, grace is the gift of God’s self in the depths of all existence. It is the free gift of God’s indwelling presence in human existence and experienced through human history. It is the formal object that informs human consciousness in history and in the final vision of God. It is also the radical fulfillment of human existence as made manifest in the incarnation of Christ.

God’s Self-Communication

The notion of grace for Rahner can be summed up in his statement that grace is “God’s self-communication in love.”5 This self-communication is fundamentally what God wills for creation (i.e., the world and human existence), and what God wills is God’s self. As Rahner understands it, the goal of God’s plan for human existence is ultimate communion with God’s self. He states that “God wishes to communicate himself, to pour forth the love which he himself is. That is the first and the last of his real plans and hence of his real world too. Everything else exists so that this one thing might be: the eternal miracle of infinite Love.”6 In other words, God has graciously and freely chosen to draw near to human persons in order to be in a communion of everlasting kenotic love with all


6 TI, 1, 310.
of human existence and thus redeem human existence. For Rahner, this gracious plan of
God’s salvation takes place in the individual person’s concrete history and situation and
is offered to all human persons.

The Gift as God’s Indwelling Self-Presence

This self-communication of God is not a collection of facts about some distant
deity. As Rahner claims, “‘Self-communication’ is meant here in a strictly ontological
sense corresponding to man’s essential being, man whose being is being-present-to-
himself, and being personally responsible for himself in self-consciousness and
freedom.”7 God is in fact making God’s self “the innermost constitutive element” of
human existence.8

In an attempt to address the prevalent theories of grace that were found in the
manual theologies of the time, Rahner’s Theological Investigations often employed
categories of personal encounter to envision grace.9 Therefore, within Rahner’s theology
of grace, God’s self-communication is seen as a freely given loving and personal
presence and embrace within human existence, and it is this presence and loving embrace
that ultimately transforms and fulfills human existence. As Rahner argues, this gift of
God’s self is in fact an interpersonal encounter. He states that

Grace is God himself, the communication in which he gives himself to
man as the divinizing favour which he is himself. Here his work is really

7 FCF, 117.
8 Ibid., 116.
9 Though Rahner attempts to present grace in terms of categories of personal presence, some theologians,
including González Faus, argue that Rahner’s theological language relies too heavily upon categories found
within scholasticism, which is difficult to harmonize on a fundamental level with categories of personal
presence.
himself since it is he who is imparted. Such grace, from the very start, cannot be thought of independently of the personal love of God and its answer in man. This grace is not thought of as a ‘thing’. It is something that is only ‘put at man’s disposal’ in that act of ‘letting oneself be disposed of’ which is the proper gift of the freest grace, the miracle of love.”

Since Rahner was concerned about the interpersonal nature of grace, one of his tasks was to address the classical debate over the relationship between “created” and “uncreated” grace. This meant that Rahner had to address the manual theologies of his day that were rooted in nineteenth century Scholasticism. As Rahner saw it, neo-Scholastic theology was not incorrect regarding its teachings on the relationship between created and uncreated grace, but rather that a return to the patristic theology of grace could draw out what was latent in Scholastic theology. Rahner argued that, on the one hand, in Scripture and in the Fathers, “the created gifts of grace [are] a consequence of God’s substantial communication to justified men.” On the other hand, in Scholastic theology the presence of uncreated grace (i.e., the “indwelling of the Spirit”) in the justified person “is seen merely as a consequence of the bestowal of created grace.” In other words, created grace is an “absolute entitative modification and determination of man.” It is a precondition of uncreated grace.

In order to offer an adequate solution to harmonize the two theological traditions without favoring one tradition over the other, Rahner employs the notion of formal

---

11 “Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace,” _TI_, 1, 325.
12 Ibid., 322.
13 Ibid., 325.
14 Ibid., 324.
causality. As Rahner argues, using Thomistic terminology, the relationship between God and the created person can be constructed by way of cause and effect. However, God’s relationship to human existence is not as that of efficient causality, but rather in the category of formal causality. As Rahner points out, “in efficient causality the effect is always different than the cause.” In formal causality, “a principle of being is a constitutive element in another subject by the fact that it communicates itself to this subject.”

Rahner modifies this category with the prefix “quasi” (i.e., “as if”). What this “quasi” means for Rahner is that the “form” (i.e., the ground of the knowledge of God in the beatific vision) “abides in its absolute transcendence (inviolateness, ‘freedom’).” He argues that this use of quasi “provides an emphatic reminder of the analogical nature of our concepts in the matter of a relationship to the world known only through Revelation.” Therefore, the difficulty in harmonizing the two traditions is resolved through the categories of formal causality and formal ontology, and with the analogical modification “quasi.”

---

15 Ibid., 326-330.
16 *FCF*, 120-121.
17 *TI*, 1, 330.
18 Ibid., 331.
19 Rahner argues that “God communicates himself to the man to whom grace has been shown in the mode of *formal* causality, so that this communication is not then merely the consequence of an efficient causation of created grace” and “the communication of uncreated grace can be conceived of under a certain respect as logically and really prior to created grace; in that mode namely in which a formal cause is prior to the ultimate material disposition” (Ibid., 334). Furthermore, Rahner argues, “In what more precisely the communication of God by way of formal causality to the creature consists…may be determined in terms of the *visio beatifica* only negatively. Just as grace in general as an entitative supernatural elevation of man
Rahner then raises the question whether or not this proposed solution to the problem endangers “the significance of created grace for justification, adoption, etc., as Trent sees them?”\textsuperscript{20} In order to address this question and remain within the tradition, Rahner argues that “there does not exist even the beginning of a possibility of thinking of created grace apart from uncreated grace, and so of thinking of uncreated grace as a fresh gift arising out of a new and independent demonstration of God’s grace.”\textsuperscript{21} Rather, created grace is the disposition for the uncreated gift of God’s presence. He argues that “[i]n order that it can be a \textit{dispositio} for uncreated grace at all, it does indeed have first of all the character of a \textit{formal} entitative, supernatural determination of the human spirit…”\textsuperscript{22}

So that uncreated grace does not become a mere consequence of created grace, Rahner recalls that “created grace alone (as a finite determination of the subject) can be called \textit{forma} in the strict (categorical) sense of the word (as opposed to the divine Being itself, which remains transcendent with respect to the creature in spite of its formal causality).”\textsuperscript{23} Created grace, then, “constitutes man as a subject fit to receive the substantial gift of the divine essence for a future \textit{visio}” and “it assimilates man to God’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 341. In the theology of Trent, “created grace is seen as \textit{causa materialis (dispositio ultima)} for the formal causality which God exercises by graciously communicating his own Being to the creature. In this way the material and formal causes possess a reciprocal priority: as \textit{dispositio ultima} created grace is in such a way the presupposition of the formal cause that it can itself only exist by way of the actual realization of this formal causality” (Ibid., 341).
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 341.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 342.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 341.
\end{itemize}
Furthermore, he contends that “[i]t is through created grace alone that man becomes a subject who is *capable* of knowing and loving God supernaturally, who has the *capacity* for it. But in order that such a supernatural ‘life’ should become actual there is need further of the self-communication of the object of this supernatural life…”

### The Experience of Grace

The questions then arise, how does the human person actually and concretely experience the indwelling presence of God and how does the indwelling presence of God affect how the person lives in the world? In his article “Reflections on the Experience of Grace” Rahner asks the question unambiguously and precisely: “Have we ever actually experienced grace? We do not mean by this some pious feeling, a sort of festive religious uplift, or any soft comfort, but precisely the experiencing of grace, i.e. of that visitation by the Holy Spirit of the triune God which has become a reality in Christ through his becoming man and through his sacrifice on the Cross.”

Referring back to our most basic and fundamental transcendental structure of human existence, Rahner argues that the movements of grace cannot be unambiguously distinguished from the *cor inquietum* of the human person. Rather, grace is experienced within the concrete experiences of human existence. The experience of grace, then, is a modality of transcendental experience.

---

24 Ibid., 341.
25 Ibid., 342-343, note 2.
27 Ibid., 86-89. See also, “Nature and Grace,” *TI*, 4, 183.
Though grace can be experienced, it can never be “grasped” directly and objectified by the human consciousness as in the case of an individual a posteriori object or thing. Furthermore, grace may not necessarily be recognized as explicitly supernatural. Rahner states:

The experience which we are appealing to here is not primarily and ultimately the experience which a person has when he decides explicitly and in a deliberate and responsible way upon some religious activity…It is rather the experience which is given to every person prior to such reflexive religious activity and decisions, and indeed perhaps in a form and in a conceptuality which seemingly are not religious at all.  

Therefore, this experience of grace is an a priori experience that permeates every realm of human existence, and is the unthematic horizon of human consciousness.

Grace can, however, become thematic and recognizable through the history of revelation and through self-reflection. He states:

a person who opens himself to his transcendental experience of the holy mystery at all has the experience that this mystery is not only an infinitely distant horizon…He experiences rather that this holy mystery is also a hidden closeness, a forgiving intimacy, his real home, that it is a love which shares itself, something familiar which he can approach and turn to from the estrangement of his own perilous and empty life. It is the person who in the forlornness of his guilt still turns in trust to the mystery of his existence which is quietly present, and surrenders himself as one who even in his guilt no longer wants to understand himself in a self-centered and self-sufficient way, it is this person who experience himself as one who does not forgive himself, but who is forgiven, and he experiences this forgiveness which he receives as the hidden, forgiving and liberating love of God himself…

28 FCF, 129.
29 Ibid., 132.
30 TI, 4, 178.
31 FCF, 131.
The possibility for a thematic experience of grace, will be further addressed below. First, it is important to offer a brief contextualization of the perennial problem of the relationship between nature and grace and how Rahner addressed that problem since the manner in which Rahner addresses the problem becomes the key to understanding how human persons can actually experience grace.

The Nature and Grace Debate

Though Rahner argues that the indwelling presence of God in human existence can be known reflexively and indirectly through the structure of human transcendence, the question of how this relationship between human persons and grace actually works so that the human person can freely and concretely affirm and accept, or deny and reject, the offer of God’s self must be addressed.

Central to the question of the relationship between nature and grace is the concept of “pure nature.” This concept arose out of an interpretation of Thomas Aquinas’ theology of nature and grace during Baroque Scholasticism and, according to Stephen Duffy, the Baroque Scholastics had misinterpreted Aquinas’ theology of nature and

---

32 As already pointed out above, there has been a historical debate within Catholic theology over the relationship between the notions of uncreated grace and created grace. Uncreated grace is oftentimes understood as the presence of God’s self in the person. As Ludwig Ott points out, it is the indwelling of God “in the souls of the justified.” Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, trans. Patrick Lynch, edit. James C. Bastible (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1962), 220. Created grace, on the other hand, “is a supernatural gift or operation really distinct from God” (Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, 220). Though there was a general consensus within Catholic theology with this distinction, problems arose in understanding the relationship between the two forms of grace. As Rahner points out, “There is no agreement in Catholic theology on how exactly the relation between created and uncreated grace is to be determined.” “Grace,” Sacramentum Mundi II, (Dorval-Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), 418.

33 The question of the relationship between nature and grace has a long history within the theology of grace and I only wish to briefly touch upon it here in order to introduce Rahner’s central anthropological concept of the supernatural existential.
grace, and more particularly his “theorem of the supernatural.” This theorem of the supernatural was meant to address the problem of the gratuitousness of grace, both prior to and after the Fall of Adam. As Duffy contends, Aquinas offered an insight into the “created sharing of the divine nature” with human existence. This “created communication of the divine nature, enabling one to love God as God is in Godself, transcends all the resources not only of human nature but of any created nature conceivable. It is absolutely supernatural.” In other words, “God in giving us participation in the divine inner life gives us to ourselves and releases within us the authentic powers that make us who we are as humans. One is finally free to become one’s genuine self.”

Instead of interpreting Aquinas’ notion of human “nature” as a “middle term” between nature as sinful and nature as redeemed, Duffy contends that the Baroque scholastics interpreted “nature” as juxtaposed with grace. This, he argues, created a need for the idea of a “pure nature” prior to the Fall. In other words, Baroque scholasticism misinterpreted Aquinas’ hypothetical “pure nature” and subsequently reified it. “Pure nature” became an in-closed nature that was oriented towards its own end and that did not

34 See Duffy’s argument in The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 149-167. Hereafter, this text will be cited as DG.

35 The question arose by the thirteenth century that since the gratuitousness of grace was understood as due to the sinfulness of human existence, how can the gratuity of grace be maintained by the sinlessness of Adam prior to the Fall?

36 Ibid., 150.

37 Ibid., 150.

38 Ibid., 153.

39 Ibid., 155.
include grace. Grace, rather, was something extrinsic to pure human nature and was something superimposed on human nature. This ultimately led to theories of grace that understood grace as a super-natural existent outside of human existence.

From that point on, Baroque Scholasticism became the guiding interpretation of Aquinas’ notion of nature until the early 20th century. It was in 1946 that this interpretation of Aquinas was challenged by the Jesuit Henri de Lubac in his work *Le Surnaturel*. De Lubac, influenced by the thought of Maréchal, Rousselot and Blondel, was concerned that an abstract notion of pure nature, as a closed system, can lead to a theology of grace that separates grace from life. As a response to this theory of pure nature, de Lubac, and other theologians of the theological movement often called the *nouvelle théologie*, returned to a retrieval of Aquinas’ thought on the relationship between human existence and grace.

Retrieving Augustine’s *cor inquietum*, de Lubac argued that the natural is fundamentally made for the supernatural. There is no real separation between nature and grace; there is only a theoretical distinction through abstraction.40 Due to the uniqueness of de Lubac’s thought, theologians of the time placed de Lubac’s assertions under scrutiny and critique. Karl Rahner was one of those theologians.

---

40 Ibid., 300.
The Supernatural Existential

Rahner entered the contentious debate over the relationship between nature and grace in a seminal essay in 1950, which later was expanded upon in “Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace.” 41 This essay was an attempt to approach the debate in a new way; though as is typical with Rahner, within the contours of the tradition.

The essay begins with a brief critique of “the average textbook-conception” of the relationship. Rahner argues that in this view of the relationship grace appears “as a mere superstructure…which is imposed upon nature by God’s free decree, and in such a way that the relationship between the two is no more intense than that of a freedom from contradiction.” 42 In other words, this textbook conception, which Rahner labels as “extrinsecism,” contains serious problems (viz., a two-fold order of the natural and the supernatural, an anthropology that potentially only understands a pure natural end of the human existent, and a theory of the potentia obedientialis that has a mere non-repugnance for grace and the beatific vision).

After this initial critique of extrinsecism, Rahner then turns his attention towards the “current” approaches to the debate (viz., that of the nouvelle théologie). 43 Rahner fundamentally supported the attempts by the nouvelle théologie to avoid extrinsecism when speaking of the relationship between nature and grace. However, Rahner believed

---

41 TI, 1, 297-319.

42 Ibid., 297.

43 Rahner notes that the unnamed theologian “D” is clearly a representative of the approach that Rahner wishes to address. Rahner also points out that he will not attempt to decide whether or not “D” correctly reproduces de Lubac’s thought, TI, 1 note 6, 303.
that their attempts were inadequate in offering a more integral theory of that relationship and a subsequent integral theology of grace.

Within these new approaches to the relationship between nature and grace, Rahner saw the potential loss of the gratuity of grace through their theory of human nature. He raises the question: “But is this inner reference of man to grace a constituent of his ‘nature’ in such a way that the latter cannot be conceived without it…?”44 This view of human nature, for Rahner, would consist of the other end of the spectrum opposite of extrinsicism. In other words, the nouvelle théologie exemplified an intrinsicism whereby the gratuity of grace could potentially be lost. This was a concern for Rahner since he argued, in line with Humani Generis, that grace must be considered “unexacted.”45

Rahner did acknowledge the fact that the nouvelle théologie did view the unexactness of grace as an axiom and as a point of departure for their theological reflection. However, as Rahner points out “the only question then is whether this axiom is objectively consistent with the theorem of an unconditional reference to grace in virtue of nature as such.”46 In other words, Rahner saw an inconsistency in the theory of human nature of the nouvelle théologie (viz., that of the undisclosed theologian “D.”) and their belief in the gratuity of grace. According to Rahner, they conceived of a nature that consisted of a natural desiderium for the supernatural, and that this intense desire is one which “‘demands’ grace” and therefore logically eliminates any notion of the gratuity of

44 Ibid., 303.
45 The term “unexact” can be understood as meaning “not owed” or “freely given.” See Ibid. note 8, 304.
46 Ibid., 304.
grace. However, Rahner believed, according to Duffy, that the “nouvelle théologie” jeopardized the gratuity of grace by reducing it to the gratuity of creation” and that Rahner defended an “intrinsicalness of grace…but not at the expense of its special gratuity.”

Therefore, in order to avoid any pitfalls while addressing the problem of the relationship between nature and grace (viz., extrinsicism and intrinsicism without the gratuity of grace), Rahner attempts to construct an argument employing both Scholastic and non-Scholastic terms (viz., obediential potency and supernatural existential).

Rahner contends that God created human existence in such a way that the human being “can” receive the infinite and real love of God’s very self, and that the human being “can and must at the same time accept it for what it is: the ever astounding wonder, the unexpected, unexacted gift.” God’s first and last wish and plan for human existence is God’s very self, and this plan is freely given by God. Rahner argues that in order for this love to be “unexacted,” or freely given, the human being “must” be created “just ‘so’ that he can receive this self-communication only as grace; thus he must not only give him an essence but also constitute him as a ‘nature’ (as opposed to an unexacted supernatural).” Human existence, then, is constituted in such a way as to be able to receive this self-communication of God. In other words, the human being has “a real ‘potency’ for it” and this potency “is what is inmost and most authentic in him, the centre

---

47 DG, 302.

48 TI, 1, 310.

49 Ibid. note 1, 310.
and root of what he is absolutely. He must have it always...”

Furthermore, since God addresses individual persons as a “real partner,” as one who can reject or accept the love given, then this innermost reality within human existence must be experienced as “an event and wonder not owed” to the person. Ultimately, this is what Rahner calls the supernatural existential.

As Rahner understood it, within human existence there exists a “central, abiding existential.” This existential is a dimension of human existence, and therefore “present in every person at least in the mode of an offer.” It is also “present prior to their freedom, their self-understanding and their experience.”

Moreover, “everyone, really and radically every person must be understood as the event of a supernatural self-communication of God, although not in the sense that every person necessarily accepts in freedom God’s self-communication to man.” Therefore, this existential is not a faculty of human nature but it is the real constitution of the human person. It is the initial

50 Ibid., 311.
51 Ibid., 311.
52 David Coffey, in his article “The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential,” in Theological Studies 65 (2004), points out that some researchers of Rahner’s concept of the supernatural existential believe that they find a contradiction in Rahner’s treatments of the concept. Coffey argues that “despite appearances, there is no contradiction between Rahner’s late and early statements on the supernatural existential.” But in fact they are “correct approximations of a truth whose entirety eluded him because it had not been fully thought through” (97). Coffey argues that not only did Rahner admit that he “had no clear idea of the nature of the relationship of the existential to grace” but also that he treatments of the idea changed over time because of context and of perspective (97, 110).

53 TI, 1, 313.
54 FCF, 127.
55 Ibid., 127.
56 Ibid., 127-128.
ordination of human existence towards God, and it is present as an offer prior to human response.

This abiding existential is, furthermore, “supernatural.” For Rahner, it is important to understand this existential as supernatural in order to maintain the unexacted, unmerited, and freely given nature of this existential. As he argues, the human person “is already redeemed and absolutely obliged to tend to his supernatural end. This ‘situation’ is not merely an external one; it is an objective, ontological modification of man, added indeed to his nature by God’s grace and therefore supernatural, but in fact never lacking in the real order.” In other words, this freely given existential consists of an ontological restructuring of human existence for the real acceptance of the divine life.

For Rahner, this supernatural existential is not human nature as such. In order to avoid confusing the supernatural existential with human nature, and to avoid any reification of human nature, Rahner offers a distinction between the two “natures” of human existence. The two natures are the concrete contingent “nature” (i.e., in a biological sense) and human “nature” (i.e., in the theological sense). Human “nature” in the theological sense is an existential. Rahner calls this human dimension of the “substance of his concrete quiddity” human “nature” and refers to it as a “remainder concept.” This nature, Rahner argues, will have to be such that it has an openness for

---

57 The term Rahner uses is “übernatürliche” as in the English words “above,” “over,” “that which transcends.” It is not to be understood as some heavenly superstructure, but as something categorically other than concrete contingent nature.


59 TI, 1, 313-314.
God’s love and presence. Since this openness is an orientation towards God it (the openness) “is not to be thought of merely as a non-repugnance, but as an inner ordination, provided only that it is not unconditional.”  However, this nature is still distinct from the supernatural existential. He states that

Even the man who has not been justified and inwardly sanctified by God’s grace is not, in the present order, in such a way identical with a man in the ‘status naturae purae’…The ordination which obliges him to a supernatural end consists…not just in a purely juridical obligation…It is far preferable to think of the ordination to a supernatural end, which is binding on all men in the present order of reality and salvation, as a real ontological existential of man…”

Though human existence has been created with the offer and call of God’s presence within the event of human existence through the supernatural existential, it is important to explore the relationship between human freedom and grace. In other words, since the supernatural existential is an abiding existential in human existence and thus orienting the human subject towards God, what do we make of human freedom? In other words, does human freedom play a role in the saving activity of God?

Accepting God’s Self in Freedom and in History

The classical doctrine of justification is often employed to address the problem of the effects of grace on the human person. As the event of a free, unmerited and forgiving, and absolute self-communication of God, the human person is already “justified” in God. This absolute self-communication of God as the act of redemption already became realized in the absolute historical event of the incarnation of the divine

---

60 Ibid., 315.

61 Ibid., 376.
Logos in Jesus of Nazareth. For Rahner, this is not merely a juridical statement but rather an ontologically real event. He contends that “[p]rior to any subjective attitude, man is really different (from what he would be as mere creature and mere sinner), because redemption has taken place in Christ.”\textsuperscript{62} Therefore, since human existence has been transformed by the redeeming act of Christ, where does human freedom fit?

Rahner argues that authentic Christian teaching understands the relationship between the human person’s justification and sanctification, and their fulfillment in the “closest possible unity.” In other words, grace and the final vision of God are “two phases of one and the same event which are conditioned by man’s free historicity and temporality.”\textsuperscript{63} They are two modalities (i.e., modifications) of human transcendence. The first is the offer and call to human freedom. The second is the response to this offer as permanent existential of human existence (i.e., acceptance or rejection). Therefore, “in grace…[man] participates in God’s being…he is already God’s son here and now, and …must only become manifest.”\textsuperscript{64}

Since the full realization of human existence is God’s ultimate intention for human existence, it is only in the communication of God’s self that human existence attains this full realization. As stated earlier, Rahner argues that this redeeming act of God’s self-communication begins as an offer which can be accepted. It is an offer that takes place in history and meets human existence within its own freedom.

\textsuperscript{62} “Questions of Controversial Theology on Justification,” \textit{TI}, 4, 200. Rahner also goes on to argue, in continuity with his method of unity-in-distinction, that since the human person is the event of God’s self-communication, justification and sanctification are “two sides of one and the same process, not of two phases one after another,” 199.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{FCF}, 118.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 120.
For Rahner, this offer must be understood as a gift so that the integrity of the freedom within human existence is not compromised. Therefore, as an offer, this communication of God’s self is not imposed upon human existence. Rather, the individual person must freely accept this free offer which is nothing less than the beginning of the person’s salvation.

For Rahner, God’s offer of God’s self is a possibility for human existence that can only be actualized through the concrete event of human freedom. As noted in Chapter Three of this dissertation, Rahner distinguishes between two forms of freedom: transcendental (originating) freedom and categorical (originated) freedom. As an authentic human existential, transcendental freedom “is not the power to do this or that, but the power to decide about oneself and to actualize oneself.” The person, in fact, actualizes him or herself through concrete, historical acts of freedom. Thus transcendental freedom becomes mediated through the person’s concrete choices and actions. These two forms of freedom are therefore not separate freedoms but rather a unified moment of human realization.

This freedom to accept God’s offer of self is, as Rahner contends, “freedom in and through history and in time and space.” The human person, therefore, can and must respond within his or her particular historical context and situation. As Rahner argues, “man is essentially the historical being for whom divine revelation and salvation are encountered through his specific history. At the same time he is the being who is always

---

65 Ibid., 38.

66 Ibid., 95.
already endowed by what we call the Holy Spirit of grace with the saving reality of God himself, as offer made to his liberty, which can be realised in all history."\(^67\)

The freedom to accept or reject God’s communion with human existence cannot be isolated to one event or another. Rather, as Rahner argues, the present and future actions and choices of an individual person are “co-determined” by a previous choice or action.\(^68\) In other words, human realization, or even human destruction, is a process that takes place in concrete history and over time and the individual person is responsible for his or her salvation or destruction in every temporal decision. He states:

> The divinized transcendentality of man, who actualizes his essence in history and only in this way can accept it in freedom, has itself a history in man, an individual and collective history. This transcendentality, as borne, empowered and fulfilled by the divinizing self-communication of God, this transcendentality takes place; it does not simply exist.\(^69\)

From this quote we can discern that the redemption of human existence not only takes place in history through God’s self communication, but that redemption is a collective existence.


\(^{68}\) FCF, 104.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 138. He continues by stating that “Fundamentally, Christianity makes the claim that it is salvation and revelation for every person,” (138).
The Definitive Culmination of Redemption\textsuperscript{70}

For Rahner, the incarnation of the Word of God is central to grace. It is the ultimate disclosure of God’s self-communication in freedom and in history. It is fundamentally the saving event and act of God’s love in human history and human existence. Furthermore, this event of God’s saving action \textit{took place} in the world.

This last point is very important for Rahner since he is concerned about all forms of Christian gnosticism that rejects the material world. He asserts that authentic Christian teaching is much more materialistic than presented in any gnosticism and that an authentic Christianity teaches that “God lays hold of matter when the Logos becomes flesh, and does so precisely at that point of unity at which matter become conscious of itself and spirit possesses its own essential being in the objectifications of matter.”\textsuperscript{71}

As Rahner argues, this saving event of God’s historical self-communication took place in the concrete life and particular choices of Jesus of Nazareth.\textsuperscript{72} In other words, Jesus made the Absolute Mystery fully incarnate in his life and was fully open to this Mystery. Jesus Christ, the God-Man, then, is precisely the goal of human existence, and therefore the salvation and redemption of human existence.

\textsuperscript{70} It must be noted that bracketing out a section on Christ and Christ’s relationship to grace when presenting Rahner’s theology of grace and redemption may open up to some real problems. It must also be noted that in Rahner’s theology of grace, Christ should not be seen as an appendage to grace either. Rather, for Rahner, all grace is the grace of Christ. As he points out “God has in fact decreed that the order of grace should depend on the Incarnate Word”\textit{(TI} 4, 176). However, for the sake of manageability, my reflections on Christology will be brief.

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{FCF}, 196.

\textsuperscript{72} ibid., 211.
The Social Quality of Grace

Up to this point, Rahner’s theology of grace appears to appeal to the individual and his or her relationship to or experience of grace and seems to say very little with regard to the social quality of grace. Brackley contends that Rahner’s theology of grace does incorporate, to an extent, the social nature of grace. He finds passages in Rahner’s theology that call attention to the social quality of salvation that includes social structures and systems. However, he does make the claim that Rahner “fails to elaborate on this point or draw out its implications.” In other words, “How does salvation take place in social, cultural, economic and political life?” 73 He points out two reasons why Rahner’s theology of grace and salvation falls short. He contends that “Rahner’s entire enterprise springs from the tradition of reflection on nature and grace. This tradition rarely asks how grace…is related to our social relations.” In addition, he points out that “Rahner’s Catholic tradition is more analogical than dialectic” and that “[o]ne temptation of this tradition is to neglect the struggle (dialectic) of grace against sin.” 74 As I see it, this is a fair assessment of Rahner’s theology of grace by Brackley and I contend that the soteriology of González Faus can address Brackley’s concern.

**González Faus: The Radical Gifts of Filiación and Fraternidad**

In *Proyecto de hermano*, González Faus contends that the restoration and redemption of the damaged human existence consists in two tasks. The first task is the re-creation or restructuring (*reconstrucción*) of human existence. The second task is the

73 *DR*, 55.

74 Ibid., 55.
empowering (*potenciación*) of human existence. Both of these tasks are fundamentally the work of God (i.e., grace) in human existence and human history, and constitute one process of human salvation.

For González Faus, this work of God in human existence and history is analogous to a personal narrative that is threatened to be terminated and never concluded. However, it is a narrative that constitutes three recognizable phases. First, grace is present in human existence and history through God’s presence and initiative of forgiving and justifying love. Second, grace is present in the struggle for liberation of the self from itself. Lastly, grace is present in the goal of the binomial *filiación-fraternidad*.

In the following section I will explore what González Faus sees as the first phase of the presence of God’s action in human existence and history (i.e., the initiative of God acting within human existence as forgiving and justifying grace). I will do this first by examining the formal notion of grace in his theology and then by exploring how his theology addresses the problem of the relationship between grace and human nature. However, the pressing question that guides this chapter and this dissertation is, does González Faus see human structures, systems, and social relations as open to receiving the gift of God’s self as God’s saving activity?

**Grace as God’s Familial Presence in Human Existence**

For González Faus, the initiative of God consists of four defining features. The first feature of God’s initiative in human existence is the gift of God’s self. Like Rahner, González Faus’ formal notion of grace places an emphasis upon the indwelling presence

---

75 *Proyecto*, 426.
of God within human existence. This gift of God’s self initiates a restructuring as well as an empowering of human existence. In other words, God’s presence initiates the process of divinization of human existence. God’s acts of restructuring and empowering create a new form of existence within the human; that which biblical language calls the new person of Jesus Christ, or the Second Adam. González Faus points out that Paul understood this newness as a “change of image” from that of Adam to that of Christ.76

Like Rahner, González Faus wants to restore the centrality of uncreated grace (i.e., the indwelling presence of God) in order to uphold God’s gratuitous initiative working in human existence and to clarify what its relationship is to created grace. He also wants to avoid the reification of grace and the mechanization of the restructuring of human existence. Furthermore, he wants to challenge the individualistic conceptions of grace and move towards interpersonal and social conceptions of grace.

For González Faus, the real problem arises in the Scholasticism after Aquinas, which reified the metaphysical language of grace utilized by Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas. He points out that in Aquinas’ interpretation of Peter Lombard ideal love is not something created in the human person. This ideal love is nothing other than the holy Spirit present in the human person.77 What is created is the subsequent “act of love” by the person.78 This act of love is initiated by the will, and according to Aquinas “there cannot be such a perfect operation of the will that is united with the Spirit if there is not a

76 Ibid., 427. Later, in patristic writings, this newness refers to the divinization or theosis of human existence. The Western church in effect lost the patristic notion of divinization and did not systematically recover it until the early twentieth century.

77 Ibid., 497.

78 Ibid., 497.
prior quality (i.e., *habitus, forma*) that perfects the will. Therefore, the initiative of God (as forgiveness and as grace) is *efficacious* (i.e., it has the power to produce the desired effect of changing the person) and therefore the uncreated gift (the Spirit) provokes a “created gift” or a restructuring in the person. González Faus has no problem with this Thomistic scheme. What seems to trouble González Faus is what Baroque Scholasticism did with its interpretation of Aquinas.

As González Faus contends, the later Scholastics took Aquinas’ abstract formula and attempted to discover “how” this new love is produced in the egoistical person. He argues that the later Scholastics emphasized efficient grace, which created a vision of God as something wholly transcendent that “produces” rather than creates or fosters. Furthermore, the emphasis upon efficient grace is likely to conceptualize the relationship between God’s saving activity and human existence in purely individualistic terms. González Faus sees this manner of viewing God and grace as leading up to Baroque Scholasticism after the Council of Trent wherein there emerged a forgetfulness of uncreated grace and an increase in the “market” of created grace. This ultimately led to a vision of the relationship between God and human existence as one centered on productivity, and the vision of grace as likened to that of a commodity that is acquired by the individual.

---

79 Ibid., 497.

80 González Faus notes that it is important to avoid understanding the restructuring of the person as similar to that of the “repairing” of a “motor” of a machine. This is often the error that Aristotelianism makes because of its abstract rational system (498).

81 Ibid., 498.

82 Ibid., 505.
The second defining feature of God’s initiative is that grace seeks out that which is most authentically human in human existence. For González Faus, God’s action in human existence is a restructuring of human existence through the process and gift of humanization. In other words, grace not only creates a qualitative change within human existence, but is that gratuitous qualitative change. As he states, “the term ‘grace’ refers to the quality of human existence.”\textsuperscript{83} This grace of humanization is essentially the transformation of the person from an egocentric individual to a social and relational self. This transformation is fundamentally the process of fiiliación.

This humanization, and therefore fiiliación of, human existence analogically corresponds to the fiiliación of Jesus Christ. In other words, this qualitatively restructured human existence through the process of fiiliación takes shape, and is absolutely confirmed in Jesus Christ the incarnate Word and the fullness of God’s presence in history. This unique restructured human existence found in Jesus Christ was the absolute confirmation of the indwelling presence and work of God. This act of grace was nothing less than a total humanization of Jesus Christ in history.

González Faus argues that the act of humanization is the first act of grace and it is fundamentally the emptying out, or divesting\textsuperscript{84}, of human existence. This divesting of self was found in the life of Christ. Christ’s life, which was a life for others, shows that this divesting is a liberation from egoistical self-interest. Therefore, the work of grace in human existence, as found in Christ, is fundamentally a divesting of egoism for the

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 436.

\textsuperscript{84} The term that is used is desposeer, which means the depriving of.
saving action of the project of fraternidad through which the gift of filiación is disclosed.  

As González Faus points out, Christ’s life as Son of God confirms the possibility of opening oneself up to kenotic love, which is the nature of God’s self. Furthermore, being open to self-emptying love implies “believing in love, hoping in love, and loving love” and this is precisely the meaning of “putting on the new person.” This form of love that was manifested in Jesus Christ is the kenotic love of others as a brother and a sister (Mt 12:50). Jesus completes what, for González Faus, is the reality of human existence; namely, “loving one another as a brother or sister.” As the first born, Christ’s filiación opens up the possibility for our filiación. This historical process of

---

85 The filiación that human persons partake in is grounded in faith whereas the filiación of Jesus Christ is by nature. This fundamental teaching of the Church is upheld by González Faus throughout his work La humanidad nueva. Furthermore, it is important to note that for González Faus, there is not an efficient causal relationship between fraternidad and filiación but rather a formal causal relationship since there is a mutual codetermining of both fraternidad and filiación.

86 Ibid., 645.

87 Ibid., 645.

88 Ibid., 646. Jesus Christ is not only the truth and redemption of human existence but Christ is also the key to interpreting all of reality for González Faus. As he argues in his work La humanidad nueva, the incarnation, cross and resurrection of Jesus are “structural events that become the key to interpreting reality.” La humanidad nueva (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1984), p. 610. In other words, the incarnation affirms that reality (i.e., the world) is not only created but that it is a project that has yet to be completed and realized. The cross points to the fact that reality is ambiguous because it is not only progressing and filled with energy and life, but it is also constantly threatened by death. Finally, the resurrection illustrates the “fullness-yet-to-come” of reality as it challenges all human ideologies and utopias (610). This triune explication of reality illustrates the reality of human existence. As González Faus argues, Jesus is the place where all language about reality (and particularity that of human reality) is no longer content with the abstract language of ontology of human existence, but rather reveals language about God (610). This is ultimately verified in the transition from “cristo-logía” (i.e., incarnation) to “Escato-logía” (i.e., resurrection) that takes place through the negation (i.e., cross) of all “logos,” (611). For González Faus, this is nothing other than the project of filiación-fraternidad.
becoming a son or daughter of God is made possible, though only partially, because of God’s own participation in human existence.\textsuperscript{89}

The third defining feature of God’s initiative in human existence is that this initiative is born in history and takes the form of history.\textsuperscript{90} For González Faus, a danger inherent in understanding the work of grace in human existence as a divinizing power is the tendency to spiritualize or intellectualize this power so that it becomes divorced from concrete history.\textsuperscript{91} This ultimately led to various forms of dualisms in western Christian thought and culture, which tended towards individualistic soteriologies and theories of grace. It becomes essential then for any theology of grace to understand grace as embedded in the world, in history, and in social relations.

As González Faus argues, the work and task of grace does not take over history nor abandons history. Rather, grace empowers and transforms history.\textsuperscript{92} The life of Jesus discloses that grace is a process in history that struggles to realize filial and fraternal relations in the world. God graciously enters human history as a process and struggle towards the project of \textit{filiación-fraternidad}.\textsuperscript{93} In addition, the process and struggle of God’s saving activity takes place in history on a personal level, social level, and global level. As a history, González Faus sees this process and struggle as analogous

\textsuperscript{89} Irenaeus’ exchange theory is clearly at play here.

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Proyecto}, 441.

\textsuperscript{91} This tendency was most prevalent in the early patristic period of the East but can still be found today. For González Faus’s argument on the need to de-Hellenize Christianity see his chapter “\textit{deshelenizar el cristianismo}” in his work \textit{Calidad cristiana: Identidad y crisis del cristianismo}, (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2006), 185-225.

\textsuperscript{92} \textit{Proyecto}, 447.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 447.
to an enduring and long-suffering relationship between two lovers. In other words, there is a tension between a person being selfish with his or her time and resources and sharing his or her time and resources.

The last defining feature of God’s initiative in human existence is the universality of grace. In other words, God offers God’s self “permanently and to all persons, including those that are outside of the church.” In making his point, González Faus looks to the book of Jonah. He points out that when God forgave the Ninevites, Jonah became frustrated with God because within Jonah’s own self-centered worldview, there is no place for a forgiving God beyond the limits of Jonah’s own making. However, González Faus claims that the writer of the book wants to show the universal nature of God’s love and forgiveness. Consequently, if a theory of grace does not maintain the universality of grace, then there is no possibility for the gift and project of fraternidad nor the gift of God who becomes a brother to all human persons. As González Faus argues, the danger inherent in an exclusivist soteriology can be seen in the extremist positions of Calvinist predestination, with its emphasis on the individual believer, and the sectarian views of Catholic Jansenism. Both of these deviations from the early Patristic and classical teachings of the church on salvation have evolved into the contemporary “arrogance of Calvinism-capitalism and the arrogance of Jansenism-sectarianism.”

---

94 Ibid., 453.
95 Ibid., 454.
96 Ibid., 479.
97 Ibid., 479.
As a result of these four phases of God’s initiative in human existence, González Faus draws out four conclusions. First, he argues that the concept of grace means the presence of the Spirit of God in human existence. Grace, in this view, is not seen as a thing or an object that manipulates or forces the person’s intellect or will one way or the other. Rather, grace is the personal presence of God within the individual, which is not capable of “forcing the person’s will but of transforming it.”

Second, this presence entails “a restructuring of the depth of the human person: namely, our spirit, in which the decision to believe and the openness to hope gives us the ability to love as God loves.” This restructuring of the person is a restructuring of the egocentric will to a will that is united to God’s will through fraternal relationship with others.

Third, González Faus argues that “the gift of the Spirit has to be understood in terms of personal presence and not substantial presence.” He points out that Rahner’s notion of “quasi-formal” causality is helpful but insufficient. As González Faus sees it, Rahner relies too heavily upon Scholasticism and its Aristotelian categories of substance. Therefore, he claims that the Aristotelian classification of causal relations “does not seem to be the most suitable form of relations in order to explain this type of presence.”

---

98 Ibid., 505.
99 Ibid., 506.
100 Ibid., 506.
101 Ibid., 506.
102 Ibid., 506.
indwelling presence of the Spirit is the category of interpersonal relations, and to extend this argument even further, God’s indwelling presence in human existence is Trinitarian by nature and therefore social. The category of social relations then becomes the paradigm for relationships between persons.

Fourth, González Faus argues that the most adequate categories to describe the “action of the love of God” in human existence are not found in the categories of physical causation. Rather, the most adequate way to express the action of love within human existence is through the categories of dialogical relations. González Faus describes this form of relationship as a dynamic and continual loving call.103

Justification by Fraternización

Grace envisioned in terms of personal presence and relationships of fraternidad opens up the possibility for mutual relationships of self-surrender and fraternidad. Thus, grace is fundamentally “the re-creation of human existence destroyed by the human person.”104 Furthermore, grace begins the transformation of human existence by ‘justifying’ human existence through kenotic love.105 For González Faus, the importance

---

103 Proyecto, 507. The metaphor that he employs to describe this form of human love is that of a marriage of many years. Fundamentally it is a relationship of fraternidad. González Faus points out that the use of personal categories of a call to relationship to describe God’s love dwelling in human existence is also found in the documents formulated at the council of Trent, 507.

104 Ibid., 488.

105 Ibid., 488. He points out that Paul understood justification as the transformation of the human person from a dehumanized existence to a fully human one. As seen through the history of the theology of grace, the term “justification” has been the cause of much confusion and debate. The term itself, González Faus argues, can be replaced with more contemporary terms like “human realization,” “humanization,” “rehabilitation,” “pardon,” “liberation (from the inhumanity within human existence),” and “regeneration,” Ibid., 487.
of the justification of human existence by grace fundamentally is “how one responds to God in a dialogical existence.”

In his presentation of the history of the term “justification” and the debate over the notion “justification by faith,” González Faus draws out two anthropological consequences. The first, he claims, is that “if love is what justifies us, love is the ultimate truth of the human person, which is the final judge of humanity and inhumanity.” Therefore, for González Faus, the truth and the judge of the human person is not human reason, as often argued. In fact, human reason does not justify human existence. If reason becomes judge, and is considered the ultimate truth of human existence, then it will fall into the service of its own interest and its own egoism. Rather, it is love that is the truth and judge of human existence and love suggests a relationship between free persons and not between a person and an object.

The second anthropological consequence is that “grace does not have to be understood as a miraculous mechanism and an instantaneous act.” Rather than being understood as an instantaneous and mechanical act, grace can be seen as a “long history and a slow dialogue.” Furthermore, understanding grace as a long and slow process

106 Ibid., 507.
107 Ibid., 507.
108 González Faus makes an interesting point when he states that, “human reason knows how to be conveniently critical when the time comes to offer a question, but when the time comes to respond it is much less neutral than it appears to be” (507). Furthermore, reason should be at the service of a critical solidarity. This point of distinction between the object of reason’s functioning clearly illustrates González Faus’s own epistemology.
109 Ibid., 507.
110 Ibid., 507.
illustrates the point that even in times of apparent alienation from God divine love is always present.

Besides transforming human existence, the justification of human existence elicits a response from a person in freedom. In other words, justification is the freedom of the person to accept this re-creation of human existence which was begun by God. This acceptance is not a passive act of faith but rather the free gift of *fraternidad*, which emerges from an active faith.

Avoiding any blind fideism, González Faus argues that faith is a “type of attitude that encompasses the person’s whole being and comes at the risk of the person’s whole being.” 111 Extending this notion of faith within interpersonal categories, González Faus understands this attitude as a real openness by a person to being loved by another person, and to loving another person. In other words, “faith is structured as love, because the reception of the gift of *filiación* begins the work of the construction of *fraternidad*.” 112 This openness by the person takes the form of a “handing over of,” “surrendering” and “emptying” (*entrega*) one’s own life to the “other” with the hope that the “other” will enrich and deepen one’s own life. 113 It is in this way that the person is justified by faith. 114

---

111 Ibid., 509.
112 Ibid., 564.
113 Ibid., 509.
114 González Faus notes that describing the classical notion of “justification by faith” in interpersonal categories is “the only and the most valid way to explain the justification of the person by God,” Ibid., 511.
González Faus argues that there are real social implications in understanding the doctrine of “justification by faith” in this way.\textsuperscript{115} As González Faus contends, the error that Luther made when he challenged the Church was to “reduce God’s love to God’s love for me and, at the same time, its effects in me and for me.”\textsuperscript{116} For González Faus, this reduction of faith to an individualistic faith, which is so prevalent in societies affected by the Enlightenment, may have contributed to the deification of the autonomous self. As he sees it, this individualistic form of faith has “a profound social implication.”\textsuperscript{117} In place of this reductive notion of faith and relationship to God, González Faus argues that the prayer traditionally attributed to Mary called the “Magnificat” better expresses authentic Christian faith and identity. In other words, God’s love for the person in his or her human poverty (i.e., weakness and need) illustrates God’s love and mercy for the poor and broken-hearted.

Justification by faith, then, according to González Faus, is an active turn to those in most need. In other words, justification by faith is disclosed in the concrete option for the poor and weak that is proclaimed by theologies of liberation. For González Faus, the person who is justified in God’s eyes chooses to love those who seem to be incapable of being loved (e.g., the destitute), not because the person has merited this love but because of the gratuitity of God’s love that extends to all. The person who realizes that God’s love for human persons is purely free and gratuitous accepts that this same love “justifies” and

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 520.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 520.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 520.
grants the gift of divine love to all who are not valued by this world. Accepting this is one of the decisive proofs that the person has been justified by faith. Thus, the doctrine of justification becomes an active return to works of justice in the option for the poor and destitute.

God’s Saving Action and the Human Desire for Fraternidad

Since grace is God’s initiative of love and personal presence in human existence as well as an act of justification by faith, the question arises, what is the relationship between God’s action and the actions of human persons working towards fraternidad? In answering this question, it is important to understand how González Faus understands the relationship between nature and grace. González Faus makes the claim that historically, philosophers and theologians have engaged the problem of the relationship between the action of God and human action by using analogies that are based on the notion of efficient causation or chronological distinctions. He argues that this epistemological starting point (i.e., a theory of knowledge framed within efficient causal relations) may lead to two extremes, namely monism and dualism.

Instead of a never-ending struggle between two extremes, González Faus turns away from chronological distinctions to ontological distinctions between the activity of God and the activity of human persons. In order to move in this direction, González Faus draws heavily on the theory of the analogy of being and of symbol as understood by

---

118 Ibid., 520.
119 Ibid., 45.
Rahner. This framework helps González Faus establish a theoretical middle-ground in his attempt to avoid any form of dualism or monism.\textsuperscript{120} For González Faus, this third approach to reality and human existence is not meant to eliminate or annihilate these partial approaches. Rather, a more adequate and practical attitude and approach to reality maintains an analogical vision of unity-in-distinction, which allows for these two partial approaches to remain present in dialogical tension.\textsuperscript{121} What is essential to this third approach, however, is the awareness that these other approaches arise from profound human experiences and that they do play a real role in how we understand the world and human existence. It also creates an awareness of the practical consequences of pursuing these approaches to their extreme ends.

After establishing an epistemological starting point, González Faus addresses the problem of the nature and grace debate. He does this by contending that this apparent disparity found between the divine and the human is not only found in “religious realms” (i.e., in realms where we talk about or experience God), but also found within the realms of concrete human experience.\textsuperscript{122} He offers the examples of love, knowledge, human

\textsuperscript{120} González Faus argues that these false interpretations of reality (i.e., monism and dualism) are actually partial approaches to reality and are expressed in cultural, philosophical, religious and political extremes. For example, seeing reality through a monistic lens becomes manifest in dialectical materialism whereby everything in the world is absolutized and is identified with ultimate reality and any form of transcendence is eliminated from this vision of reality. The extreme vision of reality as dualistic is made manifest in secular Manichaeism whereby any ultimate reality or transcendent reality (whether it be the human mind or God) is opposed to the material world. These extremes arise from real experiences of human existence. However, these experiences are only partial ones of a greater whole.

\textsuperscript{121} These experiences cannot be eliminated since they are real experiences within human existence.

\textsuperscript{122} This presupposition of a vision of all of reality as a unified totality points to the influence that Rahner’s theology has had on González Faus’ thought, and is another push towards avoiding any hint of dualism of a real distinction between the “supernatural” and the “natural” that has a tendency to appear in theological discourse.
action and human willing, freedom, and the meaning of death as examples of how this apparent disparity is found within the realms of concrete human experience.

Every concrete human experience, whether it consists of love or the pursuit to answer a particular question, is conditioned by the possibility to love, to will or to know. Following in the transcendental theology of Rahner, González Faus makes the case for the condition of the possibility of experiencing these particular human experiences as the openness to human transcendence. For example, he states in Transcendental-Thomistic fashion, that “the natural desire for absolute knowledge is the condition of the possibility to know anything.”

This discussion helps González Faus arrive at three conclusions. The first conclusion reveals that these examples point to the reality that “the human person is a limited being with an unlimited dynamism.” Even when the individual person judges these experiences (viz., love, freedom, will and action, etc.) as absolutely constituted solely by the self, and uses this conclusion to justify any form of egoism (i.e., an absolutization of the self), the person ought to reflect on how these same experiences have come to define and determine the person. The recognition that these experiences transcend, and therefore have the potential to determine the person, ought to remind the person that human existence is nothing more than an “epiphenomenon” and not the center of reality.

---

123 Ibid., 134.
124 Ibid., 142.
125 Ibid., 142.
The second conclusion shows that each one of these experiences have a certain “global characteristic.” This conclusion becomes a justification for the use of the theology of Irenaeus. The notion that these experiences can be found within all human persons, regardless of culture or religious beliefs, everywhere and for all times, is a hallmark of the anthropology of Irenaeus. For example, the condition of the possibility for love, knowledge, action, freedom, and the meaning of death are translated into Irenaeus’ language of “communion with God, vision of God, divine filtación, possession of the spirit, and immortality.”

Finally, these examples from the concrete realm of human existence support the conclusion that “the image and likeness of God is not some foreign additive to human

---

126 Ibid., 143.
127 Ibid., 143.
128 Ibid., 143. In his argument, González Faus wants to point out that his use of Irenaeus’ language of image and likeness stays within the contours of the tradition and even precedes some theological terms (viz., the terms supernatual existential and potentia obedientialis). First he points out that the language and theoretical categories that are being used to describe an indescribable reality are historically and culturally founded. The Patristic use of image and likeness of God may not have the same meaning as “supernatural existential” or potential obedientialis. However, González Faus makes the claim that these terms are striving to describe a fundamental truth about human existence as do the terms image and likeness. It is impossible to distinguish, in concrete ways, these theoretical categories within human existence. They rather “serve only as theoretical clarifications in order to maintain the absolute gratuitousness of the gift of God’s self to human existence” (Ibid., 153). González Faus’ uses this notion of complementarity of language within the tradition with his defense of the language employed by liberation theologians. In his argument, he unpacks the use of the term “liberation.” He argues that the binomial terms “liberation-salvation,” terms used by theologians of liberation, are not a break with the traditional discussion of the problem between nature and grace, but are in fact a necessary outgrowth of the classical debate. See his argument in Ibid., 157-165. As he points out, the use of the binomial liberation-salvation, which is at the heart of the project of liberation theology, is in fact “at the center of the greatest theological tradition and at the heart of one of the most global problems of all theology: the relationship between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’” (Ibid., 166). González Faus claims that the classical problem between the mutability of the rational animal and the dynamism of the image and likeness of God had been approached through the question of the relationship between “immanent realization and transcendental realization of the human person.” In the Western tradition the focus had been on the progress of the human person. Thus, the terms “emancipation” and “redemption” were most appropriate. However, in societies where there are persons living in subhuman standards, the more appropriate terms are “human liberation” and “salvation.”
creatureliness, but rather a way of being-from-creation or a way of living out one’s creatureliness.”

González Faus presses the tradition further when re-envisioning Augustine’s *cor inquietum*, Aquinas’ natural desire to know God, and Rahner’s supernatural existential. When speaking of the divine orientation towards God, as in Thomas’ understanding of human reason as the desire for the vision of God and Rahner’s supernatural existential, González Faus clarifies his point with an attempt at balancing a Scholastic emphasis upon the orientation of intelligence and knowledge with a humanistic position for the innate desire for the construction of a perfect society. He states, “the dynamism that is found in the created person, as the image of God or divine calling, is not only that of human reason and knowledge…nor is it only in the construction of human society…” Instead, this divine orientation towards God, for González Faus, is the “dynamism of the person,” who is the subject of both individual reason and society. It is the person in his or her totality as a rational being and as a communal being. Thus, González Faus make the argument that the natural inclination of reason and of interpersonal and social relations in human existence is an inclination towards the kingdom of God.

For González Faus, the classical idea of the *potentia obedientialis* within human existence also needs revision. In revisioning this Thomistic idea, he employs the work of the Spanish theologian Juan Alfaro. González Faus argues that just as there is a positive

---

129 *La imagen y semejanza no es un añadido ajeno a la creaturidad, sino una manera de ser de la creatura o una manera de vivir la creaturidad* (Ibid., 143).

130 Ibid., 162.

131 Ibid., 162.
disposition or connaturality in human reason with respect to the beatific vision, there is a type of positive disposition within human liberation with respect to the “trinitarian community” found in God.\textsuperscript{132} Just as the theological tradition claims that there is an innate appetite within human reason for God, so there exists, he argues, an innate desire for community.\textsuperscript{133} His attempt to move from the notion that the human person is a “rational animal” to the notion that the human person is a “social animal” reinforces his argument. The following quote paraphrases Alfaró’s Thomistic revision of the obediential potency. González Faus writes that

Since communion is one of the supreme goods of human existence, we have to affirm that it (i.e., human existence) possesses a certain innate inclination and desire (apetito) for communion. It is an inclination and desire that pertains to the same dynamic potential within human existence to construct society (el mundo). This desire finds total rest and peace within the infinite communion. This is the greatness of the immanence of the kingdom of God in the person as a social being: that “the human community, in virtue of its relational nature (comunitariedad), can only realize its perfection in the Trinitarian communion. Furthermore, it is in the Trinity that the human community is necessarily perfected. This fact reveals that human existence has, in the most intimate dimension of its social nature, a unique ontological likeness to the kingdom of God. In other words, human existence has an innate and exclusive connaturality with respect to the Kingdom that he does not have with respect to any other object.”\textsuperscript{134}

A desire for human community found within human existence is therefore more than a mere non-repugnance of community life; it is rather a real innate desire.\textsuperscript{135} This

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 164-165.
\textsuperscript{135} I mean to use the term non-repugnance in the same way that the classic debate over the relationship between nature and grace uses the term potentia obedientialis.
desire is fundamentally a desire for the kingdom of God, which is the absolute and final manifestation of fraternidad.

Grace as the Project of Fraternización

As pointed out earlier, González Faus makes the claim that the person who realizes that God’s love for human existence is purely free and gratuitous accepts that this same love “justifies” those who are rejected or forgotten by the world. The justification of the person is in fact an active return to works of justice in the option for the poor and destitute of the world. This implies an active faith that works for justice. Furthermore, this active faith arises out of the restructured person, which implies a liberation of the self from itself and is nothing less than the gift and process of filiación.

This liberation is something dynamic and always changing and it is always lived and experienced as both freedom and a struggle.\textsuperscript{136} The person’s choice to be liberated from the enslavement of egoism begins the project of fraternización and therefore of redemption. Though the person must freely choose this struggle for liberation, the person must wade through the waters of ambiguity that is both personal responsibility and God’s initiative. As González Faus contends,

Redemption, for the person, is not mechanistic as though it was given to the person from someone else and in which the person experiences as a lottery. Even though redemption and forgiveness are grace and initiative of God, there is no other redemption that is beyond the person’s own responsibility. Grace does not take away the person’s freedom, but rather it gives the person freedom; and it frees precisely by humanizing the person and offering the person responsibility.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 543.

\textsuperscript{137} Fe en Dios y construcción de la historia (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1998), 271.
This justification by an “act of” (i.e., active) faith, which is ultimately liberation from one’s self, requires a situational change. As González Faus states, this situational change is the real insertion into the death and resurrection of Christ.138 It is an objective situational change that requires a subjective transformation. In other words, it is the restructuring and regeneration of the human person by God’s spirit from an enslaved and alienated egoism to a liberated existence in community. It is a transformation of the self existing purely for itself towards a self-in-relation-to-others.139

González Faus argues that “faith is structured as love because the reception of the gift of filiación opens the way to the construction of fraternidad.”140 He states that “if grace is the love of God that dwells in the human person, and that helps the person love and be loved, the person is certainly a new creation.”141 In other words, the indwelling love of God in human existence interiorly restructures the person for the task of fraternidad. In turn, the active engagement in the project of fraternización leads to an unfurling of the gift of filiación.

This restructuring of human existence is no less than the restructuring of the theological dimension of human existence, which becomes manifest in faith, hope and love. González Faus argues, using Aquinas’ understanding of the effects of grace on the human person, that the restructuring of the human person is not a restructuring of human

---

138 *Proyecto*, 534.

139 As González Faus claims the sacrament of baptism is an example of how the church publicly expresses this awareness of the person’s change in situation, (Ibid., 536).

140 Ibid., 564.

141 Ibid., 565.

142 Refer to footnote 303 of Chapter Three for an explanation of the term “theological.”
faculties, but rather of the essence of the human person. As González Faus understands it, this change is a restructuring that transforms the human powers of memory, understanding, and will. As a result, human understanding is raised up to a faith that acknowledges Jesus Christ as the absolute paradigm of human existence over and above the ego-centered self. Also, human memory is lifted up towards the hope that remembers the resurrection of the crucified one. Finally, human will is transformed from absolute love of self to the decision to surrender the egocentric self to the absolute kenotic love of God so that the will may be able to love others with the infused power of God.143

Faith, hope and love, then, are not merely effects of one’s moral ability but rather they are the divine strength that renews (i.e., re-creates and empowers) the person’s broken will.144 They are theological virtues; that is, they are three possibilities of the new person: the newness of love, the gratuity of faith, and the ‘receptivity’ of hope in that this hope comes from an Other and not from oneself.145

The Redeeming Act of Fraternización

González Faus argues that the final project and goal of human existence, which is nothing less than the binomial filiación-fraternidad, is historically and fully disclosed

143 Ibid., 567. Where González Faus moves beyond Aquinas is his use of language of Irenaeus. González Faus contends that instead of the static and fixed language found in Scholasticism, Irenaeus’ theological language is much more symbolic and dynamic. He argues that Irenaeus’ understands the human response to the indwelling of the Spirit as “becoming accustomed to” the Spirit, (Ibid., 570). González Faus also wants to avoid Scholasticism emphasis upon infused habits. As he claims, this could lead to a mechanical and instantaneous language about loss and gaining of grace. Rather, he points out that faith, hope and love are ‘virtues’ in the sense of the Latin term virtus meaning power, force, strength (and the Greek dynamis), (Ibid., 576).

144 Ibid., 576-577.

145 Ibid., 578.
(desplegado) in the person of Jesus Christ. In other words, Jesus’ salvific action, which is made manifest in his life and made manifest on the cross, becomes the paradigm of the restructured human person. Because of Jesus’ salvific action, the ultimate and absolute expression of *filiación-fraternidad* in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes a gift to the human person.

The gift of *filiación-fraternidad*, which is fully disclosed in the life of Jesus Christ, becomes historically realized for the individual person through the person’s freely chosen insertion into the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This insertion into Christ’s life affirms the covenantal relationships of God as Father and the “other” as brother and sister. Thus, human existence participates in this salvific gift when the individual person freely accepts the vertical covenantal relationship of God as Father, and when the person actively works towards horizontal covenantal relationships grounded in love of one another as brother and sister.

In concrete terms, these covenantal relationships founded on grace, love and justice begin with the surrender of the egoistical self and a vesting of the social self. The surrendering of the egoistical self is made a reality through the liberation of self-interest by the works of the Spirit, and is ultimately the gift of redemption. This liberation of self-interest is not a death of interest as in Stoic apathy or Buddhist nirvana, but rather “a transformation of interest.”¹⁴⁶ This transformation of interest, as understood by González Faus, is instead a movement away from egoism towards love of others in covenantal relationships. It is “experienced as new life and as the freely given source of self-

---

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 595.
realization and meaning that is a byproduct of working towards the kingdom of God.”

As González Faus argues this is, for Christians, the only possible way of understanding the salvation of human existence. This transformation of interest thus informs and changes social relationships, human structures and human systems.

The question arises, then, is this transformation really possible? As González Faus contends, the transformation of the person’s self-interest into the interest of fraternidad and subsequently of transformed institutions and systems is only possible by loving real, concrete human persons, not abstract human existence. In addition, the transformation of self-interest, which ultimately leads to the liberation of the self, is experienced and lived out as an ongoing struggle. It is the struggle between agapic, kenotic love and egoism.

As González Faus argues this is, for Christians, the only possible way of understanding the salvation of human existence. This transformation of interest thus informs and changes social relationships, human structures and human systems.

As González Faus argues “the person that receives ‘the gift of God that is God’s self’ is the person that dies to egoism in order to open the self to love.”

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the fact that this love is very difficult and practically impossible and that it is really God’s grace that is at work. What, then, becomes of human freedom?

As González Faus sees it, grace and redemption constitute the process and project of the liberation of freedom for love. This liberation of freedom is experienced and lived out as authentic freedom. As González Faus argues, the actions of the Spirit (i.e., the reign of the Spirit) in human existence consist in the insertion of the person into

---

147 Ibid., 595.
148 Ibid., 598.
149 Ibid., 600.
150 Ibid., 597.
divine *filiación* in order to become a brother or a sister (*hermano*) to one another. From this insertion arises attentiveness to the other which goes beyond the moral law. Then, the insertion of the person in divine *filiación* establishes the conditions for a freedom-from-self in order to become free from self-interest (*para que pueda ser desinteresado*).\(^{151}\) This creates an equation among freedom and indifference (*desinteresado*), and among *filiación* and *fraternidad*.\(^{152}\) In other words, for González Faus, when freedom equates to indifference, then *filiación* (i.e., divine relation with God as Father) means *fraternidad*.\(^{153}\) Therefore, “*fraternidad* is a beginning (inchoation) of *filiación*.\(^{154}\) On the other hand, where freedom equates to egoism, then personal dignity means enmity towards others, which ultimately creates death and destruction.

This new way of being human entails a series of experiences of ‘dying,’ and the experiences of passing from death to life is an experience of ‘resurrection.’ Furthermore, this restructured existence becomes verified by real concrete experiences of life and death in the struggle for justice.

---

\(^{151}\) Ibid., 604.

\(^{152}\) The meaning of the term *desinteresado* (disinterested, indifferent) that González Faus uses here refers to the Ignatian idea of holy indifference in which the person is in a state of inner freedom and openness towards all created things. As pointed out by Joseph Veale in his reflection on the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, indifference is fundamentally the experience of the “freedom of the Spirit” and to “participate in the freedom of Jesus before the Father and before all other things,” *The First Week: Practical Questions,* in *The Way of Ignatius Loyola: Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises,* ed. Philip Sheldrake, S.J. (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), 55.

\(^{153}\) González Faus admits that the precise characteristics of *fraternidad* vary from person to person. However, he does contend that in general *fraternidad* is the face and disclosure (*despliegue*) of *filiación*. González Faus argues that the term *fraternidad*, as are the terms love and God, are perhaps the most “prostituted” words in the human dictionary, (Proyecto, 649). Even though *fraternidad* constitutes our true humanity, it is simply impossible within human powers. It is only possible as ‘grace,’ that is, as a divine gift.

\(^{154}\) Ibid., 597. This idea that *fraternidad* unfurls *filiación* is understood in the same way that classical theology understood faith as a beginning (inchoation) of the vision of God, and grace as a beginning of glory. However, as stated earlier, *filiación* and *fraternidad* are mutually codetermined by each other.
This restructuring of human existence as grace fundamentally re-creates the person for coexistence and gives the person the strength and potential for communion with others. Grace also re-creates the person for the liberating acceptance of his or her limits and of his or her blame in order to accept the free offer of the love of God. This empowerment by God is given to human existence in order for the person to be able to go beyond his or her own limits, not by the absolutization of the “I”, but rather in the trusting openness to the gift of filiación and in the response towards fraternidad.

Finally, in order to believe in fraternidad, in order to look for it and to love it, what is necessary is a redemption of the image of the person. As González Faus points out,

The road to fraternidad supposes a 180 degree turn in the human trajectory. It supposes an abandoning of the described course in Gen 3:5 in order to give way to the course described in Phil 2:6. Abandoning the movement to want to be-like-gods and instead to enter into another much slower movement of self-emptying of this divine condition.155

Concluding Remarks

After exploring the concepts of grace and redemption within the theologies of Rahner and González Faus, the guiding question of this chapter must be revisited: How does God’s saving activity transform the current course of globalization, which I contend is a boon for some and a hardship for others? I argue that a Catholic theological anthropology can offer a viable response to the current global disparity if it adequately addresses that question.

155 Ibid., 650-651.
I believe that Rahner’s theology of grace and redemption offers a foundational framework in approaching this question. Specifically, Rahner’s theory of the supernatural existential offers a viable and reasonable way to address the question of the relationship between God’s action in the world and the human person’s action in the world. The theory argues that “antecedently to justification by grace, received sacramentally or extra-sacramentally, man is already subject to the universal salvific will of God, he is already redeemed and absolutely obliged to tend to his supernatural end. This ‘situation’ is not merely an external one; it is an objective, ontological modification of man, added to his nature by God’s grace and therefore supernatural, but in fact never lacking in the real order.”156 This theory offers a reasonable claim for the conditions of the possibility for redemption and for the conditions for the possibility of the dignity of human existence. Furthermore, the theory of the supernatural existential avoids the danger of extrinsicism, whereby the freedom of human response is compromised. Therefore, it balances the tension between the absolute gratuitousness of God’s presence and activity in human existence and the responsibility of human activity within the world. Thus, it offers theological anthropology a foundational theory for the possibility of addressing the anthropology that is at the center of the current trajectory of globalization and thus changing the direction of globalization in order to humanize it. However, I argue that a global issue such as global disparity and the anthropology that has engendered the global situation can be best approached via social categories and therefore the theory of the supernatural existential needs to be re-worked utilizing social categories.

156 Theological Dictionary, 161.
González Faus’ theory of grace and redemption adequately addresses this need through his use of social theory and social categories.

As González Faus argues, the Christian Trinitarian God is intrinsically social (comunitario), and God’s gift to human existence, which is fundamentally communication of God’s self, is the communio sanctorum. He claims that this traditional ecclesial idea of the communio sanctorum can best be interpreted as the “communion of holiness (or of the holy things).” This expression, then, reveals “the intrinsically ‘social’ or communitarian characteristic of grace.” Therefore, the grace of faith, or at least the openness to the gift of transcendence within human existence, transforms the process and project (construcción) of the creation of a just society into the inchoation and anticipation of the kingdom of God.

As González Faus argues, if holiness is social (comunitariedad) and the person is made holy and justified by faith, which is structured as love, then the theological virtues of faith, hope and love are intrinsically social (colectivas). Furthermore, the Thomistic idea of the relationship between rational creature, faith, and the beatific vision, which is a grace and redemption, can be reformulated in terms of the relationship

---

157 Proyecto, 664.

158 The Spanish is “communion de lo santo (o de las cosas santas),” Ibid., 664.

159 It is not clear whether González Faus means to use the term “communitarian” (comunitario) beyond basic meaning of that which is social or communal. Ibid., 665.

160 Ibid., 162.

161 Ibid., 668.
between social creature, social justice (caridad), and the Kingdom of God.¹⁶² This latter formula expresses the divine gift of filiación-fraternidad that is given to human existence.

Like the theory of the supernatural existential, the theory of divine filiación-fraternidad retains the tension between the gratuitousness of God’s presence within human existence and the natural orientation of human existence towards God. In other words, the first act of grace (i.e., God’s gratuitous and saving activity in the world) is the removal of (desposeer) egoism within the human person. This removal of egoism within human existence is not intended to destroy the person, but rather to empower the person for fraternidad, which ultimately is the indicator of divine filiación.¹⁶³ Grace structured as filiación-fraternidad is the restructuring of the individual person from an ever present and ever threatening egoism and autonomous self to the final grace, which is fraternidad. Fraternidad, in turn, is the grace needed to restructure the social egoisms found within death dealing institutions and systems.

As a final assessment of the anthropologies of Rahner and González Faus, the following chapter will explore the ecclesial implications of, and possible working metaphors of church that arise from, both Rahner’s approach to grace and redemption and González Faus’ approach to grace and redemption.

¹⁶² Este es el hombre: Estudios sobre identidad Cristiana y realización humana (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1980), 58. Hereafter Este es el hombre will be cited as EH.

¹⁶³ Proyecto, 438.
CHAPTER FIVE
ECCLESIAL IMPLICATIONS

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Bishop Hélder Câmara of Pernambuco, Brazil, Jon Sobrino wrote that:

Envisioning the Church as "poor and powerless" has never prospered much among us. Not even Vatican II, as important and decisive as it was in other matters, made it a central concern. The Latin American bishops' conference at Medellín (1968) did indeed make it a key issue, and the Puebla conference (1979) also stressed it, even in the face of serious opposition. For the last three decades, however, the abandonment of the vision has been only too apparent. As Fr. José Comblin says: "After Puebla there began the Church of silence. The Church began to have nothing to say." Although the Aparecida conference (2007) slowed down the decline a bit, the Church has still not experienced that "turning around of history" that Fr. Ignacio Ellacuría said was needed in order to heal a society that is gravely ill. The conclusion is that we need to return to being a Church of the poor and to work hard for that. In El Salvador, since the death of Archbishop Romero, the erosion has been clear, as has been the need for ecclesiastical regeneration.¹

These words are a striking reminder that what was proclaimed by Pope John XXIII almost forty years ago, namely, that the church should be “the Church of the Poor,” has yet to materialize and is still a relevant and urgent need. Unfortunately, as pointed out by Sobrino, this vision and need has been abandoned and forgotten by many from within the church.

Up to this point I have presented a dialogue between the theological anthropologies of Karl Rahner and José Ignacio González Faus with the hope of re-

envisioning Catholic theological anthropology in order to offer a more relatively adequate response to the contemporary crisis of the misdirection of globalization and the reality of global disparity due to the prevailing anthropology found in the current direction of globalization. I have found that Rahner’s transcendental anthropology offers a foundation for constructing a more historical, contextual and socio-communal anthropology but that it needs to be pressed further in order to best respond to the current anthropology that values the autonomous and absolute individual self whose only responsibility is to serve and benefit its own self, and which underpins the economic and political structures and systems that are at the heart of the current trajectory of globalization. I believe that González Faus’ socio-communal anthropology offers a vision of human existence that takes into consideration the social dimensions of human existence and its project and goal of solidarity and community. In other words, I argue that González Faus’ theological anthropology is not a drastic break from Rahner’s theological anthropology, but rather González Faus draws from certain fundamental aspects of Rahner’s theological anthropology.\(^2\)

In this last chapter, I will examine the radical (i.e., *radix*, root) images or metaphors of church that would arise from the anthropologies of these two Jesuit theologians. Ultimately, my aim is to argue that a re-examined and re-envisioned Catholic theological anthropology as found in the thought of González Faus necessarily has implications for the nature and mission of the church and that subsequently can offer a relatively adequate response to the problem at hand. The ecclesial implications arising

\(^2\) However, it is important to note that even though González Faus draws from various aspects of Rahner’s anthropology, González Faus’ anthropology is not a direct outgrowth of Rahner’s.
from González Faus’ theological anthropology will also address the pressing need, as pointed out by Sobrino, for both a vision of the church of the poor and also a provisional approach to bringing this vision to fruition.

**Dulles’ Ecclesial Models**

In order to offer an exploration into, and assessment of, the ecclesiologies of Rahner and González Faus, it is helpful to see their notions of church set within a larger framework of other ecclesiologies. The American Jesuit Avery Dulles offers one way of presenting this framework in his classic work *Models of the Church* by outlining six metaphors of church. In mapping out their ecclesiologies within this larger framework, I will first present the ecclesial models of church as institution, church as mystical communion, church as herald, and church as a community of disciples. I will then turn my attention to exploring the ecclesiologies of Rahner and González Faus within the models of church as sacrament and church as servant. It is important to note that even though Rahner’s ecclesiology can be situated within the sacrament model and González Faus’ ecclesiology can be situated within the servant model, these placements do not limit the extensiveness of their reflections on the nature and mission of the church. The focal concern of this dissertation, which is to offer an adequate approach to addressing global disparity, will guide my outline and assessment of Dulles’ models and ultimately the ecclesiologies of Rahner and González Faus.

---

Importance of Re-envisioning Religious Imagery

Dulles begins his exploration into, and examination of, various ecclesiologies by offering a word on religious imagery. In his attempt to establish the importance of images in theology as well as the criteria for the adequacy of certain images, Dulles argues that “[r]eligious imagery is both functional and cognitive. In order to win acceptance, the images must resonate with the experience of the faithful.”\(^4\) He continues, “In times of rapid cultural change, such as our own, a crisis of images is to be expected. Many traditional images lose their former hold on people, while the new images have not yet had time to gain their full power. The contemporary crisis of faith is, I believe, in very large part a crisis of images.”\(^5\) Dulles’ assessment of the crisis of faith as a crisis of imagery still applies today with the phenomenon of globalization and the challenge of global disparity.

The purpose of utilizing images and models in theology is to attempt to gain better insight into the mysteries of faith. As Dulles argues, theologians use images and models to both explain what is believed and what is known as well as explore new theological insights and possibilities.\(^6\) Therefore, since models and images are employed to describe a mystery, they must be open to critique. In addition, the models employed should clearly relate to the historical context and the problems that are at hand. Furthermore, no single model or image “should be canonized as the measure of all the

---

\(^4\) MC, 13.

\(^5\) Ibid., 13.

\(^6\) Ibid., 17.
Christian communities can function as an inspiring and healing force in the concrete history of women and men. This depends on the extent to which the communities are fully connected with the world and on the way that they make a difference by interrupting time-bound hermeneutic schemes (particularly by way of proclaiming new life).  

Possible Models of the Church

In order to organize his outline of the possible models of church, Dulles offers three features of the church that run through all of the models. Those features are the bonds that unify the members of the church, the beneficiaries of the church, and the nature of the benefits of the church. To remain faithful to Dulles’ logic, I will use these three features to present Dulles’ models.

Church as Institution

The first model of the church sees the church as institution. This model of the church dominated theories of church within Catholicism from the time of the Council of Trent to Vatican II and is best represented by Robert Bellarmine. For Dulles, the church as institution does not mean the same thing as institutionalism. Rather, the church as

---

7 Ibid., 24.
8 GCST, 37. Italics mine.
institution means that “[t]he Church of Christ does not exist in this world without an organization or structure that analogously resembles the organization of other human societies.”9 This is an important point for Dulles because, as he states, the church “could not perform its mission without some stable organizational features.”10

As Dulles explains, the bonds that unify the church according to this model come from Bellarmine’s definition of the church. For Bellarmine, membership within the church is clearly demarcated. As Dulles makes clear, members of the church are “those who profess the approved doctrines, communicate in the legitimate sacraments, and who subject themselves to the duly appointed pastors.”11 In other words, the criteria for membership must “be visible, that is to say, juridically applicable.”12

As an institution, the church is to benefit its own members, and what the church offers to its members is ultimately eternal life. Any concern for the world is a concern for the eternal salvation of individuals’ souls. This is done through evangelization and ultimately by bringing individuals into the church as full visible members of the church’s institutional structure.

Dulles finds many problems with this model, three of which I will explore. First, as already pointed out, the primary concern of the church in this model is for the salvation of souls through bringing individuals into church membership. Any social or global concerns, outside of the church, are taken as secondary. In other words, the

---

9 MC, 2-3.
10 Ibid., 27.
11 Ibid., 33.
12 Ibid., 33.
salvation of the individual person’s soul takes precedence over the individual’s socio-economic problems. As an example of this, Dulles writes that “Catholics in the Counter Reformation period became overly concerned with fulfilling ecclesiastical obligations and insufficiently attentive, at times, to fulfilling the law of charity.” Thus, in terms of theological anthropology, this model has the potential to overemphasize the person’s individual salvation. Furthermore, the notion of salvation has the potential to be relegated to an ontological and otherworldly salvation. Even if this model does emphasize the communal feature of the church as a perfect society, it has the potential to isolate itself from the world, alienate individuals from one another, and ultimately overlook the universal nature of salvation.

A second problem that Dulles points out is that this model tends towards clericalism. As Dulles argues, overemphasizing the role of the clergy can lead to the passivity of the laity. Passivity of the laity is clearly antithetical to a globalizing world where the individual person experiences greater interconnectedness with the wider world. In other words, in order to address any issue in a globalizing world of growing interaction and interconnectedness, there needs to be a deeper awareness of the growing changes in the world, and a more conscious engagement and responsible participation in the world by all individuals.

A third problem with this model, according to Dulles, is that “[e]cumenically, this ecclesiology is sterile.” In other words, this model “fails to account for the spiritual

---

13 Ibid., 36.
14 Ibid., 35.
vitality of non-Roman Catholic churches." This is an important critique of the institutional model since global problems, such as global disparity and radical egoism, need to be addressed by Christianity as a whole. It will be a battle waged in vain if the Catholic Church does not, in authentic humility, recognize its own limitations and sinfulness and thus actively work towards collaborating with other Christian churches as it attempts to address the current global crisis.

Church as Mystical Communion

The second model that Dulles outlines is the church as mystical communion. Two of the best representatives of this model are Yves Congar and Jérôme Hamer. According to Dulles, Congar sees the church as a “fellowship of persons” (community of salvation) and “the totality of the means by which this fellowship is produced and maintained” (institution of salvation). Both of these aspects, for Congar, are essential and inseparable.

Hamer, fundamentally in agreement with Congar, attempted to combine these two aspects under the one idea of communion. In his ecclesiology, Hamer distinguishes between the horizontal dimension and the vertical dimension in which the horizontal represents the “outward and visible bonds of a brotherly society” and the vertical

---

15 Ibid., 36-7.

16 I will elaborate further on the need for ecumenism in the section on the ecclesiology of González Faus.

17 John Paul II can, in a way, be added here as well. In the Appendix of the Expanded Edition of his work (2002), Dulles outlines the ecclesiology of John Paul II. Dulles argues that communion is the preferred metaphor for John Paul II in describing the church. However, Dulles shows that John Paul II’s ecclesiology goes beyond Congar and Hamer and incorporates aspects of the other models of the church.

18 MC, 41.
represents “the divine life disclosed in the incarnate Christ and communicated to men through his Spirit.”\(^{19}\) In both Congar’s and Hamer’s ecclesiologies there is an emphasis upon the immediate relationship of all believers to the Spirit.

In this model, the bonds of union are the “interior graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit.”\(^{20}\) It is a spiritual and mystical union that unifies the members of the church, rather than a juridical union as found in the institutional model. Essentially, the church in this model is a communion of the faithful united through the Spirit of God.

The beneficiaries of this model, as Dulles sees it, are not just those individuals who have a visible and juridical connection to the church, but rather the beneficiaries are those persons who are united in the Spirit of God. What the members of the church gain in this model are the initial phases of union with God in this life, which will ultimately become complete in the next life. In other words, as Dulles writes, “[w]herever the Church is present, men are already united with God.”\(^{21}\)

As with the first model, Dulles offers the weaknesses that he finds in this second model. Additionally, in light of the issue of globalization and the concern for global justice, I see a couple of problems. I agree with Dulles that this model “tends to exalt and divinize the Church beyond its due.”\(^{22}\) This is problematic since it provides little room for self-critique by those inside or outside of the church.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 42. Dulles uses gender specific language in his text. To remain faithful to the original text and to avoid the overuse of *sic* I will leave the translations as they stand without using *sic*.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 49.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 50.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 52.
Another critique that Dulles offers, and that I agree with, deals with this model’s ambiguity surrounding the mission and identity of the church. Though Dulles is forceful in stating that this model “fails to give Christians a very clear sense of their identity and mission,” I would qualify that statement with the idea that it may, but not necessarily, fail to clarify the identity and mission if that mission and identity is not christocentric.

**Church as Herald**

Another model of the church that Dulles outlines is the church as herald. This model is best represented by Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann and Hans Küng. Unlike the model of church as communion, this model emphasizes the word of God as well as personal faith and the proclamation of the word of God over interpersonal relations and mystical communion.\(^{23}\) Though there is much variance and divergence between the theologians of this model, at the core of this model is the word of God, which is an event that takes place as often as God addresses the community and this address is believed. In the words of Richard McBrien, the “Church is essentially a kerygmatic community which holds aloft, through the preached Word, the wonderful deeds of God in past history, particularly his mighty act in Jesus Christ. The community itself happens wherever the Spirit breathes, wherever the Word is proclaimed and accepted in faith. The Church is event, a point of encounter with God.”\(^{24}\)

The church therefore is shaped by the word being proclaimed and by the word being faithfully heard. The church is not, in this model, confined to any particular visible

---

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 68.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 69.
institution. As Dulles points out the “form of Church order in this ecclesiology is characteristically congregational...the Church is not dependent for its existence on any worldwide structure.”

The bond that unites the Christian community, then, is faith in the word of God in the event of Jesus Christ. This faith is essentially the individual person’s response to the word, and the proclamation of this faith to the world. In other words, faith is fundamentally that which unites and binds the community together.

In this model, the individual person’s response to the word of God constitutes faith and becomes the condition for salvation. The goal of the church, therefore, is to faithfully proclaim this message of salvation to the world. In Dulles’ words, the “preaching of the gospel is related to salvation, because it summons men to put their faith in Jesus as Savior. It announces the day of salvation that is at hand for believers. More than this, the preaching is itself an eschatological event. The word of God, on the lips of the authorized herald, is impregnated with the power of God himself, whose word it becomes. The word saves those who believe in it. Conversely, it condemns those who refuse to believe.”

Ultimately, it is those who hear the word of God and respond faithfully to the message who benefit from the church.

The question now arises, how does this model stand up to the current issue of global disparity? Since the real strength of this model is its prophetic nature, the church can be envisioned as having the potential to unmask the idolatries found in society, proclaim the good news to the poor, and herald the coming of the kingdom of God. As much of a value that proclaiming and heralding the good news of Christ may have,

25 Ibid., 75.

26 Ibid., 76.
proclamation without real concrete action to change social structures and systems may have no real effect in the world. As Dulles argues, a real disadvantage with this model is its exclusive focus on witness to the neglect of action. He claims that it “is too pessimistic or quietistic with regard to the possibilities of human effort to establish a better human society in this life, and the duty of Christians to take part in this common effort.”27 This critique is important since a rapidly changing world may not remain idle to reflect on and contemplate its own internal injustices or moral and ethical inconsistencies.

**Church as Community of Disciples**

The next model, which Dulles prefers, is the model of church as community of disciples. As Dulles points out, part of the inspiration behind this model was a remark made by John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. In essence, as Dulles claims, this model is a “variant of the communion model.”28 For him, this model has the potential to harmonize the differences of the other models and is therefore a sort of bridge-builder model with the other five models. He argues that the “notion of ‘community of disciples’ is thus a broadly inclusive one. Without being adequate to the full reality of the Church, it has…potentialities as a basis for a comprehensive ecclesiology.”29

---

27 Ibid., 79.
28 Ibid., 198.
29 Ibid., 198.
As Dulles admits, this ecclesial model very rarely appears within recent theological literature. However, unlike some of the other models, this model is rooted in Jesus’ ministry and clearly noticeable in the New Testament. In addition to being discernible in the New Testament, Dulles argues that this model of church appears often throughout the history of the development of the church. For example, in the early centuries of the church, martyrdom embodied this type of ecclesiology. Later on, the religious life, and more particularly the monastic way of life, became a way for the Christian to concretely distance his or herself from the values of the world in order to uphold Jesus’ call to discipleship within an alternative society.

Dulles describes the model of church as community of disciples not only as an alternative or distinct society from those societies emerging out of the values of the world, but also as a unique way of life for the individual Christian. He points out that the norm that constitutes Christian discipleship is “self-abnegation, humble service, generosity toward the needy, and patience in adversity.” This norm is further defined through a personal, inward transformation and an active participation in the sacramental life of the institutional church.

Though the model may appear to lack the real social mission of the church, Dulles does claim that over the past century “the social dimensions of discipleship have come increasingly to the fore.” He sees Latin American liberation theologians as exemplifying this move towards greater concern for the social dimension of discipleship.

30 Ibid., 198.
31 Ibid., 205.
32 Ibid., 212.
He points out that “[t]he Catholic Church in our time officially recognizes a close link between evangelization and the struggle for justice, development, peace, and liberation in the world.”\textsuperscript{33} He adds that the church’s “commitment to Christ and its eschatological hope have a proper and necessary impact upon political and economic life and consequently on the transformation of human society.”\textsuperscript{34}

Dulles’ attempt to include the social dimension in his model is noteworthy. However, it seems to me that underneath his receptivity to the use of more sociopolitical categories in speaking of the church lies a vision of reality that consists of a real separation and distinction between the religious and secular spheres, rather than an analogical or conceptual distinction. This is noticeable when he states that “the Catholic Church in our time officially recognizes a close link between evangelization and the struggle for justice.”\textsuperscript{35} I am concerned that he may be assuming an epistemology that only sees a “link” between proclaiming the word of God and working for justice, and an epistemology that has a real distinction between working for the kingdom of God and working for humanity.

In addition, he seems to be more readily willing to point out the extremes of the social dimension of discipleship (e.g., when he states that “the Church cannot be reduced to the level of a political coalition”) rather than pursuing the benefits of the social dimension.\textsuperscript{36} I agree with Dulles that the church needs to avoid ecclesiological

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 213.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 213.
reductionism. However, I am concerned that his argument may be setting up an unfair criticism of valuable aspects (viz., the communal and social dimension of human existence, the imperative found in Matthew 25 of service, and the relationship Jesus had with the sociopolitical structures of his day) of theologies of liberation.37

Root Metaphors and Implications of Rahner’s Ecclesiology

Of Dulles’ six models, the model that best represents Rahner’s ecclesiology is church as sacrament. In fact, Dulles argues that this model was influenced by the thought of Rahner.38 In the following section I will first outline Rahner’s notion of church as sacrament. I will then offer an assessment of this metaphor as it stands up against the problem of global disparity. Finally, I will examine Rahner’s text The Shape of the Church to Come and argue that this text is the groundwork of Rahner’s evolving thought on ecclesiology and that it illustrates the need for a more radical vision of the church.

Church as Sacrament of Salvation

As Dulles points out, the notion of church as sacrament greatly influenced the documents on church outlined at Vatican II, namely, in the document “Constitution on the Church.” It states that “the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind; that is, she is a sign and instrument of such union and unity.”39

---

37 More will be brought up on this point in my analysis of González Faus’ ecclesiology.

38 Dulles also points out that Henri de Lubac and Otto Semmelroth also greatly influenced this model of church.

39 Ibid., 56.
As Dulles argues, the sacramental model offers an attempt at reconciling the tension between the external characteristic of the institutional model and the internal characteristic of the communal model. The church in this model is both a visible sign and a sacrament of salvation, and, because it is a visible sign and sacrament, it consists of external and internal dimensions. As a sign, the external dimension of the church is its institutional structure. The external dimension is essential in order to make visible, and historically concrete, the redeeming grace of Christ. Furthermore, this dimension signifies the continuity of the gospel message of salvation from apostolic times to contemporary times.

Since the church is also sacrament, it goes beyond the external, institutional dimension and consists of an internal, grace-filled, and transformative dimension. As Dulles explains, a sacrament “is a sign of grace realizing itself. Sacrament has an event character; it is dynamic. The Church becomes Church insofar as the grace of Christ, operative within it, achieves historical tangibility through the actions of the Church as such.” 40 As Dulles continues, this dynamic event quality of the church as sacrament takes place most fully at the Eucharist.41

The notion that the church is sign and sacrament has its theoretical foundation in Rahner’s theory of symbol. In volume four of his *Theological Investigations* Rahner 40

40 Ibid., 61.

41 According to Rahner, in the Eucharist “the Church realizes itself in an absolute commitment which not merely regards the individual: the Church itself, as the community of salvation, actuates itself supremely in the sacrifice and meal of the Eucharist.” Furthermore, “the Eucharist is not only the supreme case of those acts of self-realization of the Church which are called sacraments, it is the real origin of all other sacraments – which again are so much the self-realization of the Church that all other words and actions of the Church have essentially the functioning of serving these acts of self realization, and are only really justified and intelligible in the light of the sacraments.” “The Word and the Eucharist,” *TI* 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore, MD, Helicon Press, 1966), 281-2.
unpacks this theory through exploring an ontology of symbolic reality. In his exploration of an ontology, the first two principles of this ontology captures the essence of his understanding of symbol. First, he states, “all beings are by their nature symbolic, because they necessarily ‘express’ themselves in order to attain their own nature.”42 Second, which is an inversion of the first principle, he writes that “The symbol strictly speaking (symbolic reality) is the self-realization of a being in the other, which is constitutive of its essence.”43

After establishing the philosophical foundation of his theory of symbol, Rahner applies the notion of symbol to the church. He argues that the church “is the persisting presence of the incarnate Word in space and time” and hence the church “continues the symbolic function of the Logos in the world.”44 For Rahner, the church as symbol of Christ’s grace is simultaneously a social and juridical entity and the expression of the grace of salvation.45 In other words, envisioning the church as symbol of God’s grace of salvation means that the church contains what it signifies, viz., God’s grace of salvation. It is, then, the sacrament of God’s salvation, and it is the sacrament of God’s salvation in history.

Since the church signifies and mediates God’s salvation in Christ and in history, it must necessarily be engaged in a real conversation with the social systems and structures of the world. More specifically, as Rahner claimed in a lecture given in 1968, “the task

43 Ibid., 234.
44 Ibid., 240.
of the Church or of the Churches as providing a critique of society is a theme that is actual and relevant today.”46 However, the church will not be reduced to purely an institution of social critique. For Rahner, any ecclesiological reductionism neglects the church’s transcendental dimension. As he clarifies, the nature of the function of the church as critic of society “consists in opening up ever anew a perspective which transcends the concrete reality such that within this perspective the social reality concerned appears in its relative value and so as capable of alteration.”47

The church as sacrament suggests an intimate link between the church and the Spirit of God. For Rahner, the Spirit is essential to the nature of the church and the Spirit is the one who “established the Church as the sacrament of God’s revelation in Jesus.”48 In addition, the Spirit is made manifest in the church through the gospel message and through the sacraments.

The role of the Spirit in the church does not mean that “spirituality” is a private matter. Though Rahner affirmed the Spirit’s presence in the individual person, the manifestation of the Spirit is most fully realized in the ecclesial community, which moves the individual outside of self-love to a concrete historical love of neighbor. As Rahner argues in *The Shape of the Church to Come*, “‘spirituality’ not only includes a love for our close or distant neighbor, but a love which today is obviously more than a private

---


47 Ibid., 235. The condition for the possibility of critique and alteration is first and foremost applied to the church itself for Rahner (230-3). For the necessity of self-critique in Rahner’s ecclesiology, also see *The Shape of the Church to Come*, 52-55.

affair and takes the form of a real struggle for more justice and freedom in society.”

Therefore, as Dulles explains, the bonds of union of this model are found in “all the social, visible signs of the grace of Christ operative in believing Christians.” In other words, all activities that witness to the faith, hope and love that are foundational to the Christian faith are expressions “of a heartfelt conviction inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

As Dulles rightly points out, according to this model, the beneficiaries of this form of church are “those who are better able to articulate and live their faith thanks to their contact with the believing and loving Church.” As Dulles sees it, those who actively participate in witnessing and living out faith, hope and love through the visible social activities of the church are the recipients of the grace of Christ, but are not necessarily the sole recipients of the grace of Christ. As he claims, this model does not confine God’s gifts “to people who employ biblical or Christian symbolism.” However, those who do actively participate in the life of the church “become living symbols of divine love and beacons of hope in the world.”

---

49 *SCC*, 82.

50 *MC*, 64.

51 Ibid., 64.

52 Ibid., 64.

53 Ibid., 63.

54 Ibid., 65.
Church as Sacrament of Salvation in Light of Global Disparity

The question that now arises is how does this model stand up to the current issue of global disparity? Dulles’ assessment of this model can help answer this question. One advantage of this model according to Dulles is that it allows for the movements of grace outside of the institutional church. This is an important characteristic for a twenty-first century ecclesiology. If an ecclesiology claims to offer a response to a particular global issue, that ecclesiology may benefit from other approaches to that particular global problem (e.g., the social and critically-oriented sciences).

A second advantage of this model in light of global disparity is “the ability of this model to integrate ecclesiology with other traditional theological themes. The doctrine of symbolic, or sacramental, causality brings Christology, ecclesiology, and sacramentology into a single, overarching unity.” This advantage is relevant to this dissertation since an understanding of the church will necessarily be contingent on Christology and therefore on anthropology.

The third advantage of this model that Dulles sees, and that can be beneficial in light of the problem of global disparity, is that “this ecclesiology does not encourage any deification of the actual form of the Church’s life, for it acknowledges that the symbolic expressions of grace are never adequate to the life of grace itself. The Church is continually called to become a better sign of Christ than it has been.” More specifically, this model opens up the possibility for necessary self-critique in order to

55 Ibid., 66.

56 Ibid., 66.
avoid any possibility of contributing to, even if only indirectly and unconsciously, the intensification of global disparity.

The only real critique that Dulles gives this model is the possibility of an excessive sacramentalism. In his words, “sacramentalism, carried to excess, can induce an attitude of narcissistic aestheticism that is not easily reconcilable with a full Christian commitment to social and ethical values.”57 In addition, Dulles makes the claim that the notion of sacramentality that this model presupposes “is technical and sophisticated, and defies easy popularization. This is not an objection against the theory itself, but it calls attention to a real limitation in the utility of the theory.”58 In a rapidly changing world, where the majority of Catholics are found in the developing nations and where global disparity is most strikingly present, an ecclesiology that is limited in its practicality may be problematic. Furthermore, “an attitude of narcissistic aestheticism” is also a real problem where egoism is the current underpinning attitude of the first world. However, as important as these critiques are, it is unfounded to argue that Rahner’s ecclesiology lacked a vision for, and the foundations of, a more practical and socio-communally concerned ecclesiology. As Richard Lennan so effectively shows:

Although Rahner’s ecclesiology was not overtly political, its emphasis on the sacramental identity of the Church, which included the Church’s mission to be a symbol of humanity’s reconciliation to God in Jesus Christ, was not innocent of political implications. Rahner stressed that the Church could not live quietly with injustice, either in the wider world or within the Church itself, as such injustice was alien to the Spirit. If the Church was to be a symbol of hope for the world, it needed to be more than a pious association of believers: it needed to be a community that

57 Ibid., 67.
58 Ibid., 67.
relied on the Spirit, focused on Jesus Christ, prized unity, and worked to incarnate justice in the world.\textsuperscript{59}

To this point by Lennan I would add that Rahner’s text \textit{The Shape of the Church to Come} offers a vision of and foundational ideas for a church of the future that is more socially and globally oriented and committed.

\textbf{Church as Local Ecclesial Community}

Though Rahner’s work \textit{The Shape of the Church to Come} was written in response to the German bishops’ synod of 1971, most of what is said in the text can be useful beyond the problems of the Catholic Church in Germany. After introducing the text by outlining various problems facing the Catholic Church in Germany, offering an analysis of the situation in Part One, and presenting some correctives to the current ecclesial situation in Part Two, Rahner offers five possible metaphors or images for the church of the future. These metaphors are open church, ecumenical church, church from the roots, democratized church, and socio-critical church. Ultimately, I believe that each one of these metaphors offer a possible vision of and foundation for a radical image of the church of the future, namely, church as basic ecclesial community.

It is clear that there is a progression in Part Three of the text. Though Rahner is very careful not to claim that he knows what exactly the church will look like in the future, his reflections do tend to emphasize the importance of smaller, basic church communities. This progression in thought takes concrete form with the first sentence of the third image, namely church from the roots. He states that “[t]he Church of the future will be one built from below by basic communities as a result of a free initiative and

\textsuperscript{59} “Ecclesiology and ecumenism,” 141.
association." The following section will trace this progression beginning with the metaphor of open church.

Rahner hopes that the church can move away from a ghetto mentality that turns the church inward upon itself. As he argued earlier in this text, and reiterating what was said at Vatican II, the church ought to be a church concerned with every person in the world and not with itself. In other words, the task of the church is to exist for every person and not for itself. As he argues, “[t]he Church has to stand up for justice and freedom, for man’s dignity, even when it is to her own detriment, even when an alliance – perhaps tacit – with the ruling powers would at first sight seem beneficial to her.” In addition, Rahner argues that those within the church ought to “be surprised how seldom – apart from direct and express attacks on the Church – the Church comes into conflict with those who hold power.” Even in evangelization the purpose of the church is not merely “saving those who would otherwise be lost, but acquiring witnesses as signs making clear for all the grace of God effective throughout the world.”

As Rahner sees it, the open church is also receptive to new ideas and new ways of answering pressing contemporary questions. Being open to new ideas and new ways of answering questions by the church is not an attempt to relativize the teachings and

---

60 SCC, 108.
61 Ibid., 61.
62 Ibid., 61.
63 Ibid., 62. This comment raises the question what the church in Spain would have looked like if the ecclesial hierarchy did not ally itself with Franco and his regime.
64 Ibid., 62.
65 Ibid., 62.
dogmatic proclamations of the church nor does it disregard the church’s role in repelling heresy. As he emphatically states “[i]t is obvious that there can be no further talk of the orthodoxy which is essential to the Church, where there is no acknowledgement of the living God of eternal life and of Jesus as mediator of salvation or where these things are shut out by pure humanism or ‘horizontalism’. Anyone who does not acknowledge the living God and Jesus as Lord is outside the Church.”66 For example, “[i]f a theologian attempts to interpret positively the official teaching of the Church without rejecting this flatly or from top to bottom; if he does not merely express his critical reservation, but stand up positively and seeks lovingly to win people for faith in God and Jesus Christ; if he is not merely a critic, but a herald of the faith; if, without fuss, he shares and helps to sustain the life of the Church: then the orthodoxy of his opinions may be presumed until the contrary is conclusively proved.”67 With regard to more specific questions of church teachings, Rahner argues that there ought to be some form of “discernment of spirits” on these questions.

With regard to the orthodoxy of a specific belief, Rahner argues that the issue at hand “must be a question of real dogmas.”68 However, the problem of orthodoxy today is difficult “because a quite considerable theological pluralism simply cannot be avoided and even has a positive function in the Church, since otherwise it would be impossible properly to relate the one gospel to the diversity of horizons of understanding, productive

---

66 Ibid., 74.

67 Ibid., 75.

68 Ibid., 94.
ideas, mentalities, and so on in the world.” The use of various scientific methodologies in theology may in fact fall under this notion of the “diversity of horizons of understanding.” For example, the denunciation by the Vatican of liberation theology on the grounds that liberation theology employs Marxist analysis may not fall under the category of heretical teachings since the use of Marxist analysis by most liberation theological within the Catholic tradition is used as a method of analysis rather than as a critique of religion or Christian dogma.

The second metaphor is the ecumenical church. This metaphor is closely related to the open church. Rahner’s reflection on this metaphor of church is clearly meant to address the Catholic Church’s relationship to other Christian churches, both theologically and institutionally. What is important to note for my argument here is that Rahner acknowledges the pluralistic character of the church of the future. As he claims, “the future Church will in any case be much more pluralistic than our Church has palpably been juridically and in terms of sociology of religion since the Reformation period.” This plurality points to the fact that the phenomenon of globalization has an impact on religious traditions, and more specifically on the Catholic tradition and Church.

This notion of plurality, for Rahner, is not something to fear or reject, but is a reality that needs to be embraced and dealt with. Rahner seems to be drawing from the Scholastic theory of analogia entis here in that he can envision the unity of Christianity in a plurality. As he sees it, the unity of the global church in the plurality of churches will not come about by a unification of theological teachings. Rather, for Rahner, the

---

69 Ibid., 75.

70 Ibid., 103.
“full unity of faith and theology as a consequence of institutional unification, particularly since the latter need not mean institutional uniformity based on dogma as hitherto envisaged by the Code of Canon law.” 71

The third metaphor is the church from the roots. It is here that Rahner makes the case for the necessary existence of basic ecclesial communities within the church of the future. He argues that “[t]he church of the future will be one built from below by basic communities as a result of free initiative and association.” 72 In addition, “[t]he Church will exist only by being constantly renewed by a free decision of faith and the formation of congregations on the part of individuals in the midst of a secular society bearing no imprint of Christianity.” 73 If this free association of believers “can really sustain the essential, basic functions of the Church (organized proclamation of the gospel, administration of the sacraments, Christian charity and so on),” then it has the right to be recognized as church. 74 In addition, these communities should be understood as maintaining the “reality of the great Churches” and not seen as mere “organs of the great Church.” 75

The notion of church from the roots is not meant to be understood as a further fragmentation of Christianity. As Rahner argues, the ecclesial base community does not replace or usurp the proper role of the local parish or institutional form of church. In fact,

71 Ibid., 104-5.
72 Ibid., 108.
73 Ibid., 108.
74 Ibid., 109.
75 Ibid., 119.
base communities must still be legally recognized by what Rahner terms the “evangelical
great Church.” What is meant here is that there will be a plurality in the way in which
these ecclesial communities emerge, are structured, and relate to the greater church.
Hence, there will be a dialogical relationship between the “evangelical great Church,” as
coined by Rahner, and these local communities.

In summary, Rahner makes the claim that “concrete and living Christianity today
and particularly tomorrow can no longer be passed on simply by the power of a
homogenous Christian society…but must be carried into the future through the life and
witness of a genuine Christian community living out what Christianity really means.”

If these communities are “both very intensively active and at the same time outward-
looking, they will be able to be the bearers of the real missionary power of the Church for
the future.” As I will point out later, González Faus will also argue for the necessary
existence of ecclesial base communities within the church as a response to the growing
global disparity.

The fourth metaphor, which builds on the previous metaphor, is the democratized
church. As Rahner argues, a democratized church flows directly out of the living and
stable basic ecclesial communities that are formed through a free association of believers.
The use of the term “democratized” may lead to misunderstandings of what Rahner is
attempting to argue. As with the metaphor of church from the roots, a democratized
church is not an unstructured free-for-all by its members nor does a democratized church
necessarily disregard any forms or structures of leadership. Instead, what the term

76 Ibid., 117.
77 Ibid., 119.
democracy denotes is the idea of collaboration and collegiality among all church members. As Rahner argues, “today and in the future, particularly in a Church built up more than formerly from below, there must be a greater collaboration – even though in varying degrees...”78 One example that Rahner provides is in decision-making. He states that “[a] more obvious participation of the laity is required, not only in the appointment of office-holders, but also in other decision-making processes in the life of the Church.”79

The final metaphor of church that Rahner presents is the socio-critical church. Rahner begins his exploration into this image by pointing out that “there has been so much talk about [the socio-critical commitment of the Church in all her members and particular groups] since Vatican II” and that the critics of this trajectory within the church “have the impression that, behind all the talk and the appeals about the world-responsibility of Christians and the Church, there lies a tendency towards ‘horizontalism’, an attempt to make the Church function as a purely humanitarian institution, perhaps even as a merely secular society of the future.”80 However, as Rahner argues, this commitment by the church is an essential task of the church, since loving God and loving one’s neighbor “are radically dependent on each other.”81

The gospel mandate “love of neighbor” is fundamental to the socio-critical church for Rahner and is at the heart of the socio-critical feature of Rahner’s thought.82 As

78 Ibid., 120.
79 Ibid., 121.
80 Ibid., 123.
81 Ibid., 123.
Rahner argues, love of neighbor cannot be reduced or restricted to private, personal relationships. In a world that is rapidly changing and becoming much more interconnected the command to love one’s neighbor takes on a socio-political character. In light of this reality (i.e., a changing, globalizing world and the socio-political character of love), he sees a real problem with the privatization of this command to love one’s neighbor, and thus subsequently the privatization of Christianity. He argues that “the danger of debasing Christianity by confining the struggle with sin to the wholly private sphere is imminent and menacing...” In addition, he wonders if a “retreat to a private, inner world, where alone the drama is to be played between the redeeming God of freedom, love and justice, and sinful man, does not corrupt Christianity and the unity of the living and historical person…” Instead of a vision of the human drama that is myopic, Rahner invites the Christian to see the world as interconnected and socially structured.

As Rahner further argues, a Christian who acknowledges the “sin of the world” cannot assume that these global changes are necessarily contributing to the betterment of all people. Rahner sees a real disparity between “the modern industrial nations and the underdeveloped peoples” that is amounting to “a global revolutionary situation.” He again reiterates this point by making the claim that “[t]oday...we should be able to see

---

83 SCC, 123.

84 Ibid., 124.

85 Ibid., 124.

86 Ibid., 125. In using the term “revolution” Rahner wants to be clear that he is not talking about “bloodshed and violence.” Rather, what he means by the term is that it refers to “all those vast social changes which cannot be brought about in an evolutionary way with the aid of the already institutionalized and also really functioning means in a society” (125).
that we are in a global revolutionary situation (which is not the same as revolution). For the social situation of this one world as a whole is characterized by such massive injustice and material peril for the greater part of mankind that it would be impossible to find any institutions capable of removing these things in an ‘evolutionary’ way and in accordance with principles recognized on all sides in society.”87 With this being said, for Rahner, loving one’s neighbor in a globalizing world, then, takes the form of “criticizing and changing society.”88 Offering a particular example, Rahner argues that “[a] part of the sociopolitical commitment of Christians, their groups, and the Church, which also involves their institutions, is the duty of helping the Third World…But it is obvious that our Christians and Christian congregations are not at all clearly aware of the fundamental importance of this theme for the Christian conscience.”89

It is now clear that, for Rahner, the metaphor of socio-critical church is founded upon the conscience and responsibility of the individual Christian, and it places an emphasis upon the active commitment of the individual members of the church. The metaphor of church as institution can definitely offer a way of addressing structural and global problems. However, as was pointed out earlier, the institutional model may tend to paralyze the individual person from making decisions and taking action. Rahner is therefore attempting to preserve the freedom and responsibility of the individual Christian. This responsibility, though, goes beyond personal charity and moves towards changing social structures as he makes the claim that Christians should “enter into a

87 Ibid., 130.
88 Ibid., 125.
89 Ibid., 129.
mental and material solidarity with those Christians and non-Christian groups which are working for radical changes in the social and economic structures in their own underdeveloped countries.’’ At this point the argument of this chapter can now explore González Faus’ understanding of the nature and mission of the church, and examine how he employs elements of Rahner’s ecclesiology and yet moves beyond Rahner’s ecclesiology.

**Root Metaphors and Implications of González Faus’ Ecclesiology**

Among Dulles’ six models, one that best represents González Faus’ ecclesiology is the model of church as servant. However, because of his faithfulness to Vatican II and due to the influence that Rahner’s theology has had on his theology, the model of church as sacrament of salvation is also significant in characterizing his ecclesiology. Though González Faus’ ecclesiology fits best within the servant model and is marked by the sacrament model, I argue that González Faus’ notion of the church goes beyond these models of church, and that these models do not entirely describe his ecclesiology. I contend that a more adequate model, or better, metaphor, to illustrate his ecclesiology is the binomial *filiación-fraternidad*.

In order to remain consistent with this chapter’s framework, and in order to show the uniqueness of the model of church as *filiación-fraternidad*, the following section will be divided into three parts. I will first outline the servant model as presented by Dulles

---

90 Ibid., 130.

since that model is the appropriate starting point to describe the ecclesiology of González Faus. Second, I will examine how liberation ecclesiology becomes the condition for a necessary ecclesial reform for González Faus. Finally, I will present the root metaphor of church as filiación-fraternidad and make the claim that this metaphor is the most adequate ecclesial metaphor in light of the misdirection of the present course of globalization and in light of the current problem of global disparity.

Church as Servant

As Dulles argues, the model of church as servant is found in the Vatican II document “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.” There are a number of characteristics of this model of church found in this document. For example, the document presents a positive relationship between the church and the world and acknowledges the autonomy of the world from the church. It challenges the church to continually renew itself in light of an ever changing world. It also invites the church to acknowledge the valid accomplishments of the world and to learn from the world. Lastly, the document invites the church to see itself as a “part of the total human family, sharing the concerns of the rest of men.” As a result, just as Christ was servant to all so must the church seek “to serve the world by fostering the brotherhood of all men.”

As Dulles points out, the pastoral method that is found within this ecclesiology may be called “secular-dialogic.” As he states, it is “secular, because the Church takes

---

92 MC, 83-4.
93 Ibid., 84.
94 Ibid., 84.
the world as a properly theological locus, and seeks to discern the signs of the times; dialogic, because it seeks to operate on the frontier between the contemporary world and the Christian tradition (including the Bible), rather than simply apply the latter as a measure of the former.”95 Dulles sees Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Cardinal Richard Cushing, and Richard McBrien as representative of this pastoral method and ecclesiology.96

What unites the church in this model according to Dulles is “the sense of mutual brotherhood that springs up among those who join in Christian service toward the world.”97 The mission of the church in this model is service to all those in need, and therefore, the beneficiaries of this model are “all those brothers and sisters the world over, who hear from the Church a word of comfort or encouragement, or who obtain from the Church a respectful hearing, or who receive from it some material help in their hour of need.”98

In light of this dissertation’s guiding concern of global disparity and the contemporary trajectory of globalization, one important advantage of this model is, as Dulles claims, that “the modern world very much needs something the Church alone can

95 Ibid., 84.
96 Liberation theologians could also be represented here. However, Dulles’ book was first published in 1974 when liberation theology was still in its infancy.
97 Ibid., 89.
98 Ibid., 89.
give: faith in Christ, hope in the ultimate coming of God’s kingdom, and commitment to the values of peace, justice, and human brotherhood.”

The servant ecclesiology reflects a consciousness of these needs of both the Church and the world. It seeks to give the Church a new relevance, a new vitality, a new modernity, and a new sense of mission. The effort on the Church’s part to overcome its pride, its corporate egoism, and its callousness toward human misery promises to bring about a great spiritual renewal within the Church itself. Not only individual persons in the Church, but the Church itself, can be transformed into altruistic service toward the poor and oppressed. This service can include prophetic criticism of social institutions, and thus help to transform human society into the image of the promised Kingdom.

Dulles offers a real challenge here for the church, namely, to be “transformed into altruistic service toward the poor and oppressed” through “prophetic criticism of social institutions” and the transformation of “human society into the image of the promised Kingdom.” As I will show in the following section, the ecclesiology of González Faus offers one way to address this challenge and therefore to ultimately address the challenge of the misdirection of globalization and the reality of global disparity.

Just like the other models, Dulles finds something problematic with the servant model and the point of contention that he makes is important. His main critique of this model is its lack of biblical foundation. He does acknowledge that a notion of this model can be indirectly drawn from the scriptures. However, an indirect connection is not sufficient enough for Dulles. The lack of direct biblical foundation could lead to, as Dulles claims, “uncritical acceptance of secular values, thus muting its distinctive witness.

---

99 Ibid., 90.
100 Ibid., 90-1.
101 Ibid., 91-2.
to Christ and to its own heritage.”  

In light of González Faus’ book *Hombres de la comunidad: Repensando el ministerio eclesial*, this concern is answered. The basic argument of his book is that the mission that Christ left to his apostles, and which made up the early church, is a mission of service to others, especially those in most need. The main point of this argument rests upon the fact that the “priesthood of Jesus Christ,” which is *entregarse* (i.e., giving up of one’s self for another), redefines the priesthood and is the consummation of every form of priesthood. This definitive characteristic subsequently describes the mission of the whole church.

**A Reforming Church: Liberation Ecclesiology as the Condition for Reform**

As stated earlier, the servant model that Dulles outlines does offer a way to introduce González Faus’ vision of the church. However, as I will show in the following sections, González Faus’ vision of the church and the binomial root metaphor *filiación-fraternidad* go beyond the servant model. Part of going beyond the servant model consists of the church’s task of self-critique and self-reform. In other words, the outward-looking feature of the metaphor of church as servant must be complemented with an inward-directed criticism.

Much of González Faus’ reflections on ecclesiology are devoted to the need for reform within the Church. As he states in *Where the Spirit Breathes*, “Not a few of the faithful of our days are convinced that God continues to call the church to a serious reform, and that the highest authorities in the church would be doing the church a

---

102 Ibid., 187.

103 *Hombres de la comunidad: Repensando el ministerio eclesial* (Miami: Convivium Press, 2010).
disservice were they to insist on the unsuitability of such a reform on the grounds that, since the church is holy, it is therefore beyond all reproach.”  

This “serious reform,” as he argues in his work *El factor cristiano*, can be initiated by the theologies of liberation.  

For González Faus, liberation ecclesiology holds in radical tension two seemingly incompatible theological themes that are essential to re-envisioning and reforming the church. He argues that the themes of mediation-incarnation within Roman Catholic theology and protest-purity within Protestant theology are oftentimes seen as two competing themes in the Christian theological tradition. As competing theological themes and traditions, the ecclesiologies that arise from these traditions will vary and therefore the full potential by which the gospel values and message can engage the values and messages of the world may be weakened. Liberation theology, then, can help create the needed bridge between these two traditions and therefore utilize the beneficial features of both traditions.

Following the thought of Paul Tillich and Jean Guitton, González Faus argues that Catholic ecclesiology, in general, emphasizes the notions of mediation-incarnation and fullness. These notions of mediation-incarnation and fullness are found in the principles of inculturation, sacramentality, and community. As he argues, “inculturation is a consequence of the principle of incarnation. The universality of God (as the universality

---


105 *El Factor Cristiano* (Navarra, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1994). Hereafter this text will be cited as *FC.*
of the Word) became ‘particularized’ in order to be with us.\textsuperscript{106} Therefore, since inculturation, sacramentality, and community have always been essential ecclesiological principles within Catholic theology, the church has always attempted to find the Word present in the particularities of history (e.g., Paul’s concern over Gentile converts, the early Church’s incorporation of neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism; Mateo Ricci in China; the Malabar Rites; the Paraguay Reductions).

As González Faus argues, liberation theology affirms the Catholic notion of mediation-incarnation. Ecclesiologies of liberation see the Word of God and the active grace of Christ present in the particularities of history. In other words, for ecclesiologies of liberation particular historical cultures, communities and movements become the context for the church’s task of \textit{filiación-fraternidad}. For example, many ecclesiologies of liberation argue that this particularization of the universal Word of God is found in the sacramental nature of popular religiosity.\textsuperscript{107} Therefore, these historical and concrete cultures, communities and movements become the \textit{places of grace} out of which the Spirit of God gives persons in community the empowerment (\textit{potenciación}) to restructure (\textit{reconstruir}) human systems and structures.

In addition to seeing concrete cultures, communities and movements as the \textit{loci} of God’s Word and grace, ecclesiologies of liberation see suffering and death as further

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{FC}, 255.

\textsuperscript{107} I believe that popular religiosity can be valuable today in light of a growing homogenized global culture that values individualism, materialism and consumerism. The institutional church, with its dominant cultural images and symbols that have their roots in Western culture, can especially benefit from the culturally rich symbolism and images, and the emphasis upon community life, found within popular religiosity.
places of God’s Word and grace. It is in the suffering of a particular people that the church encounters the liberating God and experiences the transformative power of God.

As González Faus argues, liberation ecclesiology does not limit God’s liberating and saving work to the categories of mediation-incarnation. Rather, for liberation ecclesiology the themes of protest and purity found in Protestant ecclesiologies are necessary for an authentic ecclesiology. These themes of protest and purity highlight the principles of the cross, the absolute transcendence of God, the authority of the Word, and the existential freedom of the individual Christian.

As González Faus points out, the cross of Christ has become an essential and dominant symbol within many Protestant ecclesiologies. These ecclesiologies oftentimes minimize the incarnation in order to emphasize the cross. This emphasis upon the cross is reasonable especially when Christian communities find themselves in situations of oppression and marginalization. For this reason, liberation theology has a long history of employing the cross of Christ as a primary symbol and seeing the church as a crucified people.

Another principle that arises from the themes of protest and purity is the principle of the absolute transcendence of God. Within many Protestant ecclesiologies, God is understood as the Absolute Other beyond all of creation. In other words, God cannot be identified with anything in creation and therefore is beyond the possibility of being manipulated by any particular ecclesial community, tradition or ecclesial authority. The Word of God, as the absolute Word, is therefore not a word that can be grasped fully and controlled but rather is the Word that challenges all forms of idolatry and must be the
only word that is listened to and obeyed. Thus, the notion that God is Wholly Other challenges any attempt by a particular community or individual to claim possession of God’s word or God’s will. Hence, as González Faus argues, understanding God as Other is also an important notion within liberation theology with its emphasis upon social and religious critique.

To sum up, González Faus argues that liberation ecclesiology can reconcile the competing images of church found within the Catholic and Protestant traditions of the West. This reconciliation can then offer a holistic vision of a liberating church that is at the service of the kingdom of God through the project and task of *filiación-fraternidad*.

**Church as Project and Embodiment of *Filiación-Fraternidad***

To envision the church as project and embodiment of *filiación-fraternidad* means, in essence, to see the church as the seed of the kingdom of God in history and in the world. As the seed of the kingdom in history and in the world, the grace of the church consists in its covenantal relationship of *filiación* to God the Father and its task and project of the transformation of history and of the structures and systems of the world through *fraternización*. However, it is important to remember that the church in its created dimension also is in need of reform, restoration and redemption. The church’s own reform, restoration and redemption are first of all found in its own restructuring from an institution that is self-serving to a communal body that is devoted to the kingdom of God. Second of all, the church’s restoration and redemption is found in its own empowering by the grace of the Spirit to transform history and to transform the world.
Though I have already pointed out that González Faus sees liberation theology as an important factor in beginning the process of reforming and restructuring the church, the following section will examine, more specifically, five features of this metaphor of church and how these features contribute to the restructuring and empowering of the church’s own body and how these features contribute to restructuring and empowering history and the world. These five features of church as filiación-fraternidad are the unmasking of idolatry and the experiencing of the true God, the denouncing of injustice, the taking of sides, the changing of the situation, and the building of local communities.

**Unmasking Idolatry and Experiencing the True God**

The first feature of the metaphor filiación-fraternidad is that of critique of religion and the authentic liberating experience of God.¹⁰⁸ For González Faus, genuine critique of religion arises from the unmasking and denunciation of idolatry.¹⁰⁹ Idolatry, in this sense, is any fixation or absolutization by a person or society of something other than the

¹⁰⁸ *Este es el hombre*, 142. In the second part of *Este es el hombre*, entitled “Consecuencias eclesiológicas” (“Ecclesiological Consequences”), González Faus employs the work of Enrique Dussel, *El episcopado latinoamericano y la liberación de los pobres: 1504-1620*, as an example of the ecclesial consequences of the divine radical gift of fraternización. In essence, Dussel’s text explores the history of the Spanish Americas from 1504 to 1620 from the other side of history, that is, from the side of the oppressed and marginalized. For González Faus, this text demonstrates the transformative power of the divine gift of fraternización. More specifically, it illustrates a relationship of fraternidad between the Latin American bishops and the indigenous peoples of the Americas during the Spanish conquest. In the first part of *Este es el hombre*, González Faus establishes the binomial filiación-fraternidad as the root of Christian identity through Jesus Christ. He then argues that the ecclesial implications of this radical binomial had already been discovered and unfurled in the theology of liberation. With this point made, he defends liberation theology against the Declaration of the International Theological Commission on liberation theology by arguing that essential principles of liberation theology have deep roots that were already established in the attitudes and teachings of the church in Latin America during early colonial days. Furthermore, these roots, as González Faus claims, are a part of the church’s history and ecclesiastical tradition (139). After defending liberation theology, González Faus then uses Dussel’s work to illustrate in concrete form the ecclesial implications of the first part of the text. For reference, Dussel’s work can be found in Spanish on the Internet Argentinean database http://www.biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 144.
liberating God of truth and justice. As González Faus argues, the Latin American bishops of the 16th and 17th centuries recognized the human tendency to absolutize and worship an economic system and money long before Karl Marx wrote about the fetishism of commodities and money.\textsuperscript{110}

As pointed out in Chapter Three of this dissertation, González Faus argues that the human act of idolatry becomes visible in acts of hypocrisy. Thus, at the root of hypocrisy is the idolatric tendency within human existence.\textsuperscript{111} A clear example of hypocrisy, and therefore ultimately idolatry, is found, for González Faus, in the Spanish conquest of Latin America. As he shows, the hypocrisy of the Spanish can be seen in their justification of the conquest of the Americas for the sake of the evangelization of the indigenous people. Instead of worshipping and spreading the good news of the liberating God of Jesus Christ, the Spanish conquistadores worshipped the gods of gold and silver.

The real evil of idolatry, for González Faus, is found in human sacrifice. In other words, the active displacing of the saving and liberating God of Jesus Christ with the gods that feed off of human egoism and greed not only need human greed and egoism to exist, they also need human sacrifices to exist and flourish. More concretely, these gods can be found in the structures and systems of society that divinize the individual self or particular groups or material goods at the expense of the dignity and life of those who are made to serve these structures and systems. One clear example that González Faus offers

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 142.

\textsuperscript{111} As pointed out in Chapter Three, González Faus employs Pauline typology to describe this tendency within human existence. As he points out, using Paul’s letter to the Romans, this form of sinfulness is characterized as the sin of “the Jew” (i.e., the religious hypocrite). It is important to note, once again as pointed out in Chapter Three, the term “Jew” is a rhetorical device used to characterize a universal tendency within all humans to be hypocritical and it does not refer to any religious or cultural group.
is the silver mining at Potosí, Bolivia during the 16th century. The cruel conditions of the work in the mines killed thousands of indigenous people. Being appalled at the conditions of the mines and the death of the miners, the Latin American bishops explicitly unmasked the injustice of this economic structure and condemned the promotion of it by the Spanish colonists. One particular bishop, Bishop Domingo de Santo Tomás of La Plata, wrote that the greed of the Spanish materialized in the human sacrifice of the silver mines in Potosí.\footnote{112} In the same spirit another bishop, in a letter to the King of Spain, wrote that the indigenous people are unable to hear the words of Christ because of the words of the gods of the Spanish, namely, “give me gold, give me gold.”\footnote{113}

In addition, these demonic gods mask themselves as good and just structures and systems and hide from the grace of fraternización. For González Faus, then, “the denunciation of idolatries is one of the first tasks (misiones) of the church” since the greatest sin against God is idolatry, which ultimately leads to the destruction of human dignity and human life.\footnote{114}

This unmasking of idolatry is simultaneously a real experience of God. As González Faus argues, “this critique of religion, which is, definitely, a denunciation of idolatry and its personal and social significance, alludes to an experience of the true God

\footnote{112} Ibid., 142.
\footnote{113} Ibid., 143. González Faus wonders if this deafness is still present today. Perhaps many promoters of socialism are deaf to the saving Word of God because of the relationship between many Christians and capitalism. In other words, so many people who proclaim belief in the Word of God are also mesmerized by the god of capitalism. Hence, many promoters of socialism conflate Christianity with capitalism. As González Faus claims, “today, capitalism is a self-proclaimed religion whose only god is money” (143).
\footnote{114} Ibid., 145.
which takes place in the cry of the oppressed.”\textsuperscript{115} It is in the cry of the oppressed that the God of truth and salvation is heard and in an Exodus experience that the God of truth and salvation is found. As with all experiences of grace, the individual person is free to accept or reject the invitation to work towards unmasking idolatry and accompany the poor and marginalized in their Exodus moment. This invitation forms the foundation for the other features of \textit{filiación-fraternidad}.

\textbf{Denouncing Injustice}

The second feature of the metaphor \textit{filiación-fraternidad} is the “prophetic denunciation of injustice,” and it is the logical consequence of the unmasking of society’s idolatrous behavior.\textsuperscript{116} Prophetic denunciation does not consist simply in being the voice of the oppressed, but rather “it consists in clearly and courageously denouncing dubious, and even perhaps lawfully enforced, practices.”\textsuperscript{117}

As pointed out in Chapter Three, the idolatries found in society oftentimes develop into beliefs and practices that eventually become normative and institutionalized. Some of these norms and institutions go directly against the teachings of the church (e.g., laws that prohibit the free practice of the faith). However, there are times when some of these idolatrous social norms and institutions do not directly affect the church. Yet, the church must always denounce such social normative practices, not just when these practices directly affect the church but because they damage the human project of

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 144.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 155.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 157.
One example of this denunciation of social practices that González Faus describes is the forced migration of indigenous workers from their homes during the Spanish conquest of Latin America. The denunciation of this atrocity, both during the Spanish conquest of the Americas and during contemporary times, as González Faus shows, did not come from European bishops, but rather from Latin American bishops, even though they themselves were not forced to migrate.119

A second example of this prophetic denunciation that he recounts is the condemnation by some Latin American bishops of colonists selling vast amounts of alcohol to the indigenous peoples in order to create a market of need.120 In other words, the bishops condemned the activity of selling large quantities of alcohol to the indigenous people in order to get them to fall into a cycle of addiction and need, which ultimately brought in revenue for the colonists.

Because of the bishops’ denunciations of abuses, the powerful class in Spanish America felt threatened and subsequently attempted to use their power and authority to defame the church and weaken the power of the bishops. This defamation by the powerful took the form of making false claims to the king of Spain and to the local authorities. Defaming the bishops eventually turned into systematic lying by the powerful. As González Faus details, this systematic lying became a powerful resource against the bishops. For example, he details an account of a document sent to the King that blamed the Franciscans at the seminary of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco (a seminary

118 Ibid., 157.
119 Ibid., 157.
120 Ibid., 159.
created for the education of indigenous seminarians) of teaching social rebellion.\textsuperscript{121} Ultimately, this systematic lying led to direct threats to the bishops’ lives.\textsuperscript{122} These two hazards, namely, the defamation of names and the direct threat on persons’ lives, are oftentimes the outcome of a church that prophetically denounces the injustices of the powerful of society.

**Taking Sides**

The third feature of the metaphor *filiación-fraternidad* is the option for the poor or, as González Faus puts it, the “class” option.\textsuperscript{123} This preference for the poor does not mean “exclusivity,” and therefore it does not negate the universality of the gospel message.\textsuperscript{124} Rather, the invitation to salvation for all persons is found in *fraternización* with the poor and oppressed, not the exclusion of others. In other words, the grace to opt for the poor and marginalized of society is given to all. As González Faus puts it, “the possibility to have a preferential option for the poor and the possibility to encounter the good news in this ‘foolish’ option is offered to all.”\textsuperscript{125} This is the universal message of salvation that the Jesus of the gospels has proclaimed.

\textsuperscript{121} González Faus notes that oftentimes schools in the Americas became means of integration into the social system and inculturation. They also became places of conscientization. As he points out, the powerful know very well that oppression never really weakens the oppressed, but what it does weaken is the “culture and the conscience of the oppressed,” (Ibid., 171).

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 169.

\textsuperscript{123} González Faus uses the term “class” because he believes that it is “the only word we have to refer to the oppressed as an *oppressed group* and not only as an individual” (Ibid., 145).

\textsuperscript{124} FC, 263.

\textsuperscript{125} EH, 146.
As González Faus sees it, the option for the poor draws its meaning from Jesus’ proclamation of good news for the poor. Jesus’ own option for the poor therefore transforms the incarnation of the Word from an acceptance of the social order into a protest and challenge of the social order.\textsuperscript{126} In other words, the cross, which is the paradigmatic symbol for the preferential option, prevents the theological notion of incarnation (i.e., enculturation) from being co-opted into a justification of the cultural status quo.\textsuperscript{127} Hence, as González Faus claims, “only through the primacy of the poor is Christianity truly Christian.”\textsuperscript{128}

For González Faus, then, without the poor and marginalized the theological theme of “fullness,” as found in Catholic theology according to Tillich and Guitton, is meaningless because the exclusion of certain groups of people (in this case the poor and marginalized) destroys the “and” of Catholic universality. In addition, without the poor and marginalized the theological theme of “purity,” as present in Protestant theology according to Tillich and Guitton, is also empty of meaning and therefore the church is threatened by the temptation to absolutize itself and to use the power given to it for its own sake.

González Faus sees an authentic option for the poor and marginalized in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century Latin American bishops’ attitude and actions towards the indigenous. He finds three underlying themes that confirm this preferential option in various letters of bishops to the King of Spain, as well in an early bishops’ council in Lima, that confirm

\textsuperscript{126} FC, 264.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 264.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 264.
this preferential option by the bishops. The first theme that he discerns in these letters, and in the bishops’ council document, is that the bishops treated the indigenous peoples with dignity because the bishops saw them as human beings who deserve to be treated with dignity.

The second underlying theme that he finds is that the bishops freely chose to accompany these marginalized and oppressed people. González Faus points out that while some Latin American bishops lived like kings, others chose to freely live like the indigenous people and mandated that their priests and missionaries learn the language and customs of the indigenous. For González Faus, not only is living like the people important, but to live with the people is essential to being on their side. He argues that the ministers of the church (especially the hierarchy) need to “understand the spirit of the common people” and ought to live near the people.129 Living with the poor and oppressed will ultimately facilitate in the unmasking and the denouncing of injustice and may lead to certain grave consequences. One example of this that González Faus recounts is when the local government officials prohibited the missionaries from having personal contact with the indigenous, as well as threatening the indigenous with hangings if they were caught developing friendship with the missionaries.130 This attempt at inculturation by these bishops may appear almost natural today, but in the 16th century the idea of inculturation was not the norm and was especially frowned upon in the Spanish culture that promoted Spanish superiority.

129 *EH*, 164.
130 Ibid., 169.
A third theme that he finds for this option for the indigenous is that the bishops believed that they had a profound obligation to love the indigenous and to care for them as a parent loves a child and to “warn those in power” that there is a divine obligation to treat the indigenous with the dignity that they deserve. In all three examples, what is important to note is that the indigenous people did nothing to really merit this preferential option by the bishops. It was freely chosen by these bishops to take the side of the poor and oppressed peoples of this colonized land.

González Faus argues that these three underlying themes found in the Latin American bishops of the 16th and 17th centuries can be applied today. He states that there can be disagreement about whether or not a particular situation of a group of people can be considered unjust. But, if there is a situation where people are being oppressed, the church “demands of us a class option.” González Faus continues by arguing that this option is nonnegotiable and that it does not have to entail an armed conflict. Instead, “it’s more about the problem of a conflict of interests, and there are some interests that cannot be realized without ‘tearing apart and wearing down’ the other class.” This feature of church is most clearly unfurled in the next feature.

---

131 Ibid., 147.

132 However, as González Faus sees it, “the church’s actual position on the matter appears to have been different: the church has not denied the existence of the injustice of capitalism, and the church’s admonition of capitalism’s oppressive character has been very clear. But, at the same, accepting this, the church continues to be very reluctant about the idea of a class option,” (148).

133 Ibid., 149.
Changing the Situation

The fourth feature of *filiación-fraternidad* as a needed metaphor for the church is the church’s mission to concretely advance human life and dignity by improving the living standards of the poor and by fomenting greater social participation for the marginalized of society. González Faus makes the claim that there is an inseparable relationship between the promotion of human existence (i.e., human progress, but not progress to the detriment of the environment or particular groups of people) and Christian evangelization. That is, he argues that there is an inseparable relationship between human liberation and salvation. As he makes the case, the two notions are “inseparable.” However, the two cannot be “formally identified” nor are they indistinguishable.\(^{134}\) He continues by arguing that even though the concrete work to advance human life and dignity and of the spreading of the gospel message can be formally distinguished, “they can be seen as ‘hypostatically’ united by the dignity of the human person” as a “child and creature of God.”\(^{135}\) Therefore, for González Faus, working for social justice and the message of Jesus is intimately united as one human act.

This relationship between human progress and evangelization, and the relationship between historical liberation and transcendent salvation is analogous to the intimate relationship between God’s action and human action that was presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation. In other words, González Faus argues that this real, but distinguishable, identity between human liberation and human flourishing, and the gospel message of salvation is rooted in the relationship between God’s action in the world and

\(^{134}\) Ibid., 150.

\(^{135}\) Ibid., 150.
human action through the work of God’s Spirit. Therefore, this radical union between
God’s action and human action through the Spirit establishes a real relationship between
“human progress (promoción humana) and God’s salvation, or the development of the
world and the eschatological completion.”\textsuperscript{136} This last quote points out that even though
historical liberation and human progress, and salvation and evangelization are one
inseparable reality for González Faus, he clearly points out that human liberation is an
eschatological event. In other words, “historical liberation does not undermine nor
negate transcendent salvation. Rather, it constitutes its mediation, its sacrament and its
historical anticipation. Just as Jesus’ humanity does not negate nor reduce his divinity
but rather it constitutes the only true mediation of it.”\textsuperscript{137}

One essential component of evangelization and the promotion of human progress
is the preaching of the Word of God. As he states, “the content of preaching (i.e., the life
of God in human existence) demands the promotion of human existence” and “the work
to promote human existence can be, in some cases, authentic preaching.”\textsuperscript{138} He sees this
relationship between authentic preaching and the promotion of human existence in the
first council of Mexican bishops in 1555. As stated in a document from that council, an
authentic act of preaching is when the individual Spaniard acknowledges the dignity of
the indigenous and empowers them to become active members in society.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 81.
\textsuperscript{137} FC, 266-7.
\textsuperscript{138} EH, 151.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 151.
González Faus continues with a defense of the bishops against any critique of reductionism. He argues that those bishops understood that the church must first take care of the physical needs of the people (viz., the indigenous who were the oppressed) and then care for the spiritual and interior life. In other words, quoting from one bishop’s letter to the King of Spain, how can “the poor Indian listen to the word of God and come to know the Christian doctrine if all day long the encomendero is mistreating and overworking him…” Again, careful to avoid any misunderstanding, González Faus argues that this priority of the physical needs of the people is a temporal priority and not a causal primacy. Evangelization and the proclamation of the gospels have causal and essential primacy, whereas the promotion and the advancement of human life have temporal priority.

Building Local Communities

The final feature of the root metaphor of filiación-fraternidad is the church as the people of God, which is fundamentally a church of concrete persons working towards building a community of filiación-fraternidad. This final feature for González Faus can be seen as arising from his own personal experience as a young Jesuit in Spain. As pointed out in Chapter Two, after his theological studies in Tübingen, Innsbruck, and Rome, González Faus became a member of a base community in a poor neighborhood outside of the city of Barcelona. This connection to base ecclesial communities

---

140 Ibid., 151. An encomendero is a term used to refer to a holder of an encomienda, which was, during the Spanish “Reconquest” of Iberia and the colonization of the Americas and the Philippines, “a governmental grant of an indigenous sociopolitical unit to an individual Spaniard for him to use in various ways.” Latin America, history of.” Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010; available from http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-60835; Internet; Accessed on 30 June 2010.

141 EH, 154.
continued with his travels to Latin America. It was in these base communities that he formed his theological and ecclesiological projects.

As pointed out earlier, this notion of church as constituting an actively faithful people of God has its roots in the ecclesiology of Vatican II. For González Faus, this notion of local church is best characterized by the numerous ecclesial base communities found throughout impoverished regions of the world; however, for González Faus, authentic local ecclesial communities are not limited to these regions. Though González Faus uses the notion “base communities” in many of his works, he does not limit the possibilities of various forms of local ecclesial communities.

Filiación-fraternidad envisions the church as a concrete and particular reality “in the world,” and as comprising a concrete mediating role towards the fullness of Christ on earth.¹⁴² Local ecclesial communities, then, “explicitly maintain the mediation of the faith of the church” through the radical relationship of filiación-fraternidad.¹⁴³ They do this by creating a new way of being church, which is, in the words of Leonardo Boff, “reinventing the church” and, in the words of Jon Sobrino, “resurrecting the true church.”¹⁴⁴ This new way of being church, therefore, confronts the power of globalization through concrete personal and communal witness of Christ’s transformative power through the Spirit of God. The person, in unity with the whole community and through the power of the grace of filiación-fraternidad, can now challenge the

---

¹⁴² FC, 267-8.
¹⁴³ Ibid., 268.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 268.
assumptions, norms, and idolatry of the current trajectory of globalization and live as a community in a new way.

The basic form of the church in this model shifts from the binomial clerical-lay to “communion in service.”\textsuperscript{145} In addition, the church leaders will shift from concern for the purely spiritual to concern for the concrete needs of the people of this world, from self concern to concern for others, and from the vertical to the collegial.\textsuperscript{146} In line with Rahner’s understanding of the juridical relationship of base communities to the global church, this form of church does not eliminate the global institutional dimension of the church with its unique Petrine and episcopal (i.e., bishops’) ministries. Rather, local communities challenge the hierarchical church to become a servant church of the poor rather than a church of the powerful.\textsuperscript{147}

Furthermore, as González Faus argues, “Each local church is the whole church (i.e., ‘the catholic\textsuperscript{148} church’)”\textsuperscript{149} For him, this claim is clearly found in the New Testament. As he states, “[t]he New Testament teaches that the church as people of God is not a type of religious multinational, but rather that each particular church is the whole \textit{catholic} church.”\textsuperscript{150} In addition, to be catholic the local church needs “to be


\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 9.

\textsuperscript{147} FC, 268.

\textsuperscript{148} In the context of the article, it is clear that González Faus is referring to the original Greek meaning of the word catholic, which means universal.

\textsuperscript{149} “¿Para qué la Iglesia?,” 15.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 14.
integral” (holistic) . . . and it also needs to be, in essence, open to communion with other local churches.\textsuperscript{151}

At this point, a few concerns can be raised with regard to the model of local ecclesial communities. In the conclusion to his book Ecclesiology for a Global Church, Richard Gaillardetz points out a few possible concerns with regard to local ecclesial communities. He sees that the model of local church can possibly lose its identity amidst a postmodern “hybridization of cultures.”\textsuperscript{152} In addition, Gaillardetz argues that local communities may be conceived of as possibly being situated in “virtual reality,” that is, via the Internet. This diminishing of a concrete space may “deprive members of a vital sense of place, rootedness, and the personal vulnerability that is so often the by-product of face-to-face communal interaction.”\textsuperscript{153} Lastly, Gaillardetz sees the potential problem of insularity. In other words, a local church may have no sense of connectedness to the larger church and become too myopic in its vision of the world and salvation, which ultimately would undermine the catholicity of the church.\textsuperscript{154}

Gaillardetz raises very important concerns for this feature of the metaphor of church as filiación-fraternidad. However, I believe that each of these concerns can be allayed through serious consideration into the features of local communities that I presented earlier. For example, the concern about a local church’s disconnect to the global church and its insularity can be addressed by cultivating a local community’s

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{152} The Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 291. Hereafter, this literature will be cited as EGC.

\textsuperscript{153} EGC, 291.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 291.
concern for global injustices and for cultivating solidarity with other local communities in order to address global injustices. In addition, an option for the poor and oppressed may in fact facilitate the rootedness of place and may obligate the local church to be committed to communal interaction with other communities.

A second set of concerns arises in light of the structural changes that are taking place due to globalization. The important question here is: Can a multiplicity of local ecclesial communities that may in fact be structured differently and have a plurality of cultural traditions and expressions better address a global reality such as global disparity? In other words, is not a global problem best addressed by a global institution that can offer a global response? More specifically to the current argument, would not an institutional model of church be a more adequate model in the case of global disparity and an anthropology of radical egoism and individualism? González Faus offers three reasons why the model of local communities is better than an institutional, hierarchical model of the church. The first reason deals with the very structure of local communities. Local communities as structures and institutions are fundamentally at the service of the church’s mission of salvation and the task of building up the kingdom of God rather than the self-interest of the institution. As González Faus sees, a real weakness of the institutional model of church is that the institution itself may be overly concerned with its own existence as the means to the solutions of problems that its own survival and interests may subordinate the mission of the institution.

The second reason that local communities offer a more radical, and therefore better, model of the church is because of the notion of service. Local communities
understand the notion of service as directed outwards toward the world and not strictly
directed inward to the members of the church. For González Faus, the church ought to see
service as an offer of grace and salvation to a world that is constantly threatened by
sin rather than understanding service as the commitment of one’s self to the church’s
battle in a war against the world.

The last reason offered by González Faus is the authentically communal
characteristic of local ecclesial communities. Authentic local communities that are
oriented towards the kingdom of God offer a real experience of fraternidad. Local
communities do not reject authority and hierarchy; rather, they transform them and point
to the true authority of the gospel message. This real experience of fraternidad transforms the church into the real “sacrament” of salvation and becomes the true witness to the world of this salvation. The world then will see the church as an authentic community of fraternidad (i.e., liberation, in this case) rather than as an authoritative figure in the world concerned only about individual morality and the survival of the institution.

Fundamentally, ecclesial local communities help the church to become more
structured as a divine and human community rather than a perfect society or a moralistic
institution. This concern for the creation of local communities is not only a moral imperative for González Faus, but it is, as has been pointed out in Chapter Four, the very desire of the human heart and the fulfillment of what it truly means to be human.

\[155 \text{FC, 269.}\]
Incarnating *Filiación-Fraternidad* in the World Today

In Chapter One, I raised the concern that we are currently living in a world that is rapidly and radically changing due to the phenomenon of globalization and that many communities are not benefiting from the current form of human interaction, human organization, and human power. In addition, due to the current trajectory of globalization the number of people living in extreme poverty is increasing. More concretely, I argue that the current economic system of liberal capitalism and an anthropology of rationalistic and mechanistic individualism dominate the current trajectory of globalization that not only affects the economic sphere but also all other spheres of human existence (e.g., culture, politics, education). Furthermore, the structures and systems formed by this economic system and anthropology shape, in one way or another, the ideas, feelings, desires and hopes of all persons and communities in the world. Given the concrete realities of this current misdirection of globalization and global disparity, a closer look at how González Faus’ binomial ecclesial metaphor *filiación-fraternidad* can concretely offer a more engaged ecclesiology is in order.

As illustrated above, *filiación-fraternidad* consists of five specific features (i.e., unmasking idolatry and experiencing God, denouncing injustice, taking sides, changing the situation, and building local communities). Though each one of these five features can be abstracted, isolated and explored independently of the others through conceptual analysis, in the world of concrete experiences and practical attempts to respond to these experiences all five features constitute one inseparable reality. For example, it would be hard to imagine the first two features as not being dependent upon each other. A church
that unmasks social idolatries will necessarily denounce those idolatries and the social practices that arise because of them. Again, taking the side of the poor cannot be done without a real effort to attempt to transform their socio-economic situation. In addition, the task and project of local ecclesial communities will consist of the first four features.

The incarnation of the church as *filiación-fraternidad* within the current global situation depends on various factors. One important factor is the differing economic contexts. For example, the unfurling of the church as *filiación-fraternidad* within the rich and powerful regions of the world is clearly one that must exist in ambiguity. In other words, the members of the church within a first world context and in a context that may be contributing to the misdirection of globalization will attempt to unmask and denounce global injustice *from the side of* the rich and powerful. This context makes the unmasking and denouncing difficult because of the possibility of contributing to the unjust structures in which it lives. For example, a local ecclesial community within a wealthy and powerful region of the world whose task and project is the grace of *filiación-fraternidad* must establish concrete relationships with local ecclesial communities in impoverished regions or with marginalized persons found in the context of power. Furthermore, the local community, in solidarity with other local communities, must constantly discern its role in society and must be perpetually self-critical.

At the same time, the unfurling of the church as *filiación-fraternidad* within the disparaging regions of the world is not one of ambiguity but rather is clearly defined. That is, the members of the church as *filiación-fraternidad* in these regions will attempt to unmask and denounce global injustice *in and through* their suffering and oppression.
For example, a local ecclesial community within this context will struggle for justice as a unified community and will struggle for justice by reaching deep into its own wealth of non-material resources. The community will find within itself the grace that it needs to be liberated.

In addition to the distinct economic contexts, another factor determining how filiación-fraternidad will be incarnated in the world is the unique relationship that a particular local community may have with other local communities. This relationship may be based on a particular charism or established through a particular network of communities. An example of this is the international network of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and the many groups associated with the Jesuits who are oftentimes referred to as “colleagues” or “companions” of Jesuits. I argue that this international religious order and its network of local communities already embody this task and goal of filiación-fraternidad in a number of ways. In 1974-75 the Jesuits convened their Thirty Second General Congregation (GC 32). Decree 4 of this Congregation clearly lays out the nature and task of the mission of the Jesuits, which are namely “the service of faith and the promotion of justice.” In 1995, the Jesuits held the Thirty Fourth General Congregation (GC 34) which reaffirmed their mission of faith and justice. Out of these congregations arose various works of social action and centers for social research,

156 Using the Jesuits as an example is not an arbitrary choice on my part but actually fits in with my remarks in Chapter Two on the Ignatian tradition and vision that have influenced Rahner and González Faus.


158 See Decrees 3 and 4 for this reaffirmation of the mission of the Jesuits. McCarthy, John L. Ed. Documents of the Thirty Fourth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995).
analysis and training. As already mentioned, these works include both the Jesuit order and the colleagues of the Jesuits. Other concrete examples of filiación-fraternidad within this particular ecclesial body are the networking website www.jesuitsocialapostolate.org, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA), and the Centre d’Estudis Cristianisme i Justícia which González Faus is the director.

**Concluding Remarks: Filiación-Fraternidad as the Transformation of Globalization**

At the outset of this dissertation, I introduced what I believe is the most important problem facing our globalizing world today, namely, global disparity. I also raised four concerns that I believe should be at the forefront of the thoughts of every Christian in light of the massive changes occurring in our globalizing world. I think it is helpful to raise these concerns once again. First, is the increasing interaction and interconnectedness of peoples throughout the world facilitating a greater sense of human dignity, equality and solidarity? Second, how is the world going to be structured, with greater equality and opportunity or less? Third, how will these structures define what it means to be human? Finally, whose interests are being served, the global community or only the particularly strong and competitive communities? In other words, how will human power be used, to enter into the struggle for justice with those in society who suffer from powerlessness, or to dominate and exploit those who are powerless?

---

159 The Jesuit Social Apostolate branch of the order organizes the works according to the following manner: type of injustice, people served, type of activity or service, role or identity of the individual minister, purpose, approach or technique, and level (e.g., grass-roots or global). *Promotio Iustitiae* 69 (Rome: Social Apostolate Secretariate, 1998), 10-11.
My claim in that chapter was that a Catholic theological anthropology that can present an account of human existence through social and structural categories can be beneficial as a constructive and productive response to the current problem of extreme poverty and the social ills that accompany that form of poverty due to a particular egocentric individualistic anthropology. I have argued that González Faus’ use of contemporary social sciences (e.g., Frankfurt School of Social Theory) in conjunction with biblical typology (e.g., covenant language), his use of social categories to describe sin and grace, his claim that the drive, project and purpose of human existence is necessarily the socio-communal life of God, and his binomial *filiación-fraternidad* as a metaphor for church offers a constructive theological anthropology that can be employed as a relatively adequate response to the problem at hand.

As argued in Chapter Four of this dissertation, González Faus sees the salvation of human existence as being initiated and brought to completion by God through the project and task of restructuring (*reconstrucción*) and empowering (*potenciación*) human existence. This gift of restructuring and empowering human existence is made a reality through the restructured and empowered local communities of faith. As the visible sign of God’s saving grace in human history, the task of the church, as servant and local community, is to make visible and embody this gift of salvation. In other words, as a visible sign of salvation, the church becomes the project and embodiment of *filiación-fraternidad*.

Taking up the challenge of Jon Sobrino, which is to re-envision the church as the church of the poor, I believe that a church of the poor would best be illustrated in the
binomial root metaphor of *filiación-fraternidad* as articulated in the thought of González Faus. This binomial root metaphor illustrates both the covenantal and communal aspects of the church. As the church embodies the project of *fraternización*, and understands its eschatological goal as *fraternidad* (i.e., the vision of the human family as brothers and sisters of one another and the task of justice with a preferential option for the marginalized and oppressed through the power of the Spirit of God), the more it works towards the kingdom of the Trinitarian-Communal God. This metaphor also highlights the unique familial and covenantal relationship between God the Father and God’s children through the Son and with the Spirit. Through the project of *fraternización*, the gift of *filiación* becomes more apparent and pronounced. It is through the radical gift of *fraternización* that the unfurling of the radical gift of *filiación* ultimately takes place.
APPENDIX A:

LIFE CHRONOLOGIES OF KARL RAHNER AND

JOSÉ IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ FAUS
Karl Rahner: A Life Chronology

Life:

1904 Born March 5 (Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany)
1922 Entered the Jesuit novitiate (Feldkirch, Germany)
1927-29 Taught Latin (Feldkirch, Austria)
1932 Ordained (Munich)
1934-36 Attended four semesters in Martin Heidegger’s seminar (Freiburg)
1939-44 Work at the Diocesan Pastoral Institute (Vienna)
1944 Pastoral work (Bavaria)
1962-65 Theological consultant at Vatican II
1964-67 Chair of Christianity and the Philosophy of Religion (Munich)
1969 Member of International Theological Commission
1984 Died March 30 (Innsbruck)

Education:

1922-24 Jesuit formation in Ignatian spirituality
1924-27 Philosophy Studies (Feldkirch, Austria and Pullach, Germany)
1929-33 Theology Studies (Valkenburg, Holland)
1934-36 Graduate Studies in Philosophy (Freiburg)
1936 Doctoral Studies in Theology (Innsbruck)
1936 Doctoral Dissertation Completed (on the typological meaning of John 19:34)

Theological Career:

1937-39 Lecturer in Dogma and the History of Dogma (Innsbruck)
1938 Encounters with Silence published
1939 Spirit in the World published (was rejected as doctoral thesis in philosophy)
1941 Hearer of the Word published
1939-44 Work at the Diocesan Pastoral Institute (Vienna)
1944-45 Pastoral work (Bavaria)
1945-48 Lecturer in Dogma (Pullach)
1949-64 Professor and Lecturer in Dogma and the History of Dogma (Innsbruck)
1954 First volume of Theological Studies published
1962-65 Theological consultant at Vatican II
1964-67 Chair of Christianity and the Philosophy of Religion (Munich)
1967-71 Professor of Dogmatic Theology (Münster)

1 All biographical information on Rahner comes from CCKR, and Geffrey Kelly’s Karl Rahner: Theologian of the Graced Search for Meaning.
1971-81 Emeritus (Munich)
1972 Honorary Professor of Dogma and the History of Dogma (Innsbruck)
1976 *Foundations of Christian Faith* published
1981-84 Emeritus (Innsbruck)
1984 Last volume of *Theological Studies* published

**José Ignacio González Faus: A Life Chronology**

**Life:**

1933 Born December 27, (Valencia, Spain)
1950 Entered the Jesuit novitiate
1956-60 Taught catechism in immigrant neighborhood of Sabadell, Torre Romeu
1963 Ordained
1966-68 Chaplain to Spanish immigrants (Tübingen); wrote dissertation (Tübingen); Attended two courses with Joseph Ratzinger – *Christology* and *Introduction to Christianity*)
1968 Witnessed the May ‘68 student revolt in Germany (was traveling frequently b/w Tübingen and Innsbruck to meet with his dissertation director)
1968-78 Member of a base community (Sabadell, Torre Romeu, Spain)
1977/79 First visits to Latin America
1998-02 Worked with *Fundación Arrels*

**Education:**

1939-50 Jesuit colegio (San José in Valencia)
1950-52 Jesuit formation in Ignatian spirituality
1953-55 Jesuit Juniorate (humanity studies)
1956-60 Philosophy Studies (Sant Cugat del Vallès and the Facultad Civil de Barcelona)
   Licentiate in Philosophy
1960-64 Theology Studies (3 years at Sant Cugat del Vallès; 1 year at Innsbruck)
1965 Third Probation
1965-66 Biblical Studies in the P.Instituto Bíblico (Rome)
1966-68 Theological Studies (Tübingen & Innsbruck)
   Doctoral Dissertation Completed (on the Christology of Irenaeus of Lyons)
1969 Introduced to the “Frankfurt School”

---

2 All biographical information on González Faus comes from my E-mail correspondence with González Faus, Vitoria Cormenzana’s interview, and Bosch’s *Notas Biográficas*. 
Theological Career:

1960-64  Helped found *Selecciones de Teologia* (in response to his professors and Francoism)
1966-68  Chaplain to Spanish immigrants (Tübingen)
1969     *Carne de Dios* published
1968-2000 Professor of Systematic Theology at Facultat de Teología de Catalunya (Barcelona)
1968-77  Director of *Selecciones de Teologia*
1974     *La Humanidad nueva* published
1980-Present  Professor of Systematic Theology: (El Salvador – la Universidad Centroamericana; Mexico; Brazil; Bolivia
Brief Courses or Conferences: Argentina, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, Columbia
1981-Present  Director of *Centro de Estudios ‘Cristianisme i justicia’* (Barcelona)
1997     *Proyecto de hermano* published
2000-Present Emeritus at Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya (Barcelona)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


*De ‘Proyecto de hermano’ a Agradecimiento de hermanos.* Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, 2002.


VITA

Scott M. Myslinski was born and raised in Tempe, Arizona. He began his academic studies at Arizona State University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Ibero-American History in 1993, cum laude. His senior thesis was entitled “Declining Mexican-Anglo Relations in Early Tempe, Arizona: 1870-1930.” He then earned a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish in 1994, summa cum laude, from Arizona State.

After graduating from Arizona State, Scott was accepted as a member of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) of the California Province. As a Jesuit, Scott had the opportunity to teach religious education and English as a second language at Dolores Mission Alternative High School, Los Angeles; La Casa Franciscana community center, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico; Holy Rosary Mission and Red Cloud Indian School, Pine Ridge, South Dakota; and St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Chicago.

Scott began his studies in philosophy and theology as a Jesuit at Loyola Marymount University and continued his studies at Loyola University Chicago where he earned his Master of Arts in Constructive Theology. His academic interests include theological anthropology, political theology and philosophy, liberation theology, and the relationship between theology and the social sciences.

Currently, Scott is a full time theology teacher at Loyola Academy Jesuit College Preparatory School in Wilmette, Illinois. He lives in Mount Prospect, Illinois with his wife, Lourdes, and his two children, Rebecca and Adam.