



# BULLETIN

*The North American Paul Tillich Society*

Volume XXXV, Number 4

Fall 2009

Editor: Frederick J. Parrella, Secretary-Treasurer

Religious Studies Department Santa Clara University

Kenna Hall, Suite 300, Room H, Santa Clara, California 95053

Associate Editor: Jonathan Rothchild Production Associate: Benjamin Petrick

Telephone: 408.554.4714 FAX: 408.554.2387

Email: [fparrella@scu.edu](mailto:fparrella@scu.edu)

Website: [www.NAPTS.org](http://www.NAPTS.org)

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## **In this issue:**

- The 2009 Program of the North American Paul Tillich Society and the AAR Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group, including Information on the Annual Banquet of the NAPTS
- Report from the Biennial Colloque of the APTEF in Paris, May 2009.
- Letters to the Editor
- New Publications
- Paul Tillich and Karl Rahner: A Bibliography, compiled by Thomas O'Meara
- Analytical Report on Papers Presented at the Tillich Meetings in Chicago, Illinois, October 31–November 2, 2008. Robison B. James, editor; Charles Fox, Guy Hammond, Ronald MacLennan, and John Starkey, compilers
- “An Ontology of Health: A Characterization of Human Health and Existence” by Ryan J. Fante
- “Paul Tillich as Apologetic Preacher: Theology in the Form of Sermons” by Echol Nix, Jr.
- “Critique and Promise in Paul Tillich’s Political Theology: Engaging Giorgio Agamben on Sovereignty and Possibility” by Gregory Walter
- A Map of Montréal and the Officers of the Society

**For those who have not paid their 2009 dues, please remit 50 USD, or 20 USD for students, to the secretary treasurer as soon as you are able. You may also pay in person at the meeting in Montréal next month. Many thanks.**

## ANNUAL MEETING

*A reminder:* The annual meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society will be held in Montreal, Québec, Canada, on Friday, 6 November 2009, in conjunction with the meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The annual banquet will be held at the Holiday Inn Montréal Center-Ville, Friday evening. Our speaker this year will be Raymond F. Bulman of Saint John's University. He is the author of the award-winning book, *A Blueprint for Humanity. Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture*. The AAR Group, Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture, will meet on Monday (9:00-11:30 and 4:00-6:30) at the AAR meeting. This Bulletin contains the entire schedule for both meetings as well as the time of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society on Saturday morning and the time and location of the annual business meeting.

For information and registration, see:

[http://www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual\\_Meeting/Current\\_Meeting/default.asp](http://www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/default.asp)

**N.B.** *Because of a recent change in the law, any citizen of the United States attending the meeting in Montreal must be in the possession of a valid U.S. passport in order to re-enter the country.*

### THE 2009 PROGRAM NORTH AMERICAN PAUL TILlich SOCIETY AND AAR TILlich: ISSUES IN THEOLOGY, RELIGION, AND CULTURE GROUP

**Editor's note:** Please bring this Bulletin with you for the program information you will need at the meeting. Time and room assignments are subject to change; final time and room assignments are available in the onsite manual, *Annual Meeting Program At-A-Glance*. Maps and direction to the rooms are also online this year. You may also consult this program online at AAR Online Program Book, key word "Tillich." See map of Montréal, page 43.

#### **FRIDAY, November 6, 2009**

**M6-101**

**North American Paul Tillich Society**

**9:00 am – 11:30 am**

**PDC-515C (Palais des Congrès)**

**Theme:** Tillich's Lineage: Connections to Notables in Western Intellectual History

Marc Dumas, Université de Sherbrooke, Québec,  
*Presiding*

Courtney Wilder, Midland Lutheran College  
*Tillich, Augustine, and Pauline Hermeneutics*

Gretchen Freese, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church,  
Glenwood, Illinois  
*Tillich's Ethical Nature as Drawn from  
Nietzsche and Luther*

Brandon Love, Trinity International University  
*Tillich on Eros, Logos and the Beauty of Kant*

Daniel Whistler, University of Oxford  
*Tillich's Part in "Schellingian Existentialism"*

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**M6-201**

**North American Paul Tillich Society**

**1:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

**PDC-515B (Palais des Congrès)**

**Theme:** Tillich, Church, and Society in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Germany

Bryan Wagoner, Harvard University  
*Presiding*

Marc Boss, Montpellier Université  
*The Neo-Idealistic Genesis of Paul Tillich's  
Theology of Culture*

Sven Ensminger, Yale University  
*"In Hope He Believed against Hope": Hope in  
the Theology of Paul Tillich*

Kyle Schiefelbein, Graduate Theological Union,  
Berkeley  
*The Experience of Grace in the Church: Tillich  
and Rahner on Sacrament*

Adam Pryor, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley  
*Comparing Tillich and Rahner on Symbol:  
Evidencing the Modernist/Postmodernist  
Boundary*

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**M6-306****North American Paul Tillich Society****4:00 pm – 6:30 pm****PDC-515C (Palais des Congrès)**

**Theme:** Panel on Andrew Finstuen's *Original sin and Everyday Protestants: The Theology of Reinhold Niebhuur, Billy Graham, and Paul Tillich in an Age of Anxiety*

Nathaniel Holmes, Yale University  
*Presiding*

*Panelists:*

Daniel Peterson, Seattle University  
Terry Cooper, St. Louis Community College,  
Meramec

*Responding:*

Andrew Finstuen, Pacific Lutheran University

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**North American Paul Tillich Society  
Annual Banquet**

**Reservations:**

email [fparrella@scu.edu](mailto:fparrella@scu.edu)

Phone: 408.554.4714 (leave message)

The fee of 50 USD will be collected at the banquet.  
Please bring a check or cash for payment.

**Location:** Holiday Inn Select, Montréal Centre Ville  
99, avenue Viger Ouest, at rue St.-Urbain.  
Montreal, Québec H2Z1E9

**Directions:** The Palais des Congrès, the location of  
the afternoon meeting, is at 201, avenue Viger  
Ouest, the same street as the Holiday Inn.

**Speaker:** Raymond F. Bulman, Professor, Depart-  
ment of Theology and Religious Studies, Saint  
John's University, New York City

**Title:** "The Power of Tillich's Thought: A Nostalgic  
Retrospect"

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**Saturday, November 7, 2009**

**M7-2****North American Paul Tillich Society****7:00 am – 8:45 am****FQE-St. Charles (Fairmont Queen Elizabeth  
Hotel)****Meeting of the Board of Directors****M7-111****North American Paul Tillich Society****9:00 am – 11:30 am****FQE-Péribonka (Fairmont Queen Elizabeth  
Hotel)**

**Theme:** God and Being / God Above and Beyond  
Being and God

Anne Marie Reijnen, Faculté Universitaire de  
Théologie Protestante, Brussels, and L'Institut  
Catholique, Paris and President, l'Association Paul  
Tillich d'expression française  
*Presiding*

Christopher Rodkey, Lebanon Valley College  
*Is There a Gospel of New Atheism?*

Carl-Eric Gentes, Luther College

*The Weakness of Being: A Tactical Encounter  
between Tillich's Doctrine of God and Michel de  
Certeau*

Matthew Aaron Tennant, University of Oxford

*Unity between the Ultimate and Concrete: The  
Success of Tillich's Trinitarian Theology*

Christian Danz, University of Vienna and President,  
Deutsche Paul-Tillich Gesellschaft

*Absolute Faith and the God above God: Tillich's  
New Interpretation of God*

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**Sunday, November 8, 2009**

**M8-103****North American Paul Tillich Society****11:45 – 12:45****PDC-513E (Palais des Congrès)****Annual Business Meeting of the Society**


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**Monday, November 9, 2009**

**A9-131****Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture  
Group****9:00 am – 11:30 am****PDC-511C (Palais des Congrès)**

**Theme:** God above God: Tillich, Taylor, and the  
New Atheisms

Julia A. Lamn, Georgetown University  
*Presiding*

Glen Whitehouse, Florida Gulf Coast University  
*Yes, Richard, Theology Is a Subject: Tillich's System of the Sciences Versus the Disciplinary encroachments of the New Atheism*

Richard Grigg, Sacred Heart University  
*The New Atheism, the God Beyond God, and the Phenomenology of Wonder*

David H. Nikkel, University of North Carolina, Pembroke  
*Tillich's God Above God after Mark Taylor's After God*

Daniel Boscaljon, University of Iowa  
*What God Is Ultimate? Contrasting Tillich's Different "Gods" in Terms of Faith*

**A9-327**

**Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group**

**4:00 pm – 6:30 pm**

**PDC-515C (Palais des Congrès)**

**Theme:** Tillich in Dialogue with New Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture

Jonathan Rothchild, Loyola Marymount University  
*Presiding*

Christopher C. Brittain, University of Aberdeen  
*Tillich and Adorno: Two Versions of a Theology of Correlation*

Kayko Dreidger Hesslein, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley  
*The (Dis)Integration of Judaism in Tillich's Theology of Universal Salvation*

Peter Heltzel, New York Theological Seminary  
*Economic Democracy after Empire: Paul Tillich, Evangelical Socialism, and the Global Crisis*

Devan Stahl, Vanderbilt University  
*Health, Wholeness, and Normalization: A Dialogue between Disability Theology*

*and Paul Tillich*

**Annual Business of the AAR Group:**

Rachel Sophia Baard, Villanova University  
Russell Manning, University of Cambridge  
*Presiding*

### Report from the APTEF

The XVIII<sup>e</sup> Colloque international de l'Association Paul Tillich d'expression française, en collaboration avec la Faculté libre de théologie protestante (IPT) de Paris met in Paris from 15 to 17 May 2009. The theme of the meeting was *Paul Tillich et Karl Barth: Antagonismes et accords théologiques*. The papers will be published by LIT Verlag in 2010.

The Board has elected Elisabeth de Bourqueney (Brussels) and Mireille Hébert (Montpellier) as new members. The Board is now composed of Philippe Biyong, Christopher Boureux, Elisabeth de Bourqueney, Marc Dumas, Mireille Hébert, Martin Leiner, Douglas Nelson, Jean Richard, and Anne Marie Reijnen.

The offices are distributed as follows: President, Anne Marie Reijnen; Vice-Presidents: Christophe Boureux, O.P. and Marc Dumas; Treasurer: the Rev. Douglas Nelson; Secretary (a.i) Elisabeth de Bourqueney.

The dates, venue, and topic of the forthcoming 19<sup>th</sup> International Paul Tillich Colloquium of the Association Paul Tillich d'Expression française (APTEF) are as follows: 27 to 29 May, 2011, in Brussels, Belgium. The theme will be "Tillich's Philosophy of History."

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

James Champion's paralleling of Paulus and Ernest Becker points up a standing issue of Tillichian hermeneutic. Or maybe I should say sleeping issue, because it is hardly ever noticed, even though it is, I believe, important. The issue is whether one is not obligated, in reporting what he stood for, to take seriously the "method of correlation" so axial to the mature witness of our revered mentor.

So far as concerns the "human question," Becker indeed expounds eloquently the culturally masked yet implacable role of death in the final haplessness of our existential plight. Champion grippingly

documents this, and Paulus would cheer him for doing so. But the bland concession, in closing, that there are also more positive notes in both Tillich and Becker does not begin to do justice to the categorical intentionality pervading Paulus's poignant wrestling with the "Christian answer." That wrestling, which of course is not at all in Becker's agenda, pervades the Tillichian sermons but surely is given definitively in the magnum opus—crucially in *Systematic Theology*, volume III. There it is asserted not only that the Christian answer involves "certainty that the negative in history (disintegration, destruction, profanization) can never prevail against the temporal and eternal aims of the historical process" (373). The ST stalwartly advances beyond this to "the individual person's eternal destiny" (406ff). Here Paulus unequivocally puts in place a twofold position. The outer rung of the position is what the symbol of the "immortality of the soul" (in its original Platonic authenticity) is getting at, namely, that in its essentiality "nothing that has being can be ultimately annihilated" (399). It is though, for Tillich, a serious mistake to take immortality as the normative Christian answer to personal death. For him, that answer is the resurrection of the body.

In the late forties and early fifties, I remember there was at Union Seminary in New York a number of Stoically inclined students who rather angrily did not want Tillich to espouse individual personal resurrection. They saw this as selling out to one of the "tricks" trying to dispel the reality of death (as alluded to in Champion's citation of Philip Larkin). Paulus empathized and struggled mightily to emphasize the mystery and symbolic character of resurrection language. But when all the chips were down he stood with St. Paul that the "Spiritual body expresses the Spiritually transformed total personality" (412). This "whole personality participates in Eternal Life (413)." Even the "centered, self-conscious self cannot be excluded from Eternal Life" (414).

We must remember Paulus was always existentially on the boundary between the question and the answer, leaning undoubtedly more habitually back into the depths of the question. Nevertheless, as thinker and theologian, he faithfully and courageously bears witness, not only to Becker's salutary realism of death but also beyond it to the Gospel of the Resurrection.

Apart from this dialectic we do not have the whole Tillich.

—Durwood Foster, Ashland, Oregon

I was most interested to read the moving article on Tillich and Thoreau in the Summer issue of the Bulletin.

I knew Tillich while growing up at Union Theological Seminary in the 1930s and 1940s, and also while I was an editor at Harper and Row.

I visited him at his home in East Hampton on Long Island and vividly remember his saying how much nature meant to him, especially a large tree on the lawn in the back of the house and the nearby Atlantic, which doubtless brought back memories of the seashore he knew while growing up. I remember phoning him while he was writing *Morality and Beyond* and his telling me, in his unmistakably rich voice, that he had just come into the house from writing his manuscript under his tree.

Here might have been Thoreau writing in the woods. Or while on a nearby beach, Thoreau contemplating the depths of Walden Pond as Atchley's memorable article describes.

—Hugh Van Dusen, New York City

**PAUL TILlich AND KARL RAHNER:  
A BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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<b>NEW PUBLICATIONS</b>
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- Wariboko, Nimi. *The Depth and Destiny of Work: An African Theological Interpretation*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2008. The book develops an African theology of work by weaving together Paul Tillich's philosophical theology and traditional African notions of work, being and non-being, God, personhood, and community to craft an approach for engaging with globalization. It argues that to ground globalization philosophically and theologically, we must first ground work and its telos.
- Wariboko, Nimi. *The Principle of Excellence: A Framework for Social Ethics*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009. This book deconstructs the traditional, depoliticized meaning of virtue used by virtue ethicists to produce today's conception of excellence. It then constructs a new meaning of excellence as a creative actualization of the potential for human flourishing. This new understanding of excellence is grounded on a *Christology* of excellence grafted into Paul Tillich's doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth as the *New Being*. In a pre-publication review of the book, Mark Lewis Taylor of Princeton Theological Seminary recommends the book in this way: "The Principle of Excellence is a startlingly fresh synthesis of intercultural perspective and thought. Wariboko here sets theologian Paul Tillich's writings in creative conversation with breath-taking array of 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers, resulting in sparkling new insights on Tillich, but also in a daring new vision of what the field of ethics might become. A most welcome contribution to ethics and theology today."
- McAteer, Fergus. *Immanuel Theology: Retrieving a Theology of Presence from the Writings of Paul Tillich*. Doctoral dissertation, Trinity College, University of Dublin, 2009.

<p><b>Please send information on new publications, letters or comments, and book reviews to the editor.</b></p>
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**Thank you.**

<p><b>Coming in the Winter 2010 Bulletin: The annual banquet address and the papers presented in Montréal.</b></p>
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**ANALYTICAL REPORT ON PAPERS  
DELIVERED AT THE TILlich MEETINGS IN  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, OCTOBER 31—  
NOVEMBER 2, 2008<sup>1</sup>**

ROBISON B. (ROB) JAMES, EDITOR  
CHARLES FOX, GUY HAMMOND,  
RONALD MACLENNAN, AND JOHN  
STARKEY, COMPILERS<sup>2</sup>

From Friday, October 31 through Sunday, November 2, 2008, the two premier Tillich organizations in America held their 2008 annual meetings in Chicago, Illinois. The North American Paul Tillich Society held five sessions on Friday and Saturday at which fifteen papers were delivered, plus a business meeting on Sunday. From 30 to 50 people heard each paper. The Tillich Group of the American Academy of Religion held one session on Saturday and a second on Sunday at which eight papers were heard by 35 and 50 people, respectively. Each session took place either in the Palmer House or the Chicago Hilton Towers Hotel. The exception was the Society's Annual Banquet, which was held in a restaurant.

This report is concerned with the twenty-three papers delivered during the seven sessions just identified. For ease of reference, the papers are numbered 1-23. All but three of these 23 papers are published in volume 35 (2009) of *The Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*.<sup>3</sup>

*The order of the two organizations' sessions is reversed in this report.* The AAR Group's papers are numbered 1-8, whereas they would have been numbered 16-23 in chronological order. This reversal is for the sake of parity between the organizations. Next year's report will revert to the chronological order.

At the end of the discussion of each paper, the person who wrote that particular review is identified by his name.<sup>4</sup>

**First Session of the AAR Group: Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM—Tillich and Issues in Phenomenology**

1. Chris L. Firestone, Trinity International University, "Tillich's Indebtedness to Kant: Two Recently Translated Review Essays on Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the Holy*."

After a lengthy detour discussion of what counts as a "constitutive" influence on Tillich's thought, Firestone turns to his main topic, the influence of

Otto on Tillich. The *locus classicus* for this influence is usually the quote from Tillich's "Autobiographical Reflections" where he references his first reading of *The Idea of the Holy* and how "it determined my method in philosophy of religion, wherein I started with experiences of the holy and advanced to the idea of God and not the reverse way." Certainly, Otto's book initially made a powerful impression on Tillich, but the extent to which the *method* of that book influenced Tillich is quite limited. Tillich was taken by the notion of "breakthrough" in his early post-WWI writings (I suspect Tillich got this language from its recurrent use in Max Weber's analysis of the notion of "charisma," a phenomenon that suggests Otto's later sense of the "holy"). It is this mystical trans-rational understanding of revelation that throbs in Tillich's early work (and of course it also resonates in the "senkrecht von oben" language of Barth's *Römerbrief* from this exact same time, a text that also uses Otto's language: Otto's work of 1918 was definitely a "tract for the times"). But Otto's effort to theoretize his celebration of "breakthrough" by means of the Troeltschian "religious a priori" did not impress Tillich. Likewise, Firestone's claim that Tillich held an "adoration [for Otto's work] without qualification" is simply not the case. In fact, he himself quotes Tillich's decisive rejection of Otto's confused appropriation of Kant: "a religious a priori, however, cannot suddenly stand beside the rest of the *aprioris*, not even if its content is the 'wholly other.'"

Firestone proceeds to make the Tillichian point that Otto's religious a priori "has no clear critical grounds in reason." He rightly suggests that Tillich seeks to understand Otto's phenomenology of the holy not in terms of some peculiar religious faculty (as with Otto himself) but rather as "something related to reason holistically." For Tillich, what Otto calls "the holy" is precisely Tillich's "Unconditioned" which "breaks through" *all* the functions of reason in a fashion that requires not simply a "critical" (rational analytic) accounting, what Tillich thinks of as the "philosophy of religion" outcome of his enriched "meta-logical method." Grasping the meaning of a "breakthrough" also requires a historical/typological analysis of the forms of its manifestation (what Tillich calls a "Geistesgeschichte"), and beyond that a contemporary (normative) theological formulation (where, as Firestone points out, "the unconditional substance and the unconditional form" come together in a concrete historical actuality). Firestone rightly emphasizes that the experience of

the Unconditional must not be thought of as merely occasional. One could even go so far as to say it is not even an “experience.” It is rather that which is constitutive of experience itself, of rationality as such (*vide* Schleiermacher’s “feeling of absolute dependence,” to which this whole discussion is ultimately related). It is, however, a misnomer to speak, as Firestone does, and as some translations do, of “*the unconditioned one* as the source of human experience.” Using Tillich’s later language, this is to confuse “Being-itself” with “*a being*.” *C. Fox*

2. Robison B. (Rob) James, University of Richmond and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, “How Fichte and Husserl Clarify the American Tillich.”

James seeks to find the origins, within the young German Tillich, of two of the most influential creations of the American Tillich: (a) the method of correlation that Tillich developed in his *Systematic Theology*, and (b) the withering account of the collapse of meaning that Tillich presents in *The Courage to Be*.

The paper argues that a certain “intellectual trope,” as James terms it, provides the ground plan of most of Tillich’s systematic thinking. This trope, in one of its versions, is the Triad of “Ground, Form, and Act.” In 1905-06, partly through the mediation of his philosophy teacher F. Medicus, Tillich derived and adapted this trope from J. G. Fichte’s analysis of “absolute knowledge.” (James credited Ulrich Barth of Halle, and Barth’s doctoral student, Lars Heine-mann, both for the idea that Fichte provided a kind of model for the triadic Tillichian idea, and for leading him to some key German sources.)

In scholarly disciplines such as theology, the three moments of Tillich’s Triad appear in a different order, a “methodological” order: first the analysis of rational form, then concrete acquaintance with realities that provide grounding power, and finally self-actualization, or the “unity in act” of the two polar sides of our essential being. As it happens, a succinct statement of the early triadic method of Tillich’s is found above in Fox’s review of paper #1 (see the middle of his second paragraph).

Up to a point, the later method of correlation differs because of its dyadic, question-answer structure. But close scrutiny of *Systematic Theology* shows that Tillich’s methodological Triad is still operative within each of his system’s five question-answer parts. When this is recognized, the reader can feel the “rush of wind” that blows through Tillich’s sys-

tem, as it were, and can grasp with some finesse what it means that human existential questions are answered—that estrangements are healed—in the live religious symbols through which grace grasps and transforms people in their “fallen” existence.

In Berlin in 1920, while teaching a lecture course on the philosophy of religion, the young Privat Dozent Tillich explained how the religious subject posits its objects, including gods. Speaking of Husserl by name, Tillich used Husserlian concepts to say that, by a mental act of *noesis*, we *intend* a content of meaning, a *noema*. And “meaning” is a relation in consciousness of the subject to its objects, including to God as a being.

Tillich clearly assumes this Husserlian understanding of the reality of our meaningful world in *The Courage to Be*. He famously explains that, in our historical period, the meaningfulness of the world has more or less collapsed for many sensitive souls. Even the theistic God tumbles into the void. But in extreme moments of near-meaninglessness, the “God above God” can be manifest and received in absolute faith.

*The Courage to Be* stands in a clear light when its Husserlian substructure is seen. It is hard to imagine Tillich’s writing the book without what he had appropriated from Husserl thirty years before.

*R. James*

3. Nathan Eric Dickman, University of Iowa, “Anxiety and the Face of the Other: Tillich and Levinas on the Origin of Questioning.”

Dickman reflects on “what it means to ask one another questions,” considering the perspectives of Tillich and Levinas, with Heidegger in view as their predecessor. According to Tillich, the fundamental question is “what is the meaning of being?” This question is “an expression of a state of existence,” the awareness of one’s finitude, produced by the shock of the possibility of nonbeing. For Levinas, the fundamental question derives from “the Other,” who questions my “right to be”—basically, my responsibility for another being. Dickman finds ambiguities in each thinker’s position. In the case of Tillich, is the being of the questioner an object or a subject (something or someone)? If the question is a real question (not just a cognitive process), the reality being questioned must be a subject (even if it is oneself). Dialogue is essential to the process of questioning, and Tillich should have given more attention to this. In the case of Levinas, it seems that the questioner, the Other, speaks always in the impera-



tive mode, issuing “commands.” But, in genuine dialogue, “some questions are a way in which we listen to others...Is the other capable of listening in Levinas?” This reader was left uncertain about the author’s critique of the “closed society” of the Buberian “I-Thou.” The Other for Levinas and Dickman appears as a “third party.” Perhaps Dickman needs to clarify this theme further.

—G. Hammond

4. David K. Miller, Union College, “Looking at the Truth of Art in Tillich and Marion: Symbolic Depth and the Saturated Phenomenon.”

Miller proposes that Tillich’s approach to art as a particular kind of symbol can be brought into an illuminating relationship with Jean-Luc Marion’s “phenomenology of givenness.” For Tillich, art functions as “a bridge—between the Absolute and the human spirit”; thus, all profound art has a religious quality: it “gives expression to ultimate concern.” For Marion, too, art functions as a bridge “between givenness and the self.” Is there a fruitful analogy between God and givenness (not drawn by Marion)? In his discussions of the divine, Marion “privileges distance”; God and man are kept “intrinsically apart, even in the face of revelation.” In his discussions of givenness, however, a quality of unconditionality appears, entering into a participatory relationship with the self. In the artistic experience, an “excess” appears, beyond the constitutive capacity of the objectifying self. Miller concludes that when the bridging accomplished by art is seen, not as union, but as participation, Marion and Tillich can be drawn together. For both, “the human self and God are not the same, and the human self cannot contain God, but the two participate in one another.” Miller’s analysis is compelling, but one caveat might be issued: the notion of participation is itself complex, with many possible ramifications.

—G. Hammond

**Second Session of the AAR Group: Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM: *Paul Tillich and Political Theology***

5. Gregory Walter, St. Olaf College, “Critique and Promise in Paul Tillich’s Political Theology: Engaging Giorgio Agamben on Sovereignty and Possibility.”

Walter proposes that Tillich’s conception of prophetic critique—involving grace and “promise”—can shed new light on the theme of “potentiality” as developed in the political philosophy of Giorgio

Agamben. In political theory, a sovereign power has the capacity always to make an exception to any given set of laws, hence to threaten any mode of life. According to Walter, “the political by the state of exception demands a new concept of possibility in order to think the political afresh.” To Agamben, potency is a kind of gift. But, Walter asks, “does potential, when it gives, divest itself of what it has when it gives actuality to itself?” Walter proposes that Tillich’s notion of promise offers an alternative approach to possibility: “the sort of possibility and actuality that accompanies [Tillich’s] notion of promise—[is] a giving that is communicable and therefore dispossessive of its own sovereignty.” In promising, politics can function without sovereignty.

Perhaps a short essay is not the best venue for Walter’s contribution. Acquaintance with Tillich and with recent currents of continental philosophy and theology can be taken for granted. But evoking the distinctive perspectives of Heidegger, Foucault, Schmitt, Derrida, and Levinas, as well as Agamben and Tillich, in a few sentences leads to confusion.

—G. Hammond

6. Bryan Wagoner, Harvard University, “Tillich in Dialogue with Adorno and Horkheimer.”

Wagoner’s focus is on “the interaction of Tillich and Adorno, particularly concerning anthropology,” as seen primarily in two documents: Tillich’s 1943 essay, “Man and Society in Religious Socialism,” and a letter Adorno addressed but never sent to Tillich in 1944, now entitled “Entwurf contra Paulum.” The heart of the debate is “whether knowing or making claims concerning the existence of human nature (as alienated, etc.) necessarily implies an essence over and against which to judge contemporary existence.” Adorno asserts that claims of a knowledge of essence have often been used for repressive purposes. Tillich, while agreeing on the repressive potential of such ideas, insists that they are inevitable, and must be recognized and criticized. Wagoner finds reasons to support each side in the debate. Adorno’s critique identifies a deficiency in Tillich’s essences: they are excessively individualistic, with social relations playing a secondary role. On the other hand, the theological dimensions of Tillich’s thought provide at least the potential “for a more potent critique of the status quo.” In Wagoner’s view the two philosophies of history—with the goal of human emancipation—are “remarkably similar,” both drawing upon Hegel, Marx, and Weber (via Lukacs).<sup>5</sup> Wagoner’s suggestion that *Entfremdung*

here might be translated as “dehumanization” is helpful; its limitation is that it loses the important connotation of “separation.”

—*G. Hammond*

**7. J. Heath Atchley, Mount Holyoke College, “Sounding the Depth of the Secular: Tillich with Thoreau”**

Atchley suggests that unexpected juxtapositions of thinkers prod us to less habitual and more “vibrant” thought. Thus, he juxtaposes two thinkers—Paul Tillich and Henry David Thoreau—who, though vastly different in life experience, intersect in their reflections on the “metaphor of depth.” The quest for depth derives from disappointment with “surface”; hence, we are directed behind things to the subject and to our “thoughtfulness” and attention. When religion is approached casually, it too becomes a matter of the surface, and disappoints. When the depth is reached, we realize that religion is not a separate aspect of our “spiritual life” but is its depth dimension.

The above language is Tillichian, but Atchley finds Thoreau arriving at similar conclusions. Why does Thoreau “go to the woods?” His answer: “I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life...to drive life into a corner and reduce it to its lowest terms”<sup>1</sup> For Thoreau, getting at the deep “marrow” of life requires attention and effort; even conventional ideas of deity can divert us. “Thoreau, it seems, would rather have marrow than god. Maybe marrow is the god we’ve been missing.” Religion for both Thoreau and Tillich is a matter of one’s “ultimate concern,” and is actualized in the “depths” of life.

—*G. Hammond*

**8. Jonathan Rothchild, Loyola Marymount University, “Tillich and King on Love and Justice and the Significance for Models of Restorative Justice”**

Rothchild shows how Martin Luther King, Jr. appropriated themes from Tillich that relate love and justice, and how both “support the procedures and values of restorative justice.” Rothchild suggests that the prevailing theories of punishment—deterrence, retribution, incapacitation, rehabilitation—fail to break the vicious cycle of vengeance; only restorative justice can do this. Both thinkers discuss ways in which justice and love can be integrated. Tillich sees love as bringing the universal principles of justice down into the concrete situation; as avoiding treating human beings as things; and as providing

healing rather than controlling knowledge. King embraces these themes and shows how they may be applied concretely. Both speak of “creative justice” as a fusion of love with justice rationales. (An ambiguity appears here: use of “justice” both as an overarching term and as one of the specific types.) Rothchild finds one significant difference between Tillich and King: Tillich allows for coercion as an “inevitable necessity,” while King remains committed to non-violence. Not mentioned is the charge that King earlier plagiarized Tillichian material. The paper does show, however, that King did not simply copy Tillich; he applied Tillich’s themes constructively to specific civil rights issues.

—*G. Hammond*

**First Session of the North American Paul Tillich Society: Friday, 9:00-11:30 AM: *Contemporary Theology Responds to Tillich***

**9. Matthew Aaron Tennant, University of Oxford, “Tillich and the Wild Things: Evil and Transformative Soteriology.”**

The paper is a fun teaching tool, illustrating existential estrangement by showing how Maurice Sendak’s 1963 children’s book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, parallels Tillich’s insights into the structure of finitude as locus of self-destruction. Max’s wolf suit and his declaration to his mother that “I’ll eat you up!” symbolizes self-estrangement, while her sending Max to his room shows estrangement as fundamentally estrangement from God. Max’s time among the “wild things” presents concupiscence and an attempt at self-salvation (and also idolatry, Tennant shows, though he does not quite use that label).

The major claim, however, is that the book shows what Tennant calls Tillich’s “transformative soteriology” in view of our transformation into the New Being. Here the argument seems sketchy, since the children’s book after all is about a wild night in Max’s room, and is not about the process of return to the mother’s “still warm” meal. Further, the Sendak story does not show that the initiative comes from the New Being, nor does it show how transformation is a matter of graciously re-newed participation. That said—along with a reminder that Tillich’s God is Itself rather “wild”—read and enjoy!

—*J. Starkey*

**10. Todd Bates, University of Central Florida, “Tillich and the Ontology of the ‘Homo Sacer’: Bare**

Life and Sovereign Power.” This paper was not available for review.

—R. James

**11.** John Paul Sydnor, Emmanuel College, “Paul Tillich’s Theology of Religions for Comparative Theology.”

Sydnor’s phrase, “Paul Tillich as Proto-Comparative Theologian,” already moves us past the sterile conflict over whether Tillich was still an inclusivist Christian or really a comparativist ahead of his time. Sydnor reminds us that Tillich’s work was “constantly evolving” so far as interreligious theology is concerned, and distinguishes the dated content of Tillich’s reflections from the structural principles that informed them. Thus, Sydnor acknowledges both the “hegemonistic” elements in Tillich’s view of the Christ-event and also the “pluralistic” aspects of his thought. But the focus is Sydnor’s view of Tillich’s work as compatible with and even anticipating Francis X. Clooney’s view of comparative theology as constructive theology, using comparisons and contrasts among traditions to think through issues in one’s home tradition. The article could have been strengthened, perhaps, by emphasizing the degree to which Tillich’s concrete work on the correlation of culture and religion itself provided a model for the kind of comparative and constructive work that Sydnor sees in the late Tillich on Buddhism. Also, Clooney’s notion that the comparativist remains “rooted in one tradition” could perhaps have illuminated and/or been challenged by Tillich’s evolving thought. But these are not complaints, simply suggestions for extension of a highly promising paradigm.

—J. Starkey

**12.** James Champion, Inver Hills Community College, “Ernest Becker and Paul Tillich: Cultural Meaning and the Encounter with Death.”

This elegantly written and rhetorically persuasive essay is effective in its combination of psychological and theological insights into the human response to death. Although the paper is thin in terms of specific references to Tillich’s work, the point is well made that his theology was and remains one of those best situated to respond in an honest and yet affirmative way to the kind of challenge posed in Becker’s 1973 classic *Denial of Death*. After an effective summary of Becker’s vision of culture as in large measure a response to our repressed-but-never-eliminated awareness of death, Champion shows

how Tillich’s experience of two mental breakdowns during his work as a chaplain in World War I involved Tillich himself overcoming such repression. But the point comes as Champion presents Becker (who, we are surprised to find, regularly read the Psalms and considered himself a believer!) and Tillich as contributing to an apophatic theology. Drawing in part on John Thatamanil’s interpretation of Tillich as a non-foundationalist, Champion indicates a path towards a theology that helps us avoid repression of all sorts. The paper is complete—but Tillichians will want more.

—J. Starkey

**Second Session of the North American Paul Tillich Society: Friday, 1:00-3:30 p.m.: *Tillich as Catalyst of Personal Transformation***

**13.** Echol Nix, Furman University, “Tillich as Apologetic Preacher: Theology in the Form of Sermons.”

As with other presentations, Nix’s paper offers a kind of tool to teachers of Tillich. In clear prose, the author correlates many Tillichian themes to named sermons from the collections. The opening shows how the sermons manifest the method of correlation, as Tillich links the practical or existential to the systematic, and how the sermons, in so doing, demonstrate the nature of Tillich’s work as apologetic. Along with that, Nix estimates how many sermons stress biblical or ecclesiastical terminology (perhaps 1/3 from the Hebrew Bible and 1/3 from the Gospels). After giving a number of illustrations, he notes the ontological themes in other sermons. Many themes are presented: the New Being and Jesus Christ as its bearer, the dichotomy between the fact of Jesus and his reception as the Christ, the appearance of *kairoi* under the fragmentary and ambiguous conditions of existence, the misuse of science in idolatrous ways, etc. Again, this is a type of essay that could be given to students with reading in the sermons after an initial lecture. Nix’s closing words suggest a particular student audience he may have had in mind: “Tillich’s sermons are thought-provoking, probing, passionate...even evangelical.”

—J. Starkey

**14.** Courtney Wilder, Midland Lutheran College, “Reading Martin Luther King, Jr. as a Tillichian: *The Courage to Be* and “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop.”

In a sense, Wilder's paper adds up to one-and-a-half papers. The theme is too central to be sub-text but too diffuse to constitute a focus upon King's plagiarism. Drawing on Keith Miller's work, the author takes note of the plagiarism from the dissertation to the sermons, from the "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" to the autobiography. But Wilder puts this in the context of James Cone's theological claim that it was the black church's reading of the Bible that was determinative for King's thought, and in the context of Miller's hermeneutic claim that unlettered black preachers developed a folk tradition in which they "borrowed sermons from each other on the assumption that everyone creates language and no one owns it." The true center of the article comes in Wilder's Tillichian analysis of the way King interweaves the symbols of the biblical tradition with the black experience of history. She takes note of how King's life and rhetoric combine to illustrate the vision of faith as the courage to be—quite literally—even in the midst of threats to King's being, and to the being of his community. This is illustrated in a reading of "I've Been to the Mountaintop." Tillichians, hermeneutists, and black/ liberation theologians will all benefit from this work.

—*J. Starkey*

**15.** Nathanael C. Holmes, Jr., St. Thomas University, "Paul Tillich and the Gospel of Prosperity."

Holmes performs a valuable service for those of us who do not know whether to laugh or cry about the gospel of prosperity, "the teaching that financial opulence, good health, and success in every area of a person's life are the signs of God's favor and blessings." People of faith know suffering (Paul, Bonhoeffer) and poverty (Francis, Teresa) as a norm lived by Jesus himself. Death comes to all, and none take anything with them. However, the gospel of prosperity, as Holmes reminds us, bears a certain congruence with Christianity as the most materialistic of all religions ("the word became flesh") and with Tillich's rejection of supernaturalism in favor of a "focus...on the present condition of humanity." So, "The prosperity gospel is a type of theology of culture," to use Tillich's terminology, especially as a response to existential questions posed by poverty. It strikes a sympathetic chord even among the middle class.

Holmes openly admits the weaknesses of prosperity gospel. In particular, he contends that prosperity gospel would benefit from Tillich's deeper understanding of faith as ultimate concern, as "the

courage to be,' the resolve to affirm life in the face of death, poverty, or disease." Holmes's analysis might also consider more deeply Tillich's critique of capitalism. Faith as ultimate concern not only relativizes concern for wealth and health, it also prioritizes the establishment of a radically new community in the unity of love, power, and justice that is the New Being. One suspects that the God of the prosperity gospel remains the God of theism, the Great Heavenly Errand Boy, who must disappear in order that the real God may appear (CTB, 190).

—*R. MacLennan*

**Third Session of the Tillich North American Paul Society: Friday, 4:00-6:30 PM: *Explorations and Expositions of Themes in Tillich***

**16.** Christian Danz, Protestant Faculty of the University of Vienna, "Symbols Are 'The Language of Religion': The Conditions of Tillich's Theory of Symbol in his Early Writings."

Danz begins with the claim that "we owe to Paul Tillich the most important contributions to the theory of symbolism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century." I think that is likely to be a hard sell to most people who have given Tillich's essay on "The Religious Symbol" a critical read. Danz speaks about an "ontological foundation" that Tillich gives his theory of symbol in his later American works (the original focal essay came from 1928). Danz explains that Tillich appealed to the "classical doctrine of '*analogia entis*' for avoiding pan-symbolism," and he claims that the doctrine runs "like a red thread" through Tillich's explanations of the symbol in the 1950s and 1960s. "This now is certainly what is meant when Tillich says that ontology is the basis of a theory of symbol," Danz continues. He quotes Tillich: "the *analogia entis* gives us our only justification of speaking at all about God. It is based on the fact that God must be understood as being-itself" (ST 1). But if one thinks this is going to elicit a cheer from the Thomist practitioners of the method of analogy, read on. Tillich hastens to add: "Such names are not names of being but a quality of being. If religious symbols express this quality in divine names, classical theology has always asserted that the referent of these names transcends their non-symbolic meaning infinitely." In sum, what Tillich giveth with one hand he taketh away with the other. As Tillich understands it, the *religious* symbol (not just "symbols," as Danz words it) is not concerned with "representations of meaning" but rather "refers to reality

that is beyond them”—way beyond them, indeed infinitely beyond them. Danz justly concludes that, for Tillich, “the analogia entis ... has only an illustrative and no constitutive character.”

—C. Fox

**17.** Guy Hammond, Virginia Tech, “Unconditionality without Sovereignty: Tillich, Caputo, and the Minimalist Theologies of Postmodernity.”

Hammond sets about to address a trend in post-modern “theology” that takes its clue from the deconstructive work of Derrida and, more recently, the “nihilistic” or “kenotic” theological turn of Gianni Vattimo. This exploration of what Vattimo calls “weak thought” (not the happiest of formulations, in my opinion) has found new expression in John Caputo’s book on *The Weakness of God: A Theology of Event*. In this work, he raises centrally the question, already explored by Derrida, of whether we might conceive “a divinity dissociated from power,” or as Caputo puts it, “the unconditional that lacks sovereignty.” Hammond asks, “can an exchange between Tillich and Caputo be fruitful?” In answer, he points to a number of suggestive areas, especially Caputo’s quest for a “God beyond being,” his denial of “the existence of some ‘entity or hyper-entity out there’ called God.” Also, there is Caputo’s characterization of this “God” as “a certain holy ‘ought’ without being.” And this in turn takes social/historical shape in a “messianicity without messianism,” which seems to be just another expression for a concrete confessional faith posture.

Now as to Tillich, one of his most startling pieces of theological rhetoric was to deny the “existence” of God, to deny the existence of that unconditional sovereign being that had forever been interrupting the regular course of nature and history. The “God beyond God” of *The Courage To Be* looks and smells a lot like Caputo’s “God beyond being.” Moreover, Tillich’s later move from a philosophy of “meaning” to a philosophy of “being” resulted in his efforts to ontologize time. (This was surely related to the widening influence of Heidegger’s *opus magnum*, whereas Tillich, for the most part, disassociated himself from the work of the American process theologians). For Tillich history is the realm where being is transformed into meaning. As Hammond points out, “what drives history forward, according to Tillich, are moral demand and the expectation of fulfillment.” And of course, for Tillich this “messianism” must issue in the creation of “messianic centers,” to trade on Caputo’s language. Thus, in his

later rhetoric the “new” as “meaning” becomes concrete as a “new being.” And for Tillich it is impossible (and one could add, utterly naïve) to conceive historical centers of meaning without structures of power. Hammond gives us a richly nuanced elaboration of the notion of power in Tillich. He shows us how Tillich “adds a richness of historical specificity to being.” And with this, he provides a much more subtle sense of power, in all the dimensions of being, than one finds in Caputo’s more limited range of reflection. Even knowledgeable Tillich scholars will find this account instructive.

—C. Fox

**18.** Jan-Olav Henriksen, Norwegian School of Theology, “Tillich and Eros in Light of Marion’s *Erotic Phenomena*.”

This essay offers a further foray into the effort to engage Tillich with recent French philosophical thought, in this case the work of Jean-Luc Marion, and now on the theme of love. It would appear that Marion agrees with Tillich in distinguishing various types of love as all similar species of a larger phenomenon of love as such. But the point of unification of the qualities or types of love remains unclear to me within this essay. We are told both that “agape is the uniting form of love that includes all other forms” and also that “against this background it is possible to see erotic love as a form of love that reconciles the ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ aspects of love and desire.” But the point or power of unification is not made clear, and indeed this quote would seem to suggest that the unification is from the bottom up, as it were, eros to agape, rather than the other way around, as seems to be the case with Tillich.

In a discussion of what Marion calls an “erotic reduction,” it is indeed argued that the appropriate point of departure for understanding the larger phenomenon of love is from the vantage of eros. But rather than eros being construed as self-interested desire or need, eros is now reconceived in the “reduction” as the openness to *be loved*, to participate in community. In short, the egoism usually associated with the root analysis of eros is now transformed into a latent altruism. In an obscure follow-up argument, Henriksen suggests that this is actually similar to Tillich’s starting point in an “ontological reduction” (or “epistemic reduction”). (The phrases appear to be used synonymously, though neither is Tillichian.) Nevertheless, there may indeed be something to what Henriksen is suggesting by way of comparison with Marion. Since the over-riding *ac-*

tuality of love (“agape”) is manifest in the processes of Life (in Tillich’s technical sense of the term), “Life” may thus be understood as “the manifestation of the possibility of love,” structured as it is in Tillich’s thought by the polarity of individualization and participation. In short, it may well be that whether we start with Marion’s eros or with Tillich’s Divine Love, we are phenomenologically in the same realm of analysis.

I am not confident that I have understood Henrikson’s argument (his text is difficult), and I have never read Marion. But if I have succeeded in representing the issues with some accuracy, an interesting space has been opened for further discussion.

—C. Fox

**Fourth Session of the NAPTS: Friday, 7-10 PM:  
Annual Banquet of the North American Paul Tillich Society**

19. Ted Peters, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, “Incarnation and Extraterrestrial Life.” Ted Peters’ summary of his Annual Banquet Address has already appeared this *Bulletin*. See volume XXXV, Number 1 (Winter 2009), pages 4-5.

**Fifth Session of the NAPTS: Saturday, 9:00-11:30 AM: Evangelical Responses to Tillich**

20. David Barbee, University of Pennsylvania, “What Would Tillich Do?: A Tillichian Contribution in Evangelical Ethics.”

Is it even thinkable to yoke Tillich and evangelical ethics? Barbee boldly says Yes. Specifically, Tillich’s ontological approach, worked out as theonomous ethics in a way that is neither relativism nor heteronomy—Barbee uses “relativism” more often than he does Tillich’s term “autonomy”—is able to provide evangelical ethics with an alternative to divine command ethics as exemplified by John Jefferson Davis’s well-established textbook, *Evangelical Ethics*.

Barbee finds at least three failings in Davis’s version of divine command ethics. First, at least in Davis’s case, such ethics pays too little attention to matters of social justice. Tillich’s ontology here shows that we become persons only in the context of community, which demands an ontological wisdom connecting love, power, and justice. Second, Davis’ ethics cannot deliver on its promise to provide a clear prescription for every situation. Even an expert as Davis reaches conclusions that are “sometimes

predictable” but are “idiosyncratic at other times.” Why are certain biblical passages and certain methods of interpretation chosen? Tillich’s method of correlation connects the situation with the Christian tradition, focusing on the biblical event of Jesus as the Christ. As Barbee points out, correlation resembles “divine command” by giving a normative status to the Christian tradition and specifically the biblical word, while also allowing a free, creative, imaginative response to the situation. Third, by seeking to avoid the relativism of situation ethics, divine command ethics neglects the ontological depth of love and other constructive ethics. Definite prescriptions may be useful in many situations, but can they tell me how best to promote the maturation of my child, or which economic or political program will best promote peace?

Barbee has made a proposal worthy of consideration. Its reception will test the extent to which evangelicalism is open to an alternative to narrowly construed divine command ethics.

—R. MacLennan

21. Carlos Bovell, Institute for Christian Studies (Toronto), “Can an Evangelical Say That God Does Not Exist.”

Bovell’s answer to the title’s question is a resounding Yes. Moreover, he develops the hypothesis that atheism, the position that God does not exist, “can be re-interpreted as a surprisingly God-honoring position and as a means of getting evangelical theists to ask some fresh meta-theological questions.” If evangelical theologians were to cease to be preoccupied with the question of the existence of God, they, being free to address other issues, would have to work harder at such issues. Most important, atheism could become for evangelical theology a “spiritual gesture” granting “God a measure of glory and integrity that evangelical theology does not typically afford.”

Bovell’s argument, relying on Hook and others to discuss the philosophical status of “existence,” intersects with Tillich’s thought at two main points. First, obviously, he picks up on Tillich’s insistence that God is not a being among other beings. “Thus, God is not idolatized.” Second, he agrees with Tillich that there remains the need to use terms like existence as religious symbols for God who is beyond existence (and essence).

Bovell speculates, somewhat paradoxically, that, since “an atheist must know what theistic position is being posited before she can say that she denies it,”

“perhaps atheists would no longer be atheists if theists were no longer theists.” Whether or not either side might make such a move, Bovell’s summons to “existential courage” “that can contribute...to the flourishing of human kind” via a “nuanced evangelical atheism.” opens possibilities for fruitful conversation between the theologies of evangelicals and of Tillich.

—R. MacLennan.

**22.** Christopher A. Stephenson, Marquette University, “Symbol, Sacraments, and Spirit(s): Paul Tillich in Recent Pentecostal Theology.”

Building on the work of Frank Macchia and Amos Yong, Pentecostal theologians who also use Tillich, Stephenson proposes that the Pentecostal tenet that glossolalia is “initial evidence” of the believer’s baptism in the Holy Spirit should be viewed experientially and only then developed theologically. This is the reverse of the usual Pentecostal practice. This experience fits Tillich’s description of ecstasy that does not destroy structure. The glossolalia experience is a kairic, free, sacramental self-revelation of God. The question remains whether such an understanding can bridge the gap between glossolalia as singularly significant and unambiguous “initial evidence” (even if that term is redefined experientially) of faith and views, including that of Tillich, in which any event, including all gifts of the Holy Spirit, precisely by being ecstatic without destroying structure, can be ambiguous experiential evidence of faith.

Stephenson also connects what he describes as Tillich’s pneumatological theology with Yong’s attempt to develop a pneumatological theology of religions, using especially Tillich’s notions of ultimate concern, dimension, and symbol. Stephenson raises questions meriting further discussion including the relationship in Tillich’s thought between New Being and Spiritual Presence.

—R. MacLennan.

**23.** Robison B. James, University of Richmond and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, “Three Ways Tillich Can Help Evangelicals Be Biblical.”

James, a veteran Tillich scholar and an evangelical theologian of an ecumenical sort, began with a question that is often ignored by evangelicals. Where does the New Testament locate Christ after his resurrection? Is he *absent*, ascended into heaven, or *present*—both *within* believers and *encompassing* them as the milieu in which they live?

The Book of Acts is surprisingly emphatic: in this age Christ is *absent*. True, the Spirit is sent down. But Christ remains distant. By contrast, in “Paul-John” (James’s term), and in other parts of the New Testament, Christ is here as well as in heaven.

James enlists four aspects of Tillich’s thought to help evangelicals be biblical in this situation. First, by embracing Tillich’s view of religious symbols, evangelicals can accept all of the New Testament as authoritative, not just some of it: Christ in both locations may be received as transforming symbolic realities (in Tillich’s strong sense).

Second, evangelicals tend toward a relatively individualistic relation with Christ. This means they unwittingly reject much of the corporate, mystical piety of Paul-John. If evangelicals would expose themselves to the vibrantly corporate-mystical quality of Tillichian faith, this could convert them to a more fully biblical kind of Christianity.

Third, Tillich’s skill at “ontological analysis” can help evangelicals escape from their “modernism,” namely, their pre-Einstein outlook that sees entities as billiard balls colliding or interacting at a distance. Clearly, this modernism reinforces evangelicals’ individualism. Paul-John cannot yank them out of this individualism because so much of the Paul-John voice is drowned out, for evangelicals, by the “absentee Christology” of Acts (although evangelicals’ stress on “Christ within my heart” is a vestige of Paul-John.) In Acts, if anything exists, it exists in one place at a time. Thus if Christ is in heaven, he is not here. But in the ontologies of Paul-John, and in Tillich, entities are defined by their relations within energy fields, not by their locations. Thus, Christ is both here and above.

Fourth, but without time fully to develop the point, James stated that the New Testament is not categorically but only situationally exclusivist in its attitude toward other religions. In his *Tillich and World Religions*, James added, he provides a Tillichian analysis to show that such “situational exclusivism” is coherent, workable, and biblical. The upshot is that the Bible’s usual or *overall* attitude is inclusivist, as a few evangelical theologians argue. Thus, the many evangelicals who insist that the Bible is exclusivist are to that extent rejecting biblical authority. Here again, Tillich could help.

—R. MacLennan and Robison James

<sup>1</sup> This report in a slightly longer form is appearing in volume 5 (2009) of the *Internationales Jahrbuch für die Tillich-Forschung / International Yearbook for Tillich*

*Research / Annales internationales de recherches sur Tillich*, edited by Prof. Dr. Christian Danz (Vienna), Prof. Dr. Werner Schüßler (Trier), and Prof. Dr. Erdmann Sturm (Münster), and published by LIT, [www.lit-verlag.at](http://www.lit-verlag.at). Appreciation is expressed to the editors for permission to publish this report in *The Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*.

<sup>2</sup> Robison B. James is Cousins Professor of Religion Emeritus, University of Richmond. Charles Fox is Mentor of Cultural Studies Emeritus, Empire State College, SUNY, Albany. Guy Hammond is Professor of Religion Emeritus at Virginia Tech University. Ronald B. MacLennan is Professor of Religion, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. Prof. John Starkey is Professor of Religion, Oklahoma City University.

<sup>3</sup> Not yet published in the *Bulletin* are papers 2, 10, and 23, although at least 10 and 23 are expected to appear

**AN ONTOLOGY OF HEALTH:  
A CHARACTERIZATION OF HUMAN HEALTH  
AND EXISTENCE**

RYAN J. FANTE

[Editor's Note: This paper was originally written in an undergraduate seminar, The Theology of Paul Tillich, at Santa Clara University in 2006. Mr. Fante was encouraged to submit it for publication. The author is now in his third year of medical school at the University of Colorado. It was published in *Zygon* 44, 1 (2009): 65-84, and is reprinted with the permission of the journal. The *Bulletin* is grateful for this permission.]

“Man cannot solve any of his great problems if he does not see them in the light of his own being and of being-itself.”

—Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*

In approaching one of humanity's most universal, persistent concerns—disease and the quest for health—a fundamental and integrated description of the concepts is necessary to better understand, engender, and maintain health. This paper seeks to reveal limits in the way the scientific community understands health and approaches healing. Its central focus is to introduce Paul Tillich's ontological and existential framework of health and disease and to provide an analysis that explains how this description yields a compelling understanding of these concepts—an understanding that is useful for the phil-

early in volume 36 (2010). In *Bulletin* 35, number 1, a reader will find papers 9, 11, 14, 17, 19; in 35/2 papers 1, 4, 8, 15, 16, 20, 22; in 35/3 papers 3, 6, 7, 12, 21; and in 35/4 papers 5, 13, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Fox reviewed papers 1, 16, 17, and 18; Guy Hammond papers 3-8; John Starkey papers 9 and 11-14; and Ronald MacLennan papers 15 and 20-22. Besides editing the report, Rob James reviewed paper 2 and co-authored the review of paper 23 with Ron MacLennan. Paper 10 was unavailable for review.

<sup>5</sup> It may be noted that Tillich and Adorno exchanged ideas about human essences in their debates about existentialism. See Guy B. Hammond, “Tillich, Adorno, and the Debate about Existentialism,” in *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* 47, 3 (Oct., 1991), 343-355.

osophy of medicine and to healthcare workers. Since health is a meaningful concept only within the context of a concrete living being and ontology examines the question of what it means *to be*, an ontological approach provides the most complete basis for constructing a description of health.

By using Tillich's essential and existential view of human life, health cannot be understood merely as proper functioning of the physical body or of the separated levels of body, mind, and soul. Rather, the multidimensional unity of the human being requires a new understanding of health as *balanced self-integration within the multiple human dimensions*. Under the provided characterization of health, particular healing in the physical dimension remains, of course, absolutely necessary. However, any operation aimed at promoting health should occur only after a careful consideration of its effects upon other dimensions of the person.

### **Context of an Ontology of Health within Medical Philosophy**

Leon Kass, the former chair of the President's Council on Bioethics, writes, “the healthy human being is the end of the physician's art” (Kass 1975, 13). On the basis of this premise, I argue for the need for a complete and accurate understanding of that which healthcare workers strive to promote. Like Kass, I believe that a concise and accurate *definition* of health is not possible. Kass writes, “I am not seeking a precise definition of health. I am rather



inclined to believe that it is not possible to say definitively what health is... What I hope to show more clearly is what *sort* of 'thing' health is, so that we can be more secure in recognizing and promoting it" (24). I share this goal of *describing* the meaning of health, but in a way contrary to Kass.

In "Regarding the End of Medicine and the Pursuit of Health," Kass cites a growing number of responsibilities and demands placed upon physicians who are at the same time faced with limited time and capabilities. As a result, he settles for a description of health limited to the human body. He describes a troubled system in which the "average doctor sees many more patients than he should, yet many fewer than would like to be seen" in the context of "rising patient and societal demands" (Kass 1975, 11). As a result, he concludes that health is "a state of being that reveals itself in activity as a standard of bodily excellence or fitness" (28), claiming that "somatic health is a finite and intelligible norm, which is the true goal of medicine" (29).

As a medical student who has spent extensive time in clinics and hospitals, I too am aware of the conflict between providing quality care and treating the many patients who need care. People act in a world of finite time, resources, and efforts. However, we should not then settle for a definition of our stated goal (health) that is bounded in order to make it more plausible to achieve. Rather, we should aspire to understand and promote health completely and overcome our individual limitations by utilizing the many workers in different fields of healthcare who are unified in achieving the same objective. Examining health ontologically aims to provide an ambitious, complete, and achievable formulation of the meaning of health.

Robert Lyman Potter's article, "Current Trends in the Philosophy of Medicine," provides a context for my paper within the burgeoning field of philosophy of medicine. Potter summarizes the main areas of inquiry in medical philosophy by citing the mission statements of two prominent journals in the field, the *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* and *Theoretical Medicine*, and extracting five important topics: the nature of the human being, the clinical encounter, the concept of health and disease, medical ethics, and the dialogue between medicine and culture (Potter 1991, 264). Theologian Paul Tillich's ontology provides exceptional insight into both the nature of the human being and concepts of health and disease.

Potter explains that medical "research and practice have too often focused on selected aspects of the human in illness rather than on a systematic understanding of the illness in its relationship to the whole human experience" (Potter 1991, 264). Tillich's ontology is useful for describing this relationship because it anchors the concepts of disease and health within a philosophy of human existence itself. Additionally, Potter says the aim to better describe the concepts of health and disease is "crucial to the theory of medicine," explaining that "the main purpose of the revitalized philosophy of medicine is to broaden the concept of health and disease to include psychological, social, and moral factors" (Potter 1991, 265). Because the ontological method involves examination of all of the human dimensions together when analyzing health, it is the most complete and appropriate way to accomplish this task. Basing my analysis on the existential ontology of Tillich is also justified by Potter's description of medical philosophy: "Medicine's strong emphasis on the human dimension recommends that a philosophical method, designed to describe the world from the perspective of a 'lived' human existence, be evaluated for its appropriateness" (Potter 1991, 271.) Tillich's approach introduced here is precisely what Potter is describing.

### **Introduction to the Nature and Relevance of the Ontological Method**

This introduction to ontology justifies the use of such an approach to the question of health by explaining how it provides the most fundamental basis for analysis of the meaning of health. It also provides a summary of the field for the unfamiliar reader. The concept of a multi-level reality discernible in objects is introduced and becomes important later for developing the concept of a multidimensional unity present in the human being.

Ontology is the study of being. It strives to "[characterize] the texture of being itself" (Tillich 1954, 20)—a quest which preliminarily may seem abstract. However, in all actions and expressions, we display at least an implicit consideration and awareness of our understanding of existence. Ontology asks the most basic and applicable question for human beings—what it means to say, "I am." Ontology "precedes every other cognitive approach to reality," (Tillich 1954, 20) including the scientific approach. Tillich explains ontology thus: "The question of being is not the question of any special being, its exist-

tence and nature, but it is the question of what it means to *be*. It is the simplest, most profound, and absolutely inexhaustible question—the question of what it means to say that something *is*. This word ‘is’ hides the riddle of all riddles, the mystery that there is anything at all” (Tillich 1955a, 6).

In attempting to define health, most modern individuals respond by describing a physical state of the body. Health means having normal cholesterol levels and blood pressure; being fit and muscular; the absence of infection or cancer. More generally, one might define health as the lack of bodily malfunction, or as the proper functioning of all the parts of the body. Even more generally, one might define health like the World Health Organization as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (*Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization*, 1946). All such approaches to health are relevant and useful but are limited for several reasons. First, they consider only one or a few particular “dimensions” of the human being. Put differently, these definitions of health confine humanity to the concretely quantifiable realms—the objective, scientific reality. Additionally, they primarily choose to define health through negative formulations or by substituting other vague terms such as “well-being.” An ontological description of health is preferable because it is able to provide a positive and complete formulation of the meaning of health.

In order to best promote health in a patient, a physician must consider all the human realms that constitute his or her existence. If the perfection of human life is attainable by mastery over the chemical and physical qualities of the person alone, an appropriate definition of health should consider only those elements. Paul Tillich asks, “Is the life process merely a complex physico-chemical mechanism whose perfection and duration can be enhanced by physical and chemical repairs?” (Tillich 1984, 48). He concludes, as one logically must, that if this is the case, proper physical medical corrections alone should be sufficient to engender total health. However, this type of medical perfection could never translate to perfect health because human existence involves realms beyond the physical and chemical; therefore, the preferred form of healing also requires attention to the whole person.

Any complete description of health must consider the condition upon which health is contingent and the condition that health modifies—being. Health is not a part of a human like a leg, arm, mus-

cle, or bone. Nor is health a human function, such as digestion or respiration. Tillich explains that “health and disease are existentialist concepts” (Tillich 1984, 165), meaning health and disease are only possible within the presence of a life in which they may or may not occur. Since health at its most basic level occurs in the context of existence, a comprehensive definition of health can be attained only by an analysis that examines this necessary condition of health. For example, a physics student learning about the Doppler Effect will note that propagation of a sound wave can only occur in the presence of a medium such as air, and therefore, a more complete understanding of the phenomenon requires a description of the medium which is a necessary condition for sound propagation. No complete analysis of such a phenomenon could be claimed without a close examination of that upon which the phenomenon is contingent—in this case, the air. Similarly, since health and disease are only meaningful as possibilities and distortions of existence, a complete analysis of health and disease must include a study of the person *in* existence.

Ontology exposes multiple levels of reality present in any object. A person asking the question of being can distinguish between various “surface” and “deeper, more real levels” (Tillich 1955a, 12) in an attempt to penetrate to an “ultimate reality” of a thing. For example, let us consider an ice-cream cone. We call the cone a cone, and in this sense, it is such, but we realize that in a deeper sense, it is not actually an ice-cream cone. After all, in other parts of the world, it is called something else. And our description of it is only a name. Then, we might consider that it is made up of various ingredients. And at an even more basic level, the cone is a certain organization of molecules and atomic elements. Multiple levels of reality are present in the ice-cream cone, none of which is any more real than the others. Similar analyses can be given for more complex entities such as human beings. But at what level does one reach the “ultimate reality” of a thing? Tillich explains: “In our search for the ‘really real’ we are driven from one level to another to a point where we cannot speak of level any more, where we must ask for that which is the ground of all levels, giving them their structure and their power of being. The search for ultimate reality beyond everything that seems to be real is the search for being-itself, for the power of being in everything that is” (Tillich 1955a, 13).

Our search for the *really real* reveals two important observations: first, the presence of various levels of reality in a thing, and second, the sense that none of them adequately describe the thing in an ultimate sense. To reach the ultimate reality of a considered entity, one must examine how it can *be* at all, a concept that transcends all scientific analyses of reality. The question of the “ground of being” asks about that which is unconditioned and infinite. This is and must remain an indefinite concept since finite beings cannot completely explain or describe the power of being.

### Characteristics of the Modern Mind

My own training is primarily in the biological and medical sciences; hence, prior to reading Tillich’s ontology, I believed that technical reason provided the most accurate and complete description of any given object or process. However, in considering Tillich’s analysis of the modern mind, I became aware of several tendencies deeply embedded within my own thought process, as well as an unquestioned assumption that this mode of thinking was the only relevant and proper mindset. Several characteristics of the modern (especially scientific) mind may predispose one to reject Tillich’s philosophy, but an awareness of these elements should aid in considering the possibility of other understandings of reality. In preserving an open consideration of Tillich’s ontological analysis, I have found it increasingly rational and useful in describing my own experience of life. The following is a critique of the many downfalls of the modern mindset, which points to a need for an ontological framework for understanding health and disease.

Many modern individuals, especially those in technical scientific careers, display several common characteristics that provide a basis for their actions and thoughts and shape their grasp of reality. Their understanding of reality can cause an objectification of the human being that produces a limited understanding of health. The first element of the modern mind is an emphasis upon what Tillich calls “the horizontal dimension of life” (Tillich 1955a, 24). Humanity envisions itself in a world “determined by time and space, causality and substance” (Tillich 1955a, 24), and understands itself as constantly moving forward in it. Inventions and technological achievements continually improve, and as a result, humans understand their strivings as attempts to become more adept at manipulating nature. This leads

to the second element—“the intention to control nature” (Tillich 1955a, 24). Nearly all medical achievements, whether the ability to kill bacteria with penicillin, surgically repair a damaged joint, or vaccinate against disease, provide examples of the desire to control or alter certain outcomes.

The third element of the modern mind—“making everything into calculable objects which can be described in terms of numbers” (Tillich 1955a, 25)—naturally emerges from the scientific method. In order to achieve reproducible and demonstrable scientific results, and to analyze and manage data, variables must be quantifiable. Observations must be converted into numbers that can be “managed, divided, and put together again” (Tillich 1955a, 25). A good medical example is the conversion of one’s height and weight into a body mass index (BMI) for categorizing a patient’s weight. In this conversion, much is lost—both a world-class athlete and a couch potato might have a BMI of 27, and thus be categorized as overweight. The final element is a shift from ontological reason to technical reason (Tillich 1951, 72). According to Tillich, reason “was formerly the power of knowing the ultimate principles of the good, the true and the beautiful” (Tillich 1996, 26). The modern mind often mistakes reason as a tool only to be used within science for controlling or predicting nature.

These characteristics of the modern mind have had consequences that are both beneficial and harmful for humanity. Although the benefits from these developments are numerous, the damaging consequences are of primary interest here. These elements lead to a limited and incorrect understanding of reality as only those elements that can be concretely observed, quantified, and controlled. Just as data is consolidated into manageable numbers and forms, one can observe “the making [of the human] into a calculable object” (Tillich 1996, 31). In marketing, advertising, medicine, and psychology, human beings are reduced into quantifiable processes that can be predictably manipulated. Tillich points to an example in medicine: “Not only are the moods, vitality, and emotions of a person transformed by drugs, but to a large extent the person as well. And to transform a personality by chemical means is the complete objectification [of the human]” (Tillich 1996, 31).

The modern American approach to medicine and healing taught and practiced by the majority of conventional physicians is part of a larger cultural trend that emphasizes technical reason—acceptance of

only the *scientific method* and *evidence-based medicine* as the process for establishing fact and making clinical decisions. Observations lead to testable hypotheses, which are either supported or refuted by repeatable and demonstrable outcomes. One studying to become an allopathic physician is trained in anatomy, microbiology, immunology, biochemistry, pathology, and other fields that contribute to an understanding of the physical constituents and chemical processes of the human body. Additionally, treatments frequently utilize drugs to alter imbalances and purge the body of disease-causing agents.

Since so much of a medical education focuses upon observing and detecting these quantifiable and calculable aspects of humans, doctors tend to understand their patients as mere predictable objects. This approach reduces the patient-doctor relationship to the level of a technician adjusting a machine according to protocol. Thus, many patients perceive apathy or lack of personal attention by their doctor. They sense that the doctor could just as effectively sit in a separate room, make observations, and order a given treatment without any need for communication. In contrast, by grasping the ontological definition of health, the physician becomes inclined to approach the patient as a complex, unique individual. In doing so, the clinical encounter is enhanced and the healing approach becomes more personalized and effective.

A final analysis of the elements of the modern mentality reveals a “thoroughly objectifying attitude,” (Tillich 1996, 35) which is the source of a crippled understanding of reality. As Tillich explains, “In order to define anything, you must objectify it—make it finite...Therefore all problems of something unconditional, ultimate, or infinite—not in the mathematical but the qualitative sense—are strange to the typical modern person. For these matters cannot be construed in terms of finitude or definition” (Tillich 1996, 35). Since reality in the modern mentality is understood as that which can be defined (made finite), anything belonging to the ultimate dimension is often discarded, invalidated, or ignored. Although the ontological perspective on health may be foreign to the typical modern scientist, it is a fully rational and fundamental way of approaching any human issue. The serious scientist who rejects any dogmatic description of reality must take ontology seriously.

### **Tillich’s Ontology of Health**

#### *Human Essence: A Multi-Dimensional Unity*

*Essence* and *existence* are the common qualities of all things that *are* (have being) (Tillich 1963, 12). Essence involves the innate, ideal characteristics that distinguish different objects. For example, the essence of a stone is its mineral composition as well as its hard and dense structure. However, essence alone is not *being* in actuality. The stone as a concept or as described here is not actualized because it lacks the second quality of being—existence. For the stone, existence is vulnerability to the possibilities of erosion, compression, and other natural forces. Existence means subjection to dynamic fluctuations; it presents the possibility of “growth, distortion, and death” (Tillich 1963, 12).

Although the above descriptions are generalized to apply to all things with being, essence and existence can be characterized in more detail with respect to human life. Tillich calls the essence of the human a “multi-dimensional unity” (Tillich 1984, 167). Examples of human dimensions include the physical, chemical, biological, psychological, mental, and historical (Tillich 1984, 167). (This list is not complete but includes those most readily distinguishable dimensions.) The chemical dimension is the reality of the human viewed from the organic perspective, as a complex organization of different molecules and compounds. The physical dimension is visibly observable and includes such elements as one’s stature, strength, and size. The historical dimension refers to the unique human awareness of past occurrences, progressions, and changes, including those occurring long before one’s birth. This awareness is present and active implicitly in human actions and thought.

Having described a few of the dimensions, the reasoning for using *dimension*—as opposed to *level*—must be explained because it has a very precise meaning. It is used to “[indicate] that the different qualities of life in man are present within each other and do not lie alongside or above each other” (Tillich 1984, 167). Additionally, it points to a “difference of realms of being in such a way that there cannot be mutual interference...they cross without disturbing each other” (Tillich 1963, 15). The most crucial connotation of *dimension* is the inclusion of all realms within the others in such a way that they relate but do not interfere. It describes distinct parts of the person while making it apparent “that in each dimension all the others are present” (Tillich 1984, 168). This concept is meant to counteract alternate, often dualistic notions of the person as a combina-

tion of competing or conflicting strata such as body, mind, and soul. It emphasizes that “man is one” (Tillich 1984, 167). In other words, the human is composed of multiple inseparable realms crossing in a single point. A useful criterion for distinguishing different beings is the number of dimensions that compose them. The rock is a multidimensional unity of only a few realms—the physical and chemical. Bacteria occupy a different level of being since they incorporate a new, third realm—the biological. The human being is a unity of many more complex realms.

The primary implication of a multidimensional understanding of human essence is the need “for a multidimensional concept of health, of disease, and of healing” (Tillich 1984, 168). If the human is understood dualistically or as a stratified combination of any number of levels, the healing method can appropriately be segmented; other levels can be completely ignored without any threat of disrupting the others. However, if the human is a unity of multiple realms that are present *within* each other, any attempt at healing, to be rightly applied, must attempt to account for as many dimensions as possible.

#### *Human Existence: Self-Integration*

Having elaborated the essential quality of the person, the existential aspect, which is subjection to distortion of one’s essence, must be considered. Tillich explains that all life processes (actions) involve a “going-out from a center of action” which occurs “in such a way that the center is not lost in the outgoing movement” (Tillich 1963, 30). Although the center of an individual is not typically lost in an outward process, it is inevitably altered. Within a dialogue between two people, for example, each person is exposed to ideas and concepts foreign to the self. New concepts are incorporated in such a way that the self is altered, but remains recognizable.

The names given by Tillich to the existential processes common to all beings are *self-alteration*, “the going-out from oneself,” and *self-identity*, “the returning to oneself” (Tillich 1984, 166). Self-alteration is the process of reaching out and encountering the foreign, and self-identity preserves the presence of a unique, distinguishable center. These existential processes, in their general form, are applicable throughout all the human realms. Self-alteration and self-identity are said by Tillich to “[characterize] life under all dimensions” (Tillich 1984, 166). Consider the atom that forms a chemical bond: it encounters elements outside itself and is

changed, but it is still distinctly recognizable as the original atom. Additionally, the “growth of the plant, to the movement of the animal, to the creativity of the mind, to the dynamics of historical groups” (Tillich 1984, 166) —all of these involve the same interaction between the self and the foreign.

Within the existential processes of human life, two perils are constantly present. If one process becomes dominant, damage to the being results. The first is an extreme self-alteration lacking sufficient integration into the center, which can produce “dispersion into too many directions, a wrong kind of growth, [and] a loss of the uniting center” (Tillich 1984, 166). Consider a purely spatial and physical example: if a rock completely erodes into sand and becomes dispersed, it ceases to be a rock; its identity is lost due to the loss of its defining center. Similarly for a human, if central aspects defining the personality are overtaken or replaced, the personality is lost or unrecognizably altered. An example in the physical dimension: removing a limb does not kill a person or change her central identity; however, trauma causing death is a disruption of central elements such as the brain, heart, or lungs such that the central identity is irreversibly altered.

The second danger inherent in existential processes is a reactionary response to fear of the loss of one’s center that produces a weakening or disintegration of the being. One limits the self-altering process in fear of losing one’s identity. This extreme is signaled by a “[retreat] to a limited form of existence in which the self-identity on a reduced basis is preserved” (Tillich 1984, 166). Consider parents who, in attempting to preserve their children’s innocence, compulsively limit their kids’ exposure to outside influences; this is a form, imposed from an external source, of lack of self-alteration and can have damaging consequences on childhood development. Examples in the biological realm are particularly illustrative of the danger of avoidance of the foreign. A burrowing animal, such as a rabbit, tunnels for protection against predators. But the animal must leave its tunnel to find food and water; if, in fear of the dangers present above ground, it remains in protected seclusion, it will weaken and eventually die.

In light of the existential processes that are constantly occurring in every being, one can distinguish an important function for human beings—to balance the self-altering and self-identifying processes through integration. In self-integration, “the center of self-identity is established, drawn into self-

alteration and re-established with the contents of that into which it has been altered” (Tillich 1963, 30). Consider the powerful and enduring document that is the United States’ Constitution. Its persistence and relevance for providing guidelines for the operation of the American government is primarily a result of the constant integration that has occurred during its history. If it did not allow for change, it could not confront newly arising concerns. However, if it were not protected from alterations of its fundamental tenets, it would lose its central identity.

Human health and disease can now be understood as existential qualities of human life. Since health and disease describe states of being, they are “not [elements] in the description of man’s essential nature” (Tillich 1984, 165). Health and disease “add a new element [to human essence:] the possibility and reality of its distortion” (Tillich 1984, 165).

### *Disease*

Since disease and health are related as opposing distortions of human essence, an analysis of the nature of disease will aid in arriving at the meaning of health: as Tillich explains, “Health is a meaningful term only in confrontation with its opposite—disease” (Tillich 1984, 165). Two causes of disease have already been discussed: extreme self-identity or self-alteration. In the former case, the person becomes stagnant, and in the latter, the person loses his or her identity. However, maintaining a balance by properly integrating the foreign into the self does not guarantee health. Disease stems from another quality of existence—the ambiguity of life. It is perhaps the most significant reason for disease, and it cannot be avoided. Tillich explains: “Ambiguity means that in every creative process of life, a destructive trend is implied; in every integrating process of life, a disintegrating trend; in every process toward the sublime, a profanizing trend. These ambiguities of life produce the concrete causes of disease” (Tillich 1984, 167). Therefore, in any being, even one properly integrating the foreign and new, destructive encounters are inevitable.

In nearly all human actions required for growth and life, destructive possibilities exist. One observes that even in a person or object carefully encountering its environment and integrating its center, “accidents, intrusions, and imbalances” occur (Tillich 1984, 167). By breathing, one risks inhaling infectious particles. Encounters with new ideas threaten one’s structure of meaning. A romantic relationship can become deeply damaging and hurtful. Actions

inspired by the intention to help another can result in damaging consequences. A doctor’s treatment can have an unanticipated consequence that makes a patient more ill, and drugs prescribed to heal can have dangerous side effects. One must conclude that the ambiguous nature of dynamic interactions means that no encounter is completely benign.

Although diseases stem from the ambiguity of life processes, pathology is not directly caused by the ambiguity itself. Rather, ambiguity produces unanticipated and unpreventable imbalances in the life processes, and these imbalances directly cause the disease. Tillich describes disease as a “symptom of the universal ambiguity of life,” (Tillich 1984, 167) instead of as a direct result of ambiguity. Tillich writes, “Many diseases, especially infectious ones, can be understood as an organism’s inability to return to its self-identity. It cannot reject the strange elements which it has not assimilated” (Tillich 1963, 35). Although an ambiguous interaction such as ingestion of food may have caused the infection, the direct cause of disease is an intrusion by a pathogen or toxin that alters the central identity of the affected cells or creates an imbalance that compromises cell function.

The most significant conclusion of the previous analysis is that disease is unavoidable. One must be willing to “[accept] the fact of limited health” (Tillich 1984, 170) in order to achieve more complete health. If one actively encounters the world, ambiguity will cause disease. But, if in attempting to avoid such problems, one restricts the center from interactions, disease still results—“in order to be safe, the organism tries to rest in itself, but since this contradicts the life function of self-integration, it leads to disease and disintegration” (Tillich 1963, 35). Through this ontological analysis, we reach a conclusion we instinctively know to be true: there is no reward without risk. One can avoid risk, but this also surely leads to disintegration. In other words, health must include the possibility of disease within itself. For example, the physically healthy athlete risks her health in the very actions that develop strength. Even the various banal life-sustaining actions, like consuming food and water, have inherent risks to physical health.

### *Health*

Having established a description of disease, and acknowledging that health is the negation of disease, a detailed discussion of the meaning of health is now possible. The summary of health given earlier—

balanced self-integration within the multiple human dimensions—should now be intelligible. However, this characterization requires more discussion.

The multidimensional essence of the human being was described as the innate structure of the person. Physical, biological, chemical, psychological, mental, historical, and spiritual realms are all present in each person in a unified way. They are inseparably present in each other, and are not in competition or opposition. Self-integration relates to the existential aspect of being. A being must constantly undergo a dynamic process of encountering foreign elements and incorporating them into its own center. If self-integration occurs in an imbalanced way, disease is produced.

Centeredness is required to have an identity and is necessary for self-integration. The centered human “actualizes itself as a personal self by distinguishing, separating, rejecting, preferring, connecting, and in doing so, transcending its elements” (Tillich 1963, 28). These actions are self-integrating actions, but only a centered individual can display them. In this sense, a *center* is a pre-requisite for self-integration. Health can only occur in a being with a stable center. The center transcends the individual human dimensions because it contextualizes and organizes them.

Health must be understood as dynamic because it is an existential concept. The moment a being attempts to withdraw and protect its center, it automatically becomes unhealthy. An understanding of health as dynamic combats the notion that a being can attain health, and then protect health by ceasing to participate in further life-processes. Additionally, it suggests that the possibility of disease is always present within health.

### Implications for Healing

The final portion of this paper uses the ontological definition of health and disease to discuss concrete implications for how any individual should approach the promotion of healing. In a consideration of healing, both the essential and existential elements of the person are crucial. An ontological analysis of healing leads to several conclusions: first, the essence of the human being demands a multidimensional approach to healing; second, particular healing is needed and is helpful if it considers the other realms of the human; third, personally accepting limited health is crucial for the possibility of any health; fourth, the power of *faith as ultimate concern* becomes critical for health because of its

ability to wholly integrate the person; lastly, the healing power of medicine and faith are shown to complement and assist each other.

### *A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Healing*

The entire ontological analysis of the human being suggests one crucial point—a multidimensional approach to healing is necessary for complete healing. Tillich declares, “The multidimensional unity of life in man calls for a multidimensional concept of health, of disease, and of healing” (Tillich 1984, 168). This does not mean that a healer should be trained to cure imbalances within all dimensions. It is impossible to be an expert in all areas. Similarly, limits in time and resources are present for any healthcare worker. The above analysis suggests that healers in all specializations should understand their role in promoting healing in a complex being consisting of multiple, unified realms.

The call for a multidimensional approach to healing has several specific ramifications for the training and practice of physicians. In allopathic medicine, disease is typically countered from a mechanistic angle. Such an approach considers the chemical and biological realms of the human while ignoring the others. Medical school curricula must dedicate time to contextualizing medical healing within the concept of complete healing. This means encouraging physicians to expand the human dimensions considered when treating and conversing with patients. Physicians should accept that physical health is not complete health and that physical treatments influence the other human dimensions.

These suggestions, if implemented, would not require a radical shift in medical training; curricula would only need to broaden the application of sound scientific principles and practices already in place. For example, physicians currently consult other medical specialists in order to be sure a treatment does not have unwanted effects on other parts of the body. Physicians must broaden this principle by consulting experts in other fields in order to consider the interactions of a treatment within the other human dimensions.

Physicians know another important principle of human biology—elimination of disease symptoms is not equivalent to recovery from the disease. True recovery means rectifying the source of the problem, not numbing the body to pain or hiding the symptoms. This principle, too, should be expanded in light of the human multidimensional unity. Within this broader context, the doctor can be confident that

a treatment is not causing greater damage to the whole individual by masking a physical symptom of a disease originating in another human dimension. For example, an athlete sustaining a knee injury can receive a steroid injection in order to reduce inflammation and pain at the chemical level—and thereby continue competing. However, the ability to feel pain serves a crucial function, and the inability to feel the pain often causes the athlete to more severely and permanently damage the joint. As Kass explains, “pain serves as an accompanying sign of a threat to bodily integrity” (Kass 1975, 27). The ontological approach reveals human dimensions beyond the mere physical and thus helps explain why pain, in certain cases, is important to the health of the whole individual. Because pain alerts the individual to an imbalance in one or many realms, it can promote awareness of the need for a balancing action.

The need for these changes in medical curricula can be illustrated by an explanation of the harm resulting from a narrow understanding of healing. The danger of a limited approach to healing is that “it has the tendency to provoke diseases in another realm” (Tillich 1984, 173). Particular healing may promote health in the one realm but encourage disease in another, as with cortisone injections for athletes. This occurs “if healing under one dimension is successful but does not take into consideration the other dimensions in which health is lacking or even imperiled by the particular healing” (Tillich 1984, 172). Tillich provides several possible examples: “successful surgery may produce a psychological trauma; effective drugs may calm down an uneasy conscience and preserve a moral deficiency; the well-trained athletic body may contain a neurotic personality” (Tillich 1984, 172).

To briefly illustrate this point, consider a person experiencing a highly traumatic event, such as the sudden death of a family member. Normally, that person would undergo a difficult but “healthy” period of bereavement entailing mourning, reflection and remembrance. An intervention with powerful drugs could be used to alter brain function so that the person feels little distress. For months after the event, balance, and even health, in the chemical dimension could be maintained. However, concluding that the patient is completely healthy in this instance would be absurd. It would be dangerous to the psychological health of the person to mistakenly interpret the symptoms of sadness as proof of a purely physical problem—and as a result, prematurely intervene in a way that may disrupt the mourning

process. In this example, a “correction” masks the physical symptoms of a multifaceted problem, leading to deterioration and disease in other realms.

Consideration of the multidimensional unity of the human must be applied in healing methodology, in both the extreme example given above, but also in more nuanced situations. Tillich explains, “The great physician is he who does not easily cut off parts and does not easily suppress the one function in favor of the other, but he who strengthens the whole” (Tillich 1955b, 39). The physician should carefully consider the potential effects of any treatment method within all human realms. Just as a drug can have undesired side effects upon the body, a treatment seeking to promote health in one realm can have profound implications in the other human realms.

The need for a healing approach that considers realms beyond the chemical and biological is also relevant in epidemiology and public policy planning. This is illustrated nicely by Dr. Paul Farmer’s work in Haiti. During and after his medical education, Farmer worked to improve the abysmal health conditions in Haiti, a country in which one quarter of the population dies before reaching the age of forty (Kidder 2004, 25). Despite distributing free drugs to treat tuberculosis in various poor areas, recovery rates were unsatisfactory in many regions.

One of Farmer’s Haitian co-workers believed the ineffectiveness of the medicine resulted from a limited approach to healing, and explained that, “giving people medicine for TB and not giving them food is like washing your hands and drying them in the dirt” (Kidder 2004, 34). To test the theory that simply providing the drugs was not enough, Farmer conducted an experiment. One group was given free drug treatment; the other group received the same drugs, but in addition, was given small stipends to pay for food, childcare, and transportation. Also, healthcare workers made visits to the homes of members in the second group. Thus, one group received attention to purely the chemical realm, while the second healing approach expanded its scope to confront problems in other realms of the patients’ lives. In the first group, less than half of the participants recovered, and in the second, all participants were completely cured (Kidder 2004, 34).

Farmer demonstrated that additional human realms significantly contributed to the disease and that minimal attention to those dimensions remarkably increased the recovery rate within the observable physical realm. His experience supports the assertion that a multidimensional approach to healing has tan-



gible benefits in the physical realm. However, one should note that this example does not presume that complete healing has occurred, since the other human realms are not nearly as quantifiable or observable. Rather, the example suggests that a multidimensional approach can produce healing results that anyone can appreciate.

#### *Particular Healing*

The call for a multidimensional approach to healing has implications upon the validity and justification of particular healing. A segmented healing approach that assumes the human is a combination of separate strata, and therefore ignores the other realms, is not justifiable. Since the human is a unity of dimensions, any manipulation on one will have effects upon the whole. If the human being were not a unity, the most narrow forms of healing would be effective; however, as Tillich writes, the “independence of particular ideas of health and healing is limited by the mutual within-each-otherness of the [human] dimensions” (Tillich 1984, 172).

This broader approach to healing does not imply that particular or narrow forms of healing are unnecessary. In fact, the ontological approach affirms the absolute necessity of healing in one realm while encouraging recognition and consideration of the effects upon other realms. Since the human dimensions do not lie in the same plane, “each of [the] elements can disintegrate independently of the other elements” (Tillich 1956, 128). The multidimensional unity recognizes that human elements can improve or degenerate independently of the others but recognizes that any manipulation will affect the human unity as a whole. On this basis, Tillich concludes that, “there are special helpers and healing methods called for under every dimension” (Tillich 1984, 172). The ontological description of the human being affirms the need for particular forms of healing while encouraging healers to work for the complete healing of the person.

#### *Accepting Limited Health*

Another logical consequence of the ontological description of health is the conclusion that health can never be statically preserved; as a dynamic process, health always includes the possibility of disease within it. A physician, therefore, should help a patient to “[accept] the fact of limited health” (Tillich 1984, 170). The ambiguous nature of the life processes makes the possibility of disease or harm unavoidable. Extreme attempts to avoid disease result

in a limiting of one’s life processes, and automatic degeneration into disease. Therefore, by accepting the possibility of disease, one can best pursue health. This conclusion exemplifies the broader ontological assertion that one’s being is best affirmed by embracing and including non-being.

#### *Redefining Faith*

Although the suggestions for healing discussed thus far have resulted from a consideration of the multidimensional (essential) aspect of the human being, the existential element also has important implications for healing. Previously, the direct cause of disease was uniformly understood to be imbalanced self-integration. A question is raised for the individual: is there a principle for achieving balance, and thus health, in multiple dimensions? Faith is the force capable of promoting a self-integration of the whole being, but not faith as it is understood in common usage as the acceptance of specific religious truths.

The assertion that faith is the principle that can promote health in many dimensions will require extensive explanation, mainly because of the distorted way in which it is currently understood. Tillich explains, “Today the term ‘faith’ is more productive of disease than of health. It confuses, misleads, creates alternately skepticism and fanaticism, intellectual resistance and emotional surrender, rejection of genuine religion and subjection to substitutes” (Tillich 1956, xxi). Given the massive number of distinctly different ideas about what *faith* means, I am tempted to use a different term. However, since a detailed description of the concept is needed regardless of the term used, I will retain *faith* and use it subsequently as it is defined below as one’s *ultimate concern*.

In faith, one seeks ultimate reality and truth—the ground of being—and as a result, faith serves as the guiding principle for one’s life. According to Tillich, faith is “the state of being ultimately concerned” (Tillich 1956, 1). Faith defined in this way is present and active in all people in some way; it is the varied content of faith that distinguishes its different forms. One’s faith commands and directs the process of self-integration—it contextualizes experiences, creates priorities, and helps to make decisions—actions that define the center of a being. Since faith is capable of providing a principle that organizes the center of a person, its ramifications will affect the whole in multiple dimensions.

Because faith is concern with the ultimate, it comes from the center of the self. Tillich explains that faith “claims ultimacy,” demanding “total surrender of him who accepts [its] claim” (Tillich 1956, 1). If the content of one’s ultimate concern is success, all of one’s actions will be organized in its pursuit. Daily experiences will be understood by the way they relate to this goal. Faith “demands unconditional surrender to its laws even if the price is the sacrifice of genuine human relations [and] personal conviction” (Tillich 1956, 4), as may be the case in the pursuit of success. However, such a sacrifice for the one with this form of faith is acceptable because faith also “[promises] ultimate fulfillment” (Tillich 1956, 2).

*Faith* described here must be separated from its common religious connotation—as accepting “assertions about God, man and world, which cannot be fully verified, but might be or might not be in the future” (Tillich 1959, 28). Faith does involve a risk, but the risk is not that one’s faith is objectively true or false; rather, “the risk of faith is an existential risk, a risk in which the meaning and fulfillment of our lives is at stake, and not a theoretical judgment which may be refuted sooner or later” (Tillich 1959, 28). The risk of faith is in the surrender of oneself to a self-integrating principle. Tillich explains that if one’s faith “proves to be a failure, the meaning of one’s life breaks down; one surrenders oneself, including truth and justice, to something which is not worth it” (Tillich 1956, 20).

In light of this analysis, one can better understand why Islamic extremists are willing to sacrifice their lives and kill innocent people. If the ultimate concern in one’s life—the integrating principle—is a (tragically distorted and relatively rare) interpretation of the Qur’an, reservations about ending one’s own life or the lives of innocent people are overcome by a principle demanding complete surrender and promising complete fulfillment. All forms of faith display a similar pattern of ultimate obedience to a principle, although most do not become manifest in such visibly reprehensible or violent forms.

Given the above examples that point to forms of faith that promote disease, it should be clear that the content of one’s ultimate concern is the criteria by which it should be judged and is the determinant of whether it is productive of health or disease. In a pluralistic world, how can the content of innumerable distinctly different forms of ultimate concern be judged? This question directs my analysis back to the previous discussion of the multiple levels of real-

ity present in beings and objects. Faith, as a representation of the infinite for finite beings, must always take symbolic form. The “really real” was called the “ground of being”—the ultimate reality that transcends all individual levels. Various forms of faith attempt to give access to ultimate reality, but this can be done only symbolically, since the truly ultimate cannot be fully expressed in finite form. There are innumerable different symbols through which faith is expressed; common examples include God, gods, success, money, respect, fame, family, or nation.

Tillich believes the symbol of one’s faith can be evaluated as either authentic or idolatrous. Idolatry occurs when the symbol is misunderstood as the ultimate itself. Authentic faith includes symbols that point to the ultimate reality, but the symbols themselves are not raised to the level of the ultimate. Authentic forms of faith consist of understanding that its symbols only *point* to the infinite. Therefore, a faith that promotes healing must have two characteristics: symbols that truly point to the ultimate ground of being, and symbols that are understood as finite representations of the ultimate. I believe there are symbols that point to the infinite and that are productive of health within multiple religious traditions and also outside of established religion. Conversely, both religious and non-religious symbols, when understood as the ultimate, are idolatrous and promote disease. Faith in money, since it focuses upon finite acquisitions, does not embody the ultimate. Faith in a single interpretation of a part of the Christian Bible raises a finite passage to the level of the ultimate itself and has dangerous consequences.

### *The Role of Faith in Healing*

One’s concept of health is crucial in directing approaches to healing. For example, if health is understood as a purely physical concept, the argument for faith’s role in healing is unjustifiable. However, if health requires balance and integration within the many dimensions that compose the human, faith as an ultimate concern must be central to healing. Having enumerated a careful definition of faith, I return to the original question: How can an ultimate concern promote health in multiple dimensions? Whereas a disruption in a particular human dimension does not necessarily endanger the whole, a disruption of the center is dangerous to the entire being. Similarly, a force that integrates the whole is beneficial in multiple dimensions. Faith is this force, and it is the content of one’s faith that determines whether

the center is integrated or disrupted, and whether health or disease is promoted. Tillich says, "Faith as an ultimate concern is an act of the total personality. It happens in the center of the personal life and includes all its elements" (Tillich 1956, 5). Since faith directs the center of the person, it is the principle by which balanced self-integration within multiple human dimensions can occur.

Authentic faith, however, cannot be used to *replace* other forms of healing. Tension often results from the claims made by all types of healers to possess exclusive validity in the healing process. It must be made apparent that no conflict between the healing methods exists so that an "understanding of the differences as well as the mutual within-each-otherness of the dimensions can remove the conflict and create an intensive collaboration of helpers in all dimensions of health and healing" (Tillich 1984, 173). Tillich concludes that, "the ways of healing do not need to impede each other, as the dimensions of life do not conflict with each other" (Tillich 1963, 281). A healing approach meant to be active in any particular human realm, if it considers the other realms, can be devised to complement or avoid conflict with other healing forms.

Similarly, the authentic faith described herein, because it by avoids applying faith in the form of highly narrow and finite religious restrictions, should not impede healing within any particular realm. For example, a health-promoting form of faith should not restrict the use of an important intervention in the physical dimension when it clearly has innocuous effects in other human dimensions—such as the use of blood transfusions to save the life of patients suffering severe blood loss. Faith "precedes, accompanies, and follows all other activities of healing" (Tillich 1956, 128); this means faith is present within the other healing forms, but does not impede, outweigh, or negate them.

### Conclusion

This paper seeks to help resolve common reductionistic and objectifying attitudes about human health and disease by introducing Paul Tillich's ontological framework for conceptualizing this aspect of human existence and by discussing the resultant implications for healing. By embracing what I believe to be the most fundamental and all-encompassing description of human existence and health, physicians can ensure they act in the best interest of their patients by: teaching patients to pursue health by accepting limited health, respecting

patients as unique and complex individuals, rejecting segmented or narrow healing approaches, considering the effects of any manipulation in all dimensions before acting, and most importantly, within any particular treatment, directing their efforts towards the complete healing of the person.

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**PAUL TILlich AS APOLOGETIC PREACHER:  
THEOLOGY IN THE FORM OF SERMONS**

ECHOL NIX, JR.

Paul Tillich wrote three books of sermons during his tenure at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. They were delivered either in the Sunday Chapel Service or in daily chapel. *The Shaking of the Foundations* (1948), *The New Being* (1955), and *The Eternal Now* (1963) were published because students and friends outside the Seminary community strongly encouraged Tillich to publish his sermons in order to penetrate his theological thought. He writes in the "Preface" to *The Shaking of the Foundations*: "They believe that through my sermons the practical, or more exactly, the existential implications of my theology are clearly manifest."<sup>1</sup> He further states: "I should like to think that the sermons included have helped to show that the strictly systematic character of a theology does not prevent it from being practical—that is to say applicable to the personal and social problems of our religious."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Tillich writes in *The Eternal Now*: "It is my hope to show that the Christian message, be it expressed in abstract theology or concrete preaching is relevant for our time if it uses the language of our time."<sup>3</sup>

In this respect, he presents a theology of preaching understood not as a discipline completely separate and distinct from the rest of his system, but one that seeks a language which expresses in other terms the human experience to which the biblical and ecclesiastical terminology point. A quick survey of the texts of Tillich's sermons reveals fidelity to biblical and ecclesiastical terminology. Approximately one-third of the texts come from the Hebrew Bible, including his sermon "The Escape from God" based on Psalm 139 where the Psalmist begins: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me... Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising." Also, about one-third of the texts come from the Gospels, including the sermon "The Power of Love," based on Saint

John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you." In reference to Paul's Epistles, an example is "Do Not Be Conformed," from Romans 12:2a: "Do not be conformed to this eon, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." Interestingly, Tillich uses biblical quotations from both the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Tillich thinks that the purpose of preaching is to communicate the Christian message so that a definite decision for or against it can be made.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he thinks that such communication is only possible by participating in, but not totally identifying with the life situation of those to whom one preaches. For example, in his *Theology of Culture*, he writes:

We do not need to go into the problem of participation in respect to other groups. We in America know about that! We know about the bitter feeling or resentment of some of the groups among us, not because of lack of goodwill but because of our inability to participate. Think of groups like the Jews, the colored peoples, even sometimes the Roman Catholics. Participation means participation in their existence, out of which we are supposed to give the answer.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, Tillich does not apply his principles of participation in any detail to social problems. Such is not found in his earlier or later writings but it can be inferred that he intends for churches to support better housing programs, to create political initiatives that will provide jobs, and to foster equal educational and economic opportunities for minority groups. As such, he considers his theology of preaching "apologetic." In other words, it is a demonstration of Christianity's relevance to the contemporary world by showing that the answers to the questions of existence are found in the Christian message. Tillich regards the "answering to the questions" (used interchangeably with "apologetic") to be an "underlying element of theology, which, as a function, of the church, should state the truth of the

Christian message and interpret the truth for every new generation. Therefore, an apology is not only a defense of Christian faith against opposing viewpoints but also the answering of questions arising in a situation through the power of the Word of God. In his theology, human existence is the situation from which questions arise that are answered by the truth of the Christian message in terms relevant to human existence. The method used to accomplish this is a "method of correlation." Sharon Burch writes: "A correlation (i.e., "a mutual relationship or connection") exists between the eternal truths of the Christian message and the questions that emerge from the existential situation."<sup>6</sup> Tillich discusses theology as a constant "movement" between two "poles," namely, "the eternal truth of the Christian message" and "the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received."<sup>7</sup> Not only his *Systematic Theology*, but also his sermons show this movement. Tillich's method of correlation is a product of his own experiences: as an ordained Lutheran minister; army military chaplain during World War I; and professor at Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Union Theological Seminary New York, Harvard University, and University of Chicago.

Many factors influenced Tillich's preaching but the concept of boundary is featured prominently in any discussion of his writing, including his sermons. As Frederick Parrella writes:

Tillich lived in two worlds all his life: between a pious youth and a flamboyant later life, between two nations and cultures, between theology and philosophy, between church and world, between sacred and the secular, between the exotic and the spiritual, between obscurity and financial struggle to fame and material security, between Protestant and Catholic and between temporal and eternal.<sup>8</sup>

Tillich's view is that reality is infinitely powerful and dynamic. The deepest depth is the depth in which we confront the infinite and inexhaustible ground and abyss of all being and meaning. As such, the boundary becomes a place of great conflict and risk, but it is also the place that offers the greatest possibilities for the divine intervention that can transform human existence. James Luther Adams agrees:

This is the dialectic of human existence. Each of life's possibilities drives of its own accord to a boundary and beyond the boundary where it meets that which limits it. The man who stands on many boundaries experiences the unrest, in-

security, and inner limitations of existence in many forms. He knows the impossibility of attaining serenity, security, and perfection. This holds true in life as well as thought.<sup>9</sup>

In Tillich's sermons, he offers suggestions for living on the boundaries. His sermon titles are revealing: "Loneliness and Solitude," "The Good That I Will, I Do Not," "Spiritual Presence," "Salvation," "Be Strong," "In Thinking, Be Mature," "In Everything, Give Thanks." His sermon, "The New Being" shows, perhaps better than any other, the connection between Tillich's theology and preaching. This sermon is based on Galatians 5:16 does not only include the themes he developed in his *Systematic Theology* (specifically, in volume II), but it offers Tillich's Christological understanding: "Christianity is the message of the New Creation, the New Being, the new reality, which has appeared with the appearance of Jesus who for this reason is called the Christ. This understanding is reiterated throughout the sermon, specifically that we live in "the old state of things," but the "demand made upon us by Christianity is that we also participate in the New Creation."<sup>10</sup> *The New Being* shows Tillich's staunch refusal to accept secularism's claim that reality is exclusively confined to the material universe rendering religion to the realm of fantasy and magical thinking. Here, Tillich radically re-casts the traditional terms and symbols of Christology in order to affirm the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. According to him, if Jesus is understood as the Christ and if the Christ is to have any salvific significance for modern people, the entire terminology surrounding Jesus must be re-framed so that the symbols of Christianity may be allowed to speak again. He rejects both the notion of Jesus as a supernatural person and the idea of Christ as a mere exemplar of ethical behavior. His vision of Jesus as the Christ or as the bearer of the New Being is not confined to the historical event of Jesus, but it is rooted in the nature of what it means to human. The sermons in *The New Being* are not full-length sermons; in fact, some of them are as short as four or five pages. However, they are underscored with the conviction that the event upon which Christianity is based has two sides, namely, the historic fact of the man Jesus of Nazareth and the reception of that fact by those who acknowledge him as the Christ.

In like manner, Tillich's *The Shaking of the Foundations* and *The Eternal Now* employ ontological terms rather than the traditional terminology of the Bible or the early church. In *The Shaking of the*

*Foundations*, he sees the question of being as the fundamental question and in accordance with his method of correlation. The opening sentence in “*The Shaking of the Foundations*” says: “It is hard to speak after the prophets have spoken as they have in these pronouncements.”<sup>11</sup> Consistent with his theological method, he moves to the existential situation, saying that while in times past the prophetic words of the earth’s destruction could be ignored, the world events of the recent past make that impossible. “The visions of the prophets have become an actual, physical possibility, and might become an historical reality.” Referring to the words of Second Peter concerning the vanishing of the heavens, the melting of the elements and the burning up of the earth, Tillich makes clear reference to the threat of nuclear war. He writes: “This is no longer a vision; it has become physics.”<sup>12</sup> Utilizing the image of an atom’s power, he speaks of the divine action of creation in which the “fiery chaos of the beginning was transformed into the fertile soil of the earth.”<sup>13</sup> While humanity is fashioned with the ability to discover the “key which can unlock the forces of the ground, those forces were bound when the foundations of the earth were laid.”<sup>14</sup> Hence, humanity began to use this key and subjected it to human life, thought, and will. Here, Tillich feels that modern scientists have become the prophets of the time, telling the present generation that the very existence of the earth is threatened unless humanity changes its ways. He also focuses his sermon “Man and Earth” on the universal threat to human existence posed by the nuclear age. Using Psalm 8, he says that the representatives of the scientific community have “demanded a new line of research, a “science of survival.”<sup>15</sup> Drawing upon the image of the “Great Flood,” he says, “the only difference between our situation and that of the Flood is that in these stories, the God or gods bring about the destruction of life on earth because men have aroused divine anger. Today, the destruction and survival of life have been given in the hands of man.”<sup>16</sup>

In “The Shaking of the Foundations,” he identifies the misuse of science as idolatrous, seducing people to “believe in our earth as the place for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, to believe in ourselves as those through whom this was achieved.”<sup>17</sup> Tillich thinks it is idolatrous for humanity to believe that it can use this scientific knowledge creatively. “The human being is not God and whenever the human being has claimed to be God, and to rely on human systems of culture, technology, poli-

tics, or religion, the result has been disintegration.”<sup>18</sup> For Tillich, the source of prophetic power is identified as residing in God, “who brings doom for the sake of eternal judgment and salvation.”<sup>19</sup> God is the foundation of all foundations, the foundation that is “immovable, unchanging, unshakable, and eternal.”<sup>20</sup> Hence, God as the unshakable foundation, becomes evident in the crumbling of earthly foundations, and in the face of this “shaking of the foundation,” only two alternatives remain, namely, despair which is the certainty of eternal destruction or faith, which is the certainty of eternal salvation.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the invitation is extended to choose faith which enables one to see the manifestation of the Eternal in the “doom of the temporal” and thus to experience salvation. Similarly, in “Man and Earth,” Tillich writes: “The question of man and earth, this question that has plunged out time into such anxiety and conflict of feeling and thought cannot be answered without an awareness of the eternal presence.”<sup>22</sup> The quote from the Psalmist: “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Psalm 139) contributes to his conception of providence that is set within the context of history. For him, history possesses both an objective and subjective dimension. While the former represents factual occurrences, the latter identifies the necessary human element of reception and interpretation of these occurrences. Consequently, the human forms history as well as being formed by it. Thus, history is subject to the categories of existence, although time is its decisive category. The movement of history and its ambiguities can be conceived of as a series of pulses involving conflict and crisis between growth and decay that allows for the identification of periods. Within these periods, there are centers or moments that Tillich describes by the notion of *kairos*. These moments, even though they occur in history, and therefore under the fragmentary and ambiguous conditions of existence, represent the aim of history which is the overcoming of the disruption, between essence and existence, and the resulting conflict, destruction, and meaninglessness which seem to characterize historical existence. However, he remains firm in the conviction that the central *kairos* is the appearance of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ expressed by the eschatological symbol of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is that state in which the disruption between essence and existence, between potential and the actual, is overcome completely and universally. While the Kingdom occurs in history, it also points beyond history to the

transcendent reality of eternal life. The Kingdom of God cannot be fully grasped by the power of *kairos*, which gives meaning and direction to human existence in anticipation of the final goal of history when the Kingdom is fulfilled completely and universally. This understanding of history can give humans faith that is also courage, specifically, the ability to be and to act “in spite of” the conflicts and ambiguities of existence. In these sermons, Tillich suggests the “answer” to the ontological question of human predicament or the manifestation of what concerns humanity “ultimately.” The reception of this revelation is what he calls people to in these sermons so that “through the crumbling of a world, the rock of eternity and salvation which has no end” may be seen by people in faith.<sup>23</sup>

Each of the three volumes seeks to communicate the Christian message so that contemporary men and women can discover and re-discover the relevance and ultimate significance of Jesus the Christ. Jesus as the Christ or as the bearer of the New Being is the final revelation that judges every other revelation. In him, the reconciliation of essence and existence has been realized, constituting a new creation and a new life for all who participate in him. Such participation is possible because if Jesus as the Christ is able to maintain essential unity with God, every human being is asked to take on the “form” of the Christ participating fully in the New Being present in him. This participation constitutes salvation of which is the purpose of preaching. Tillich’s sermons are closely related to his philosophical theology and such concepts in his system are embedded in his sermons. Tillich’s sermons are thought provoking, probing, passionate, moving, practical, and theologically and philosophically oriented...even evangelical.

<sup>1</sup> Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), iii.

**CRITIQUE AND PROMISE IN PAUL  
TILlich’S POLITICAL THEOLOGY:  
ENGAGING GIORGIO AGAMBEN ON  
SOVEREIGNTY AND POSSIBILITY\***

GREGORY WALTER

“nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
inciderit”

—Horace, *Ars Poetica* 191-2

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1963), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1964), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Sharon P. Burch, *Collective Absolute Presuppositions: Tectonic Plates for Churches* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 48.

<sup>7</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick J. Parrella, *Correlatio*, “Paul Tillich’s Life and Spirituality: Some Reflections,” 2006. Publicação da Sociedade Paul Tillich do Brasil e do Grupo de Pesquisa Paul Tillich do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Religião da Universidade Metodista de São Paulo.

<sup>9</sup> James Luther Adams, *Paul Tillich’s Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

<sup>10</sup> Paul Tillich, “The New Being,” in *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955), 15. Here, Tillich is referring to Jeremiah 4:23-30; Isaiah 54:10; and Isaiah 24:18-20

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> *The Eternal Now*, 66.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>17</sup> *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 11.

**Introduction**

Theologians who seek a firm pact (*ewiger Vertrag*) between themselves and another domain have much at stake in the well-being of their partner, especially when it seems that the other sphere has significant difficulties of its own.<sup>1</sup> Giorgio Agamben has called attention to problems with the definition of the nature of the political itself. It seems, following his analysis, that the political sphere in its very constitution is unstable and indeterminate. His ex-

amination of the distinction between the political and the non-political, the ordinary and the exceptional situation undoes any boundary between the political and the barbarian. In short, the problem is that the very idea of sovereignty can turn everything into the political and therefore nothing, exactly no being, at all. There would in this sense be nothing apolitical, nothing transcending it in any sense in order to critique or modify it.<sup>2</sup> This is the ontological significance of what Michel Foucault called biopolitics, a state of affairs where the very nature of life is inescapably political.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, worse, the indeterminate character of the political under Agamben enervates any prospect for critique by its evacuation of possibility.

These problems identified by Agamben turn out to be both the bewildering question of the gift and the relationship between the political and the ontological. Paul Tillich's political theology can engage and resolve the unsettled aporia of the political and non-political by use of his conceptions of critique and promise. This requires a reassessment of Tillich's writing on immanent and transcendent critique and making use of some possibilities available in his writings that he did not see to their end: the critical potential and political significance of promise.

Such an engagement will strengthen Tillich's conception of prophetic critique and further his contributions to political theology. This is needed since Tillich's use of an intuitionist conception of how one discerns when the prophetic is present cannot stand on his own terms. Taking up Tillich will allow theologians to continue a theological correlation project in new ways that do not replicate older patterns and divisions of correlation, especially after the emergence of post-secular thinking. To fail to take up any of these initiatives would re-inscribe Blaise Pascal's cleft between the God of philosophers and of the biblical patriarchs in the domain of politics, an opposition Tillich opposed.<sup>4</sup>

Political theology—by virtue of its dual citizenship—situates itself in both the world of theological tradition and the tradition of political discourse. This joint residency is very important since it demands that radical critique and the power of gift kiss alongside of the embrace of justice and peace. Theology draws its life from the gift of God; the health of the political depends upon critical reflection. Put together, political theology demands a critical involvement, a measure, a publicity that theology has long labored to engage. But the stakes for such a union are higher: one might suggest that the gift is

the dire opposite of the critical since the gift demands acceptance, its offering requests it be taken up or refused while critique seeks to weigh, judge, and obtain distance. Immanuel Kant wrote on behalf of many when he wrote that the gift or the given smacks of the dogmatic and oppressive but having recourse to publicly examinable principles is the gold with which the critical path is paved.<sup>5</sup> Because of this challenge of combining the gift and the critical, political theology must heed its practical callings at many ports but always returning to drop anchor in the harbor of fundamental ontology. Tillich directly contributes to this question since he articulated theological criticism, which he called the prophetic, as a peculiar gift to immanent criticism.

In order to develop this union of the critique and the gift at the site of the political, I will first examine the aporia of sovereignty and the political that Agamben has examined. Next, I will revisit Tillich's writing on critique and gift and show how that writing can serve more purposes by developing the prophetic in the category of promise. This will lead to his own proposed fundamental ontology in the nature of potency, and of the gift and the significance of Tillich's argument in addressing the aporia of sovereignty and proposing another relationship of the political to the theological.

### **The Aporia of Sovereignty and the Political Animal**

Giorgio Agamben's wide-ranging essay, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, presents the aporias of political power as rooted in the very nature of the political itself.<sup>6</sup> Agamben begins his study by noting Aristotle's classical distinction between life (*bios*) and animal life (*zoe*) and the foundation of his inquiry on the political animal (*politikon zoen*).<sup>7</sup> The creation of the political involves the expulsion of bare life from its sphere. This power constitutes itself by its ability to exclude, and strangely, to include the excluded. Agamben aims to understand "why Western politics first constitutes itself through an exclusion (which is simultaneously an inclusion) of bare life."<sup>8</sup> Power, in this sense, cannot have any boundaries and so can extend limitlessly and to even absorb the outlying territory into its interior.<sup>9</sup>

In order to illustrate the extension of the political through sovereign power, Agamben invokes Herman Melville's *Bartleby, The Scrivener*, but we might find another figure in the Magistrate and the barbarian woman from J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*.<sup>10</sup> These two display the inscription of



imperial power in their bodies as the result of the power of the Empire that the Magistrate once served. The Empire intrudes on his border village since it has decided it is at war with the barbarians surrounding it. This Magistrate, long out of the reach of the centers of power on the edge of an anonymous Empire, criticized the futile efforts of the Empire to combat the barbarians surrounding them as well as their status as convenient fictions for the Empire's sovereignty. When the soldiers of the Empire campaigned to destroy these barbarians, all they could round up was some fisher-folk. Yet, when the Magistrate opposed the Empire's efforts, he was himself arrested, tortured, and imprisoned.

The Magistrate's history invokes Agamben's analysis of power and the constitution of the political as necessarily including what it has rejected and shaping each of its citizens as excluded in potential. As Agamben notes in his introduction, we may make a more modest claim about the argument by looking at what analysis has led us to wonder not just about the "possible articulations of the good life," as he puts it, but why this definition of the political includes and excludes life itself.<sup>11</sup> This construction of the political in principle can combat and therefore exclude life itself, not just this or that modality of life. Nothing may escape the sovereign since the sovereign may make all into nothing. Or, to put it more strictly, the sovereign already countenances everything within his or her domain as nothing in potentiality, to place sovereign power in the schematic of being and non-being, a key to Agamben's analysis and its resolution in Tillich's essay.

As the Magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians* discovered, the Empire he served needs its barbarians in order to exist, no matter how fantastic and phantasmal they really are. As he observed in his small frontier town, wave after wave of military expedition was unable to engage or defeat any barbarians. But that did not stop the Empire's use of them to constitute their power, their nation, and their way of ordering human life. Coetzee's Empire needs them within its bounds just as much as it seeks to expel them without. Lacking flesh-and-bone barbarians, it will transform its own servants into them. The Magistrate, calling the Empire's actions folly, was made into a barbarian.

For Agamben, this amounts to the chief aporia of sovereignty: though it concerns political life, it turns or can turn any of its own, those who live within the bounds, into bare life, into the outsider. There is no life that is not political and no politics

that does not concern life. This is biopolitics if not "thanatopolitics."<sup>12</sup>

### **Sovereignty and Potentiality**

This complex and provocative thesis merits attention.<sup>13</sup> Agamben challenges political thinkers, like Carl Schmitt did, to seek out notions of power that can escape this problem. But, unlike Schmitt, he translates the problem of power into reflection on being and metaphysics, a translation that makes it easier to see the theological significance of a political sphere that is radically unstable.<sup>14</sup> Even if the sovereign power is constituted by the transfer of an inalienable right to the executive, Agamben holds that exceptional powers always threaten polities of every kind, including Western democracies. Despite the practical issues this may raise from a sovereign power that retains all potency reserves being for itself and does not permit any way to think otherwise. Agamben argues that Western practices of power find their ontological correlates in the relationship of possibility and actuality. Any way of remedying this aporia must find its way in ontological deliberation.

In general, Western thought privileges actuality over possibility in its conception of being. In order to avoid leaving this as an empty and general observation, it is important to note that what this privilege grants actuality depends upon the elaborations of what such priority indicates, of course, but the priority of actuality seems to leave possibility as a derivative concept, a shadow or dream of what might be. The significance of Agamben's examination of the political and sovereignty rests on this privilege.

Discussing this potency begins properly with Schmitt's *Political Theology*. The state of exception in Schmitt's thought requires a translation or grounding in ontology since he claims that the sovereign decides when the state of exception is in effect.<sup>15</sup> This means that the exceptional is always lurking in potentiality within the ordinary constituted order. Part of this amounts to the way one anticipates in thought the exceptional. This problem may be stated as the problem of how to anticipate that which exceeds all expectations. Schmitt thought legislative or constitutional efforts to define the exceptional in advance were futile.<sup>16</sup> Since the sovereign must have this power to confront the exceptional situation, according to Schmitt, the exception is always within the ordinary constitution of things since the sovereign is ceded "exceptional powers" that can address the unanticipated.<sup>17</sup> Schmitt argued that this issue of exceptionality affects all polities,

no matter their form. Because the sovereign can decide the exceptional, anything may be turned into a state of exception, in Schmitt's view, even if the sovereign only possesses legitimacy through a democratic regime. Thus, the natural outcome of this is that life is capable of being undone; every citizen is potentially an outcast and bandit.

The sort of existence one accords this depends entirely upon the sort of being potency possesses, if one may say it has any at all. Agamben makes two points regarding this. First, if political life earns its definition by a negative relation and an ordered life to the good, it is constituted by the relation to the exceptional, that which exceeds politics and therefore included in it.<sup>18</sup> This means, second, that the potency we experience always threatens to undermine any actual life we have. Agamben defines sovereign power succinctly: the sovereign, by virtue of his or her power, can always undercut life itself.

The constitution of the ordinary by the excluded, the human by the quasi-human wolf-man, and the political by the state of exception demands a new concept of possibility in order to think the political afresh and prevent its downfall into a spiral of pure exceptionality. Agamben states the need clearly: "...only if it is possible to think the relation between potentiality and actuality differently—and even to think beyond this relation...a political theory freed from the aporias of sovereignty remains unthinkable."<sup>19</sup>

Agamben calls for a potency that is freed from any relation to actuality and so freed from any ban. Just as the outcast or bandit is forever marked, by his or her exclusion, by the ban, being calls for a new conception in order to free it from its cancellation or annihilation. Tillich's writing on prophetic critique can untie this knot by showing and developing the potency of promise and rethinking that relation.

### Potentiality and Gift

The path to address this aporia begins with Agamben's invocation of the figure of the gift in his ontological grounding of sovereign power. Since sovereignty is a power that decides what is exceptional and what is not, it is a power that relates the actual and potential to each other, according some actual and others potential being. In order to elaborate the being of sovereignty, Agamben refers to Aristotle's discussion of potentiality and actuality in *De anima* on the faculties of sensation, writing that potentiality is in fact saved in actuality as a gift of itself to itself.<sup>20</sup> Agamben render the word *epidosis*

as "giving."<sup>21</sup> This dissents from the majority of English translations of this word as "develop" or "alter."<sup>22</sup> Aristotle meant that by doing something that one has the power or faculty to do does not alter oneself (for instance, as a tree alters itself as it grows) but gives oneself to oneself. Since Agamben's construal of potency implies that potency and actuality are neither parts of a whole nor subordinate to each other but that potency gives actuality to itself, we find that the actual has no priority in the power exercised by the sovereign. That which is actual does not master itself in this scheme. Rather, potentiality rules over actuality since it always retains the possibility of giving this or that being at all. This may seem metaphysically exotic since we ordinarily take that which is actual to possess more being than that which is a mere possibility. Actual coffee tastes better than a potential cup. But this counter-intuitive claim about the priority of the possible in sovereignty is part of the dangers that attend it.

Further analysis of both his statement of potency and his conception of the gift is needed since Agamben's choice to render *epidosis* as "to give" can imply a kind of subjectivity or agency on the part of the growing tree. This, of course, is one of the great questions about gift and its possible semantic relationship to the given or phenomenological donation: Are gifts and the given personal or impersonal or some middling combination thereof?<sup>23</sup> Does potential, when it gives, divest itself of what it has when it gives actuality to itself? Does the white-on-white of pure potency ever bear the marks of other color? Perhaps, the giving of actuality by potency is a kind of surplus that does not diminish what the being potency has. This sort of gift does not give in the sense of an ordinary gift, a thing alienable from a donor to recipient. Though potency gives actuality to itself, in Agamben's formulation, what makes sovereignty aporetic is that it always retains itself as potentiality. It gives to itself and to no other since any gift of actuality that it gives never gives itself away. The barbarian is included in the political because it is no real outsider, no exception because it either never gives to another nor does it receive.

Though actuality appears to be the result of potentiality's gift, it is not all of what potency is. The gift of actuality to itself exhausts neither the possible nor sovereign. In practical terms, this means that the sovereign, even when operating within the limits of a constitution or other political order, always retains possibility to decide for an exceptional situation, and

so may suspend the ordinary constitution again. Yet, the manner in which this gift bears its formulation, it gives without loss, without appearance is itself the conditions for possibility and impossibility of all giving. For potentiality to appear in its entirety as potentiality would amount to its full actualization and so lose its ability to not-be. If the gift were to appear at all and so be recognized as gift, it cannot be purely given and so would demand return.<sup>24</sup> As the exchange of the gift of being from itself to itself, potentiality or sovereign power demands a return of the being it gives so far as it appears.

This seemingly reflexive construction of possibility as a gift of itself to itself shows the blind alley facing Agamben and the need for an exit. One of the particular difficulties it engenders is that since sovereign power always retains possibility to itself it evacuates all other corners of the air of possibility. Lacking any resources of the possible, critics cannot propose alternatives to the sovereign. Criticism depends upon the discovery of possibility and when it lacks it, its own powers wither. Restoring the critical and the political requires a reconsideration of possibility, sovereignty, and the relationship of critique to gift. To that end, we now turn at last to Tillich's work.

### Critique and Gift

Tillich's writing unites critique and gift. The main resource for this is his 1929 essay, *Protestantism as Critical and Creative Principle*.<sup>25</sup> In this writing, Tillich provided an important impulse to examining the aporia between the political and the non-political and he introduced a different manner of thinking.<sup>26</sup> He upheld the two demands of any theology of correlation: reciprocity between the political and the theological as well as the autonomy and individual integrity of each. I will show how the lines of thought in this essay on critique and gift alter this correlation project in a way that upholds these essential demands even if it seems to weaken the autonomy of the two domains of the theological and the political.

In the course of this essay, Tillich proposes two kinds of critique: rational and prophetic. Rational criticism is wholly immanent and depends upon the transformation of reason has developed throughout history. Rational criticism does not aspire to an eternal and unchanging set of norms but relies instead upon its immanent and contingent judgments.<sup>27</sup> Prophetic critique, on the other hand, is unconditioned.<sup>28</sup> It relies on no norm or immanent measure whatso-

ever; instead, it offers an absolute affirmation and negation to the finite. Since Tillich had worried that the prophetic power of religious socialism and the early dialectical theology would remain abstract and silent before the world, it became decisive for him to articulate the interrelationship of these two kinds of critique in order to uphold the political significance of prophetic critique. He wrote that prophetic criticism is concrete only in a rational form and that it gives depth and boundaries through its limitless source, unbounded grace.<sup>29</sup> This is the site of the gift.

There is, then, for Tillich, no prophetic critique not an immanent critique; to claim that there is some finite criticism or norm in itself, as the unconditioned judgment of God, would entertain Tillich's charge of idolatry and demonization.<sup>30</sup> The depth of any criticism may be given to it by transcendent and prophetic critique.<sup>31</sup> This puts his conception of criticism and the relationship of the immanent and transcendent in the *agon* of the gift because immanent criticism articulated out of rational or finite norms is given its depth or weight by the prophetic.

Because the prophetic appears within the immanent and never apart from those forms, it is needful to discern when an immanent critique has this depth. If prophetic criticism always has the form of an immanent critique, we need to be able to identify when such an immanent critique bears prophetic depth or when it is merely immanent. Tillich offered few criteria to discern where and when such a depth may be. It would seem that detecting a prophetic critique would easily fail since it does not permit an ordinary canon of judgment or sensibility. There seems like there could be no school one could attend to develop this skill. In the essay, like in much of his writing, Tillich relied on his concepts of *kairos* and other intuitionist criteria. These criteria succumb to difficulties since they are not readily public in the sense of readily available or given to the consent of many. So, as interpreters of Tillich have rightly pointed out, this "intuitionism" needs discursive or procedural supplementation to develop Tillich's thought further.<sup>32</sup> His preferred manner of discerning the presence of the prophetic is non-discursive and immediate, ways that do not aid the development of political theology and its attempt to make itself public.<sup>33</sup>

Though we must expand or correct Tillich's use of *kairos*, it remains important to uphold his worry that thought or practice might objectify the prophetic and abrogate its gift-like character. Any extension of Tillich's thought should tend to this dimension of his

work since the form of grace, the unconditioned, is the power that drives prophetic criticism.

### **Promise as Gift**

In order to address these questions, let us take up a line of reflection in Tillich's writing, the way of gift as promise. That way begins with the labors of the historian and theologian Karl Holl and other members of the Luther Renaissance in the 1920s. Their recovery of Luther's early exegetical writings, such as his lectures on Romans, had enormous significance for theology and hermeneutics in the Twentieth Century, reaching far beyond the circles of Protestants in Weimar Germany. Therefore, we should not be surprised that Tillich attended to their work; Tillich is frequently credited with naming this movement; he evaluated its significance and failings in various writings.<sup>34</sup> Tillich noted that Holl had found the power of Luther's prophetic criticism but never made it contemporary; Holl, in Tillich's judgment, only represented Luther's prophetic rationality in its Sixteenth Century form. He failed to adapt and transform it into an idiom needed in Holl's own Weimar Germany.<sup>35</sup> This had the dual effect of making Luther appear as a reactionary force and prevented his writings from having any significance in the present day. Tillich's criticism of Holl is a lament that something in Holl's work remained unrefined since he did not constructively engage Luther's theology. We will address Tillich's lament by indicating how Tillich's prophetic and something like Holl's recovery of Luther on promise will address the aporia of the political.

Holl undertook a revision of various formulations of justification by faith in light of his recovery of Luther's exegetical writings. He identified the category of promise as the central metaphor of Luther's thought and developed it to consider a variety of issues from hermeneutics to ecclesiology. He advocated a return to the conceptuality of promise even though his followers and critics amended and revised his work. Though working out this conceptuality has an importance in its own right, for our purposes it is sufficient to indicate that promise is the sign under which the path of criticism, gift, and sovereignty may converge as well as indicating that Holl's reflection on promise, as much writing on promise does, demands a further development. This can be gotten by considering promising in its relationship to gift-exchange and the kinds of gift economies considered by Marcel Mauss and his philosophical and anthropological heirs. This can bring

to the fore a line of thought in Tillich's reflection on the prophetic as a way to address Agamben's difficulties.

By placing promise amidst the various construals of gift, we can see that a promise is both the pure gift advocated by Derrida as well as the ordinary gift of Mauss that can engage the economy of give-and-take.<sup>36</sup> The divine promise, which demands interaction and development with narrative, time, and its possibility, can not only behave in a way that satisfies the problems of the gift but also enables a sort of possibility and so sovereignty that is communicable and dis-possessive. Because it is this sort of gift, promise shares in the unconditioned gift championed by Jacques Derrida as well as in the gift that demands reciprocity and competitive giving as articulated by Marcel Mauss. The disagreements surrounding the gift largely concern its ontological significance as well as the sort of force it possess to press obligation or debt on its recipients, both matters that promise can address. Both of these matters pertain to our examination.

Tillich construed the gift and form of prophetic criticism as non-objective yet present. Grace as a gift cannot be fixed yet must address its recipients if it might give depth to immanent criticism. To avoid fixing the prophetic in a finite form, to prevent prophetic criticism from assuming a plastic and immovable shape in history, Tillich leaned toward intuitionism and the oracular as a way of construing grace as a non-objective gift. Yet, this gift anticipates the future and is eschatological in its scope. Indeed, this motion does preserve the aleatoric and transcendent character of the prophetic, but it could be as apolitical as Tillich thought dialectical theology was by its insistence that God is always other than the world.<sup>37</sup> These goals of Tillich's must be upheld without losing the political significance of the prophetic; the latter needs to interact with the ordinary and immanent give-and-take.

A promise is a gift. Yet, it is a gift that warps the ordinary economy of giving. In this, any thinker that develops promise as a gift must attend to those who are interested in interrupting the ordinary gift economies that the anthropologists since Marcel Mauss have considered. Because a promise consists of a given pledge and its ultimate fulfillment, it can be considered a doubled and extended gift. As Karl Holl indicated, a promise has a doubled gift: one first promises, offering a token, down payment, or one's word as a pledge of the promised gift.<sup>38</sup> One next fulfills that promise by giving the promised gift.

These two gifts are actually a single, doubled gift since they are related to one another. The promise is an extended gift since the promised token and its final gift are separated in time; as Mauss indicated that gifts take and make time, a promise requires time.<sup>39</sup> The time that obtains between the doubled token and gift is the promise's extension.

More importantly, how a promise is exchanged differentiates it from other forms of the gift along with its doubling and extension. Where the ordinary gift consists of the exchange that leaves the recipient in the debt of the donor, the promise dis-possesses itself and inverts the order of debt. The proper worry about gifts is the debt they inflict on their recipients. Mauss indicated that gifts must be returned. Divine gifts in this mode would be worst of all since they carry with them servitude that cannot be escaped. What creature of finite resources can repay a divine gift? A promise reverses this order of debt since the donor has not given anything yet, just a token or word. The donor, not the recipient, assumes the obligation to give. This dis-possesses the donor by a radical act of assuming debt rather than issuing it, an act that will allow this reformulation of Tillich's prophetic critique to address the problem of potency and sovereignty. While the potency Agamben described gives actuality to itself it does so by always indebts or obligates actuality to potency; this means that the existence actuality possesses always can be returned to pure potential or nothingness. The sovereign may always undo its subjects, taking away their existence. One promising gives away potency and actuality, as we shall see.

Yet, we should note that the initial token of the promise Derrida took up another way to think the gift without these obligations. Comparing his pure gift with the promise, we note several matters. Because the pledged token is not the fulfillment of the promise itself, it resembles this pure gift. Derrida took an example of the impossibility of a pure gift a counterfeit coin circulated in Charles Baudelaire's "Counterfeit Money."<sup>40</sup> One dimension of Baudelaire's brief poem is the ambiguity that attends one character's gift to a beggar: did he give a real coin and only say it was counterfeit to preserve his dignity in front of his friend, so he might "give in secret" as Jesus demanded?<sup>41</sup> The two friends had encountered the beggar, offered some money to him, and then the friend of the narrator speculated what might happen with the counterfeit coin. But did he really offer a counterfeit coin? A promised token does not forever defer or resist closure, unlike the

putative counterfeit coin that is never tested to see if it is real or not. It is ambiguous so long as the pledge remains unfulfilled. But the expectation of the recipient need not dissipate into endless dissemination. Rather, the token bears a relationship to the future and so the donor, by giving her word in fact hands over sovereignty, hands over honor, and transfers her name to the recipient. This sort of gift is "given back" to the donor when the recipient trusts her. The donor receives honor from the one promised in this trust. The counter-gift of trust is truly free and uncoerced since the token is not the gift promised but is its double. In the case of a biblical example, the promises made to Abraham are given to him in tokens, words, and ritual but they are not themselves the gift promised; this is the case even if we generalize the various scenes of promise.

This doubled character of a promise satisfies Tillich's description of prophetic critique. It cannot be fixed yet must appear present.<sup>42</sup> If the prophetic were to appear forever cemented in finitude, it would fail to be prophetic, it would cease to be the transcendent. Likewise, Tillich claims that any "form of grace," any immanent appearance of prophetic critique, will always anticipate a future.<sup>43</sup> It will always rightly hold open the hope of a future, a utopia perhaps, or the fulfilled Reign of God.

The sort of possibility and actuality that accompanies this notion of promise Tillich describes in his essay as a giving that is communicable and therefore dis-possessive of its own sovereignty. While Agamben's analysis of potentiality issues in a being that forever retains its own power while giving itself to itself in actuality, being promised communicates itself to another, to the one outside of itself and so offers itself in a differential (the token) so as to fulfill itself to another. Thus, we can see that another kind of possibility is needed to reconstruct the political. The promise addresses, refers, and performs; this is the case even if the promise is in some sense creative of the one the promiser addresses, as is the case of giving new names to Abram and Sarah. Contrast this with a pure gift that never arrives, never present to consciousness. The pure gift may interrupt but it does not create in the way that a gift as promise does. It, as Tillich pointed out, may criticize and negate without ever saying Yes or issuing in new forms, all actions that preserve the purity of the gift from any exchange.

We may now put these things together in order to address the difficulties raised by Agamben. Promise goes beyond his construal of gift and potency by

not giving actuality to itself but to another. It is not a gift that is given only within identity or one that retains the sovereign potential but is instead promised to another being.

This concept of potentiality in being promised does not rest on a self-contained or self-giving gift. If we inscribe the promise in place of the ordinary gift in Agamben's translation of *epidosis*, we find that the stranger still intrudes on the constituted and ordinary political situation but not in the aporetic way Agamben has demonstrated. Rather, the promise is a gift that addresses another, taking the stranger as neighbor, to serve and dis-possesses itself to the neighbor. The agonistic gift is competitive and challenges the other; the pure gift shocks, interrupts, or haunts the other. Agamben's construction of the stranger, as well as the way the stranger demands an absolute hospitality in the manner of the pure gift, both retain a chasm or equivocity between self and stranger, between home and exile.<sup>44</sup> Being promised can address this fundamental chasm, as an analogical approach might, by its dispossession and address.

Far from resisting transparency and critique, Tillich's prophetic critique in our modification is one that is debatable, contestable, and weak, a key to showing how our proposal is discursive and public. Indeed, this view of promise and critique would, if carried out in the political sphere Agamben considers, amount to the sovereign handing him or herself over to be judged and accounted for by the barbarian. Put into ontological terms, this being promised communicates itself to the other, not merely to itself and so risks, steps outside of itself. In the terms of gift exchange, any one promising hands over her or his name, his identity to another. So, the ability of the sovereign to make good on the promise is in question until it is fulfilled. The sovereign awaits the Yes or No of the outsider, the one promised who can credit the sovereign that she or he is indeed worthy of trust. A promise is otherwise than sovereign because it communicates its possibility to another and so makes itself transparent to the other and thus may be said to dispossess him or herself. To take an important example, Cain may have received the ban from God but God's mark of protection holds God in Cain's debt if Cain trusts God. No sovereign can expel like that; so, God's promising occurs otherwise than sovereign. But it is neither beyond sovereignty nor is it utterly non-sovereign because the final gift is only available to the one promised by virtue of his or her according truth to the one prom-

ising, receiving the promised token in trust. That first token is still not yet the gift promised. Sovereignty is neither utterly transcended nor is it abandoned altogether.

### Otherwise than Sovereign

In constructing a way out of the aporias Agamben articulates, a theologian laboring to consider the political and the theological together should pay heed to Horace's playwriting advice: do not bring a god into the narrative unless the plot's problem merits the god's entrance. The theologian must avoid the temptation to absorb the sphere of the political into the theological and to first consider how forces and agents immanent to the political can attend to the problems facing it. This should not avoid the important insights of Schmitt and others that find that modern political philosophy often has drawn its breath from secularized theological and ecclesiological concepts. Nevertheless, it would do considerable violence to political thought to demand that it depend in its entirety upon prophetic criticism and the form-without-form of divine judgment. Instead, we must look for the way that prophetic judgment and its concept of promise has immanent effect and the way that promise itself mediates between the divine gift and the immanent reciprocal gift. Once again, it is promise and its being that will permit these connections; we will rely on the interaction and interruption of the promise.

We can now indicate how this revised form of prophetic criticism as gift can open itself to public reason, afford a free exchange between the political and theological, and sustain the political. Each of these achievements depends upon the nature of the promise as a kind of gift between the pure and agonistic forms of the gift.

Because the promise extends and depends upon trust, it opens a space fertile for free exchange and responsibility purged of agonism. It is the merit, I think, of Milbank's writing on gift to identify the difficulties that face the pure gift while attempting to uphold the exchange of gifts in peace. This free and non-competitive reciprocity depends upon the doubling of the promise into its initial token and final gift. The first token might be symbolically related to the final gift, as the deed and keys are to the house, but they are simply not the final gift. This difference is decisive for addressing the character of competition and the threat of violent giving, the offer one cannot refuse, since the token is nothing, a trace, perhaps, a little something that requires trust in order

for it to have any significance. Because the promise is doubled into token, it does not have reality without trust. The promiser may indeed go on to deliver the final gift without anyone according him or her truth, but there is no debt created here since the significance of this token depends upon the trust of the one receiving it. It has no force without it and so does not replicate the way the appearance of one bearing gifts carries with it the threat of acceptance or rejection.

But even when the token is received in trust, there is no debt created since the final gift has not yet arrived. One might feel obligation in anticipation of the gift but such obligation differs from that which a gift would actually have received rather than a gift one might receive. Because of the translation of obligation into the future, it opens up a space for exchange without debt. One can take this token in trust and then return to God without debt, without obligation in freedom. Derrida constructed the pure gift in order to preserve it from exchange and reciprocity. He did not thereby think that the gift so purified would not affect the world of exchange, forever hovering aloft. Rather, his preferred way of describing the gift is as an interruption, a trace, or cinders that would in some oblique or indirect way haunt or challenge the ordinary economy. By contrast, because the giving of the promise indebts God to the one promised in some sense, this token and final gift enter into the already existing exchange of gifts in human culture or the political sphere. Derrida's gift, in some of its formulations, could parallel the conservatism that Tillich feared among dialectical theologians when they refused to allow God to interact with the world for fear of tainting God's wholly otherness. This refusal would prevent the token offered in promise as well as the one promised from entering into the give-and-take of life with the token in hand or the trust of the word, even though it can radically challenge by its interruption of gift economy.

This kind of free exchange shows why promise does not accept the given without a critical reserve; it does not merely endorse political realities as it finds them. It does not introduce new immanent criterion for judging the political; rather it, as Tillich indicated, opens possibility. The prophetic can provide an engine for addressing the construction of sovereignty as Schmitt has outlined it, as it seems to threaten human life; it can do so by endorsing political practices that are in fact otherwise than sovereign that involve the establishment of free reciprocity and a field of exchange among equals without domina-

tion or debt. This seems to be the task that Tillich ascribes to the congregation: "The congregation should not take itself as a higher sociological form than other forms of community life, rather as a particular expression of the transcendental meaning of sociological forms....such a church that the social forms should elaborate their transcendental content-meaning."<sup>45</sup> The church, Tillich asserts, should be the place for this deliberation and anticipation. In short, he proposes the church as the site of promise.

All this could work in an adaptation of Tillich's writing without addressing his "intuitionism" until we now take up the way to discern and think the promise in specific gifts and promises. Because the promised token is itself not a gift in the rudimentary sense but only the initial sign of what the donor promises, its being as possibility additionally enables discourse and debate about the promise. The doubled character of the promise or prophetic can also enable us to think about prophetic criticism as itself debatable. Its status as knowledge is not final and is revisable since the token is but a trace of the final promised gift. It invites trust but does not demand it. This means that any sign already is partaking of the ordinary economy of exchange of gifts.

The decisive question remains: what is promised? What offered gift can we take as the token as promise among the wealth of signs and givens that wash through the world? Owing to his view of prophetic criticism, Tillich claimed that yesterday's prophetic act may be in need of revision and criticism today. This means that few or no signs may be taken as offered tokens. However, it would not be the case, he thinks, that Protestantism simply would carry out a sort of semiotic iconoclasm, wringing its hands, worried that every sign in the world is always a failing. Interestingly, at the end of his essay, he turns to the congregation and there we may find some ways to construe the prophetic as sign of the cross. Tillich does not develop what he calls the Protestant form of grace, a chastened form that would dissent in his view from the objectification of what he calls Catholicism. Of course, this is a severely limited judgment on Tillich's part since his there are many vibrant accounts of the Eucharist—Catholic and Protestant—together with their practical and political significance are deeply marked by the same engagements and imperatives that Tillich raised.<sup>46</sup> These senses of Eucharist still would benefit from reflection on promise and its local form in the congregation has a better sense when it is framed by the Eucharist as site of promise, gift, exchange, and free

reciprocity. Eucharist, briefly, invokes the character of promise as the offering of Jesus' testament as well as a mutual action that is both *communio* as exchange between God and creation as well as in and amidst creation. It would not take much to think through the Eucharist as the liturgical action and embodiment of promise, to reconsider it and its practice toward being otherwise than sovereign as I have written here.

More, of course remains to be said about the character of the prophetic and promissory in this scene. Much remains to be developed in conversation with Tillich's work to continue the work of political reasoning in and with the prophetic, searching for other ways and rationale to take the form or locus of divine promise, and the character of the interaction between God's gift as participation in the divine being, the breath of the Spirit that gives life and the promise that renews all things, all important subjects to which Tillich and others contribute. Nevertheless, the concept of possibility and promised being that we have found can develop and expand a concept of the political that does not include what it excludes, indeed, does not embrace only the abandoned. By finding the sign of the promise, we have discovered that being otherwise than sovereign does not move beyond ordinary sovereignty. It does not seek to dispel the realm of political autonomy with an ecclesial life beyond the realm of non-ecclesial humanity. Yet it recognizes the embrace of the marginal and barbarian that ordinary sovereignty includes by excluding. Finally, owing to the indeterminate character of a promissory note, the pledge, it does not trump, overwhelm, or absorb the world. It calls instead for trust in the one promising.

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\* Revised version of paper given at the Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group for the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Chicago, November 2008. I am grateful to the fellow participants and the discussion that followed the paper as well as the comments of my colleague Peder Jothen. Any remaining errors are my responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> John P. Clayton gives an essential account of correlating theology by elaborating two conditions that distinguish it from other approaches to theology in modernity: autonomy and reciprocity. See *The Concept of Correlation: Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 34-42. The phrase "ewiger Vertrag" comes from Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Zweites Sendschreiben an Lücke* (1829) in KGA I/10,

350.30-351.12. See Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation*, 39, n. 15 for discussion of the meaning of this phrase.

<sup>2</sup> Nikolas Kompidas, without any reference to Agamben, points out in his review of the state of contemporary critical theory needs to provide possibility that elaborates a chance to think and be otherwise than the way things are. See *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 21-23.

<sup>3</sup> Foucault first defined biopolitics in these terms: "modern humanity is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question," *Histoire de la sexualité: La volonté de savior* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 188.

<sup>4</sup> "The correlation of ontology and biblical religion is an infinite task. There is no special ontology that we have to accept ...to ask the ontological question is a necessary task. Against Pascal I say: The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the God of the philosophers is the same God," in *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 85.

<sup>5</sup> "Wenn ich von allem Inhalte der Erkenntnis, objectiv betrachtet, abstrahire, so ist alles Erkenntnis subjectiv entweder historisch oder rational. Die historische Erkenntnis ist *cognito ex datis*, die rationale aber *cognitio ex principiis*." *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1787) B 864; AKA 3, 540. He made the connection to the dogmatic at B 764; AKA 3, 482. We use these by extension to the categories of criticism and gift-exchange.

<sup>6</sup> *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a1-18.

<sup>8</sup> *Homo Sacer*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> It seems that one way of addressing Agamben's concerns would follow from stating that Aristotle does not define the political in essence but distinguish it on the basis of its appearance, eschewing any attempt to get at the being of the political. Readers of Aristotle are divided on this matter. See the following examinations of Aristotle's definition of politics: John M. Cooper, "Political Animals and Civic Friendship" in *Aristotle's Politics: Critical Essays*, eds., Richard Kraut and Steven Skultety (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2005), 65-90; Richard Bodéüs, "L'Animal politique et l'animal économique" in *Aristotelica: Mélanges offerts a Marcel De Corte* (Liège: Presses Universitaires, 1985), 65-81; Wolfgang Kullmann, "Man as Political Animal in Aristotle" in *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 94-117.

<sup>10</sup> New York: Penguin Books, 1980.



<sup>11</sup> *Homo Sacer*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>13</sup> Agamben does not eschew consideration of political philosophy in the sense that Foucault did, owing to his use of Carl Schmitt's *Politische Theologie*. Agamben refers to Foucault, *La volonté de savoir* and his refusal to take up theories of sovereignty in his analysis of power. Foucault seems to have taken more account of these theories in his Collège de France lectures. See, for instance, Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> This is his attempt to find a truly practical thinking that sees *phronesis* as first philosophy. See Agamben, "Poesis and Praxis" in *Man without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 68-93.

<sup>15</sup> "Soverän ist, wer über den Ausnahmezustand entscheidet," *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2004), 13; "Sovereign is he [sic] who decides the exception," Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the complex situation surrounding Schmitt's formulation of the exceptional in the Weimer era, see John P. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 121-156; George Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936* (Westport: Greenwood, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> The exception cannot "be circumscribed factually and made to conform to a pre-formed law," *Politische Theologie*, 18; *Political Theology*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> It is not bare life or unspeaking life, since Aristotle defines political life through speech and organized work (*ergon*) and not reason. See Aristotle, *Historia animalium*, 488a; there Aristotle groups animals together according to the society they obtain through their activity and not their capacity for reason. Notably, humans and bees are both political animals since they have a common work.

<sup>19</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> *De anima* II, 5 (417b).

<sup>21</sup> Agamben translates the entire passage in this way: "patire non è un termine semplice, ma, in un senso, è una certa distruzione attraverso il principio contrario, in un altro è piuttosto la conservazione (*sōteriā*, la salvazione) di ciò che è in Potenza da parte di ciò che è simile ad esso...Poiché colui che possiede la scienza (in Potenza) diventa contemplante in atto, e questo o non è un'alterazione—poiché si ha qui dono a stesso e all'atto (*epidosis eis*

(*epidosis eis eautó*)—ovvero è un'alterazione di altra specie," *Homo Sacer: Il potero sovrano e la nuda vita* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1995), 53.

<sup>22</sup> As done in, for example, Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (New York: Penguin, 1986) 170-171

<sup>23</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Donner le temps: 1. Le fausse monnaie* (Paris: Galiléé, 1991), 71-77. Translated into English by Peggy Kamuf as *Given Time: 1 Counterfeit Money* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 50-52; "On the Gift: A Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, Moderated by Richard Kearney" in *God, The Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds., John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 58-59.

<sup>24</sup> "S'il le reconnaît comme donne, si le don lui apparaît comme tel, si le present lui est present comme present, cette simple reconnaissance suffit pour annule le don. Pourquoi? Parce qu'elle rend, à la place, disons, de la chose meme, un equivalent symbolique. Le symbolique ici, on ne peut meme pas dire qu'il re-constitue l'échange et annule le don dans la dette," Jacques Derrida, *Donner le temps*, 26; *Given Time*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> "Der Protestantismus als kritisches und gestalten-des Prinzip" (1929) in *Theological Writings*, ed. Gert Hummel, *Main Works/Hauptwerke* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) vol. 6, 127-150. Hereafter cited as MW/HW 6. Translated into English by James L. Adams and Victor Nuovo as "Protestantism as a Critical and Creative Principle," in *Political Expectation*, ed. James L. Adams (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 10-39. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. I cite the English translation for ease of reference.

<sup>26</sup> Tillich sought to take up the challenge left to the last century of constructing a theology that mediated between theology itself and human culture, broadly construed. In this essay, *Über die Idee einer Theologie die Kultur*, Tillich outlined much of his subsequent task, no matter its lapidary formulations and his shifting use of these concepts, especially as demonstrated by John Powell Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation*, 191-221. Here one may read his proposal for thinking of the relationship between religion and culture as *Gestalt* and *Gehalt*. These two metaphors have either together or singly been the axel and motor of correlation in theology. Less so has his writing on critique and prophetic theology. Pursuing these underdeveloped metaphors can aid the reconstruction of a theology of correlation in its various domains, as I have outlined here, at least for political theology.

<sup>27</sup> "Die erste Art der Kritik hat einen Maßstab und kann von ihm aus Ja und Nein verteilen. Das ist ein ra-

tionales Unternehmen, auch wenn der Maßstab selbst nicht rational gewonnen ist." MW/HW 6, 128; *Political Expectation*, 10.

<sup>28</sup> "Der zweite Art der Kritik hat keinen Maßstab; denn das, was jenseits der Gestaltung liegt, ist keine verwendbare zum Meßen benutzbare Gestalt. Sie verteilt darum auch nicht das Ja und Nein, sondern sie verbindet ein unbedingtes Nein mit einem unbedingtem Ja," Ibid., 128; *Political Expectation*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> "[i]n der rationalen Kritik wird die prophetische konkret. In der prophetischen Kritik erhält die rationale ihre Tiefe und ihre Grenze, ihre Tiefe durch die Unbedingtheit der Anspruchs, ihre Grenze durch die Gnade." MW/HW 6, 131; *Political Expectation*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> The critique of finite forms by the form of grace, even those forms in which grace appears, is a necessary "antidämonische Kampf," MW/HW 6, 141; *Political Expectation*, 29

<sup>31</sup> Tillich alternatively characterized this gift of depth as "Ernsthaftigkeit," 131; "Verstärkung," 132; "Gewicht," 134; *Political Expectation*, 15; 16; 18

<sup>32</sup> Dennis McCann, "Tillich's Religious Socialism: 'Creative Synthesis' or Personal Statement?" in *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, ed. J. L. Adams, W. Pauck, and R. Shinn (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 81-101; Gary M. Simpson, *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 33-52. Both McCann and Simpson argue that a more discursive approach to Tillich's prophetic criticism can address his deficits; they both take up Jürgen Habermas's proposal for a communicative rationality and discourse ethics.

<sup>33</sup> As Simpson indicates, Tillich criticizes the role of the heroic or the hero in this essay for being too intuitionistic and therefore not useful for developing a theology. Taking exception to Tillich's use of *karios* or "intuitionism," therefore, is still to stay on the grounds of Tillich's own thought, not to introduce a perspective alien to him. See Simpson, *Critical Social Theory*, 50-52.

<sup>34</sup> Arnold Wiebel, "Zur Genese des Begriffs Lutherrenaissance," *Luther* 73 (2003): 83-84. In no sense can Tillich be considered a member of the Luther Renaissance as, say, Emanuel Hirsch can. For an analysis of the character of the Luther Renaissance, see Heinrich Assel, *Der andere Aufbruch: Karl Holl, Emanuel Hirsch, Rudolf Hermann (1910-1935)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 18-20.

<sup>35</sup> "Darin ist die Lutherauffassung der Hollschen Schule weit überlegen. Aber sie macht diese ihre Möglichkeit für die Gegenwart dadurch unwirksam, dass sie die geschichtlich bedingten Formen der rationalen

Kritik in Luthers prophetischem Wort unmittelbar an die Gegenwart..." MW/HW 6, 132-133; *Political Expectation*, 17.

<sup>36</sup> John Milbank rightly wishes to purify the agonism of Mauss' gift without abandoning exchange or reciprocity. See Milbank, "Can the Gift be Given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic," *Modern Theology* 11(1995): 139-161.

<sup>37</sup> "Abstract prophetische kritik...wirkte konservativ," MW/HW 6, 130; *Political Expectation*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Karl Holl, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit" (1910) in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1932), vol. 1., 113; 119.

<sup>39</sup> Mauss, *The Gift: The Reason for Form and Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 36.

<sup>40</sup> The chancy and indeterminate character of the counterfeit coin that the character in Charles Baudelaire's eponymous short story gives as alms to a beggar resembles the chancy and indeterminate character of a promise. Both are perhaps "real," both can be passed off as genuine or as false. This character rests on the "perhaps." See Derrida, *Donner le temps*, 189f; *Given Time*, 149f.

<sup>41</sup> Derrida did not explore the relationship between giving in secret per se to Baudelaire's poems in *Donner le temps* except to note that the counterfeit money can never reveal itself to be counterfeit. See *Donner le temps*, 95; *Given Time*, 124. I am grateful to my seminar on the gift held in the Fall of 2008 at St. Olaf College with Dr. Gary Stansell and our students who considered Baudelaire with and without Derrida, especially thinking through Baudelaire's Catholicism that Derrida seems to have neglected.

<sup>42</sup> "Gnade ist Gegenwart, aber nicht Gegenstand," MW/HW 6, 138; *Political Expectation*, 24.

<sup>43</sup> "Das Verhältnis von Anschaulichkeit und Ungegenständlichkeit der Gestalt der Gnade kann und als 'Vorwegnahme' bestimmt werden. 'Vorwegnahme' leigt der zeitliche Bild einer kommenden völligen in besitznahme," MH/HW 6, 139; *Political Expectation*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *On Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> MH/HW 6, 146; *Political Expectation*, 36.

<sup>46</sup> For instance, Hans Urs von Balthasar's provocative account of the Eucharist: *Theodramatik* (Einselden: Johannes Verlag, 1980) III, 363-378. Von Balthasar's use of dramatic conceptuality seems to satisfy these demands. Also of significance would be Bernd Wannewetsch, *Political Worship: Ethics for Christian Citizens*, trans. Mar-

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garet Kohl. Oxford Studies in Theological Ethics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

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