



BULLETIN

The North American Paul Tillich Society

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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH AMERICAN PAUL TILlich SOCIETY AND THE NEW OFFICERS

The annual meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society was held in Chicago on Friday, November 16, and Saturday, November 17, 2012, as always, in conjunction with the meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The AAR Group, "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture" also met on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, November the 18th to the 20th. The meeting on Monday

was a joint meeting with the AAR's "Music and Religion Group."

The annual banquet of the Society was held on Friday night, November 16, 2012 at the Essex Inn. The guest speaker at the banquet was Guy B. Hammond. His stimulating address is published in this Bulletin.

New officers were elected to serve the Society:

President

Echol Nix, Furman University

President Elect

Duane Olsen, McKendree University

Vice President

Charles Fox

Secretary-Treasurer

Frederick Parrella, Santa Clara University

Past President and Chair, Nominating Committee

Courtney Wilder, Midland University

Three new members of the Board of Directors were also appointed for a three-year term, expiring in 2015: Tom Bandy, Adam Pryor, and Devan Stahl. The Officers and the Board of the Society extend their most sincere gratitude to those members of the Society who have served on the Board for a three-year term expiring in 2012: Robison James, University of Richmond, Matthew Tennant, Oxford University, and Gregory Walter, St. Olaf College.

Congratulations to the new officers!

**NAPTS CALL FOR PAPERS
2013 MEETING
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

The North American Paul Tillich Society (NAPTS) welcomes proposals for its annual meeting that will take place Friday and Saturday, 22–23 November 2013 in connection with the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in Baltimore, Maryland, 23–26 November 2012. We welcome proposals for individual papers and panels on the following issues:

1. Tillich's *Systematic Theology* after 50 Years: Construction and Contribution
2. The Appropriation of Tillich by Liberation Theology
3. Tillich and the Holocaust
4. Tillich and the Progressive Christian Movement
5. Tillich and Mary Daly
6. Radical Theology and the Post-Tillichian Debates about God
7. Tillich's Socialist Writings

Proposals should be sent to the Vice President and Program Chair of this year's meeting (electronic submissions preferred):

Dr. Duane Olson

dlolson@mckendree.edu

(Please put NAPTS Call in the subject line)

McKendree University

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**CALL FOR PAPERS
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION GROUP
"TILlich: ISSUES IN THEOLOGY, RELIGION,
AND CULTURE"
2013 MEETING
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

The American Academy of Religion Group, "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture," welcomes proposals for its sessions at the Annual Meeting of the AAR in Baltimore, 23–26 November 2013.

We welcome proposals for individual papers and panels on the following issues in theology, religion, and culture that engage with Tillich or post-Tillichian thought:

1. Schelling, Kierkegaard, and Tillich

Co-sponsored with the Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Group

The Kierkegaard and Tillich Groups jointly invite papers on (a) Kierkegaard's debt to Schelling, or (b) Tillich's debt to Schelling.

2. Twenty-First Century Correlation?

Tillich's method of correlation roots his ideas in the contemporary existential situation of his day. He defined the task of Systematic Theology as providing Christian answers to questions that arise in light of accepted political, ethical, artistic, philosophical, and theological practices. What is the (or are) the major challenge(s) that face religion, culture and theology in the 21st century? How does the method of correlation apply to those challenges (or that challenge?) In what ways is Systematic Theology providing a Christian response? Is it effective?

3. Tillich and Film

Co-sponsored with the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group

Following the successful 2012 session on Tillich and music, we invite papers on Tillich and film. What is the significance of Tillich's theology of culture for work in film and theology? How does Tillich's approach inform theological interpretation of film? What is meant by the claim that Tillich suggests the "possibility of revelation through film"?

4. Radical Political Theology: Tillich's Legacy and Significance

What is the importance of Tillich for contemporary radical political theology? Unlike much mainstream contemporary political theology, much thinking from the margins—from the politically and theologically under-represented (including various liberation

theologies)—draws creatively from the work of Paul Tillich. What are the further prospects for work in this area?

5. Pentecostal Engagements with Tillich

Building on the forthcoming collection, *Spiritual Presence and Spiritual Power: Pentecostal Readings of and Engagement with the Legacy of Paul Tillich*, ed. Nimi Wariboko and Amos Yong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), we invite proposals on both the reception of Paul Tillich within Pentecostal theology and a Tillichian engagement with Pentecostalism.

6. Practices of the Christian Life in Tillich's Thought

Co-sponsored with the Christian Systematic Theology Section

We invite papers that address theoretical and practical reflections about the practices of the Christian life from a theological perspective informed by Tillich, in particular with reference to *Systematic Theology*, volume 3 (first published in two parts—Life and the Spirit & History and the Kingdom of God—50 years ago in 1963).

Please Note: Other Tillich-related proposals will be seriously considered. Unless otherwise requested, proposals not scheduled are automatically passed onto the North American Paul Tillich Society for possible inclusion at its Annual Meeting. A winning student paper receives the Annual Tillich Prize.

The group fosters scholarship and scholarly exchanges that analyze, criticize, and interpret the thought or impact of Paul Tillich (1886-1965), and that use his thought—or use revisions of, or reactions against his thought—to deal with contemporary issues in theology, religion, ethics, or the political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, or artistic spheres of human culture. The group cooperates with the North American Paul Tillich Society (a Related Scholarly Organization of the AAR), which is linked with the German, French-speaking, and other Tillich societies. Papers at Group sessions are published in the Society's quarterly Bulletin without prejudice to their also appearing elsewhere.

Proposals should be submitted online at the AAR website or sent by email (as attachments) to the group's co-chairs, Dr Russell Re Manning, University of Aberdeen (r.remanning@abdn.ac.uk) and Dr Sharon Peebles Burch, Interfaith Counseling Centre (spburch@att.net). Proposals should be of no more than 1000 words and be accompanied by a 150-word abstract. Please indicate if eligible for the

student prize.

Proposals should be received by 15 March 2013. *Please feel free to circulate this Call for Papers.*

See you in Baltimore.

NEW PUBLICATIONS AND NEWS

Gounelle, André. "Histoire et Temporalité chez Paul Tillich." *Revue d'Histoire Philosophie Religieuses* (Strasbourg) 92, 2 (Avril-Juin 2012): 259–274.

Wheat, Leonard F. *Hegel's Undiscovered Thesis—Antithesis—Synthesis Dialectics. What Only Marx and Tillich Understood*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2012.

Stenger, Mary Ann. "Mediating Relativism and Absolutism in Tillich's and Hick's Theories of Religious Truth," in *Religious Pluralism and the Modern World: An Ongoing Engagement with John Hick*, edited by Sharada Sugirtharajah (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 164–175.

Congratulations to Professor Stenger. She received both the College of Arts and Sciences and the University of Louisville Career of Service Awards for 2012. They were presented with stipends at public ceremonies.

Please send any new publications or republication on Tillich as well as any news of the Society's members.

2012-2013 PAUL TILlich LECTURE THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE

Wednesday, May 6, 2013

5:30 p.m.

The Memorial Church
Harvard University

Robert N. Bellah, Elliott Professor of Sociology,
Emeritus, University of California
Berkeley, California

"Paul Tillich and the Challenge of Modernity"

Robert N. Bellah is America's foremost sociologist of religion and one of the world's most renowned. Professor Bellah received his two academic degrees at Harvard: the B.A. in social anthropology and the

Ph.D. in Sociology and Far Eastern Languages (1955). Both his undergraduate honors thesis, awarded the Phi Beta Kappa Prize, and his doctoral dissertation, on Tokugawa Religion, were published by the Harvard University Press. After receiving his Ph.D., Professor Bellah was Research Associate in Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, and then returned to teach at Harvard (1957-1967) becoming tenured as Professor of Sociology. A colleague of University Professor Tillich for five of Tillich's seven Harvard years, he was one of six distinguished faculty who spoke at Tillich's memorial service on November 4, 1965, with President Nathan M. Pusey. In 1967, he moved to Berkeley where for the next three decades he was the Ford Professor of Sociology. Bellah has written and lectured widely on "American Civil Religion," a concept and phrase he

introduced. Among his notable books are *Beyond Belief*, *The Broken Covenant*, *Habits of the Heart* and *The Good Society* (both collaborative); these books have helped to "shape the discipline." In 2000, President Clinton awarded him the National Humanities Medal, and in 2007, he was awarded the American Academy of Religion Martin E. Marty Award for the Public Understanding of Religion. Professor Bellah's magisterial *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (2011) has been called "the most important systematic and historical treatment of religion since Hegel, Durkheim and Weber." In it, following Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, he names Tillich one of his "three great teachers." He is currently writing a book on modernity, the encompassing direction of his life's work.

EXPERIMENTING WITH CORRELATION

GUYTON B. HAMMOND

The Annual Banquet Address of the North American Paul Tillich Society

Greetings, fellow admirers of Paul Tillich. It is an honor and a privilege to address this group, of which I have been a member and a participant for so many years. Let me first tell you how I have interpreted this evening's assignment. In a recent work entitled *Remembered Voices*, Douglas John Hall speaks of attempting to recover "a rich [theological] legacy not adequately appropriated." This he seeks to do through a combination of personal testimony and more formal analysis. In a much smaller scope, I would like to remember and retrieve a certain trend of thought that may not have been adequately appropriated, doing this through a combination of personal history and theoretical analysis. On the personal side—at great risk of self-indulgence—I will offer some reminiscences about my development as a scholar and about a few of our predecessors in the Society. On the formal side, I will trace a current of thought as I pursued it, believing that it exemplifies how theology can be done in a Tillichian vein in the contemporary period.

I took a liking to Paul Tillich's theology while a divinity student at Yale in the mid-1950s, but began to give him more focused attention when casting about for a dissertation topic at Vanderbilt University in 1957. I was drawn to a much-used dissertation device: a comparison of thinkers (possibly sev-

eral but more manageable with only two). Who might be a good dialogue partner for Paul Tillich? Being already acquainted with the work of the social psychologist Erich Fromm (who was popular in those days as a kind of "Freud lite," with the requisite emphasis on sexuality, but also bringing in social and political issues), I observed that his 1955 publication, *The Sane Society*, centered upon the theme of "alienation." It happened that Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, Volume 2, appearing in 1957, had "estrangement" as its major focus. (Both of these words translate the German word, *Entfremdung*.) Clearly a comparison of these two thinkers was what the doctor ordered, so I set out on that course. Using Tillich's method of correlation to compare approaches to estrangement/alienation proved to be fruitful both methodologically and substantively.

It became obvious that both men in their discussions of *Entfremdung* drew upon a tradition of thought going back to Marx, Feuerbach, and Hegel, and that both sought to incorporate Freud into that tradition. At that time I was very innocent of the fact that the two—Tillich and Fromm—had had years of personal association and mutual influence in the context of a group of scholars known as the Frankfurt School. (It would seem that my last advisor, Langdon Gilkey, was not familiar with this connection either; if he had informed me of it, I would have been saved some years of delay in my research. The close connection was probably known in some circles at Union Theological Seminary, but not in the boondocks of Nashville, Tennessee.)

Thus, I saw that for Tillich the "question" posed by Fromm's secular thought is alienation. However,

Fromm, like other secular thinkers, offers answers to the posed question. In a Tillichian analysis, if alienation is “partial” (i.e., if only some aspects of human existence are alienated), reconciling tendencies can emanate from the un-alienated aspects. In Fromm’s case, I found that it is consciousness that is alienated. Therefore, healing tendencies can flow out of the unconscious, as consciousness reconnects with its own depths. Tillich’s theological critique maintains, however, that existence itself is alienated. Healing and reconciling tendencies must emanate from beyond existence, thus requiring a theological “answer.” I recognized that Tillich’s correlation in fact involves analysis and critique of both secular questions and secular answers, a recognition that has become commonplace, though at the time it was not widely acknowledged. (Parenthetically, I realized later that Tillich’s “existence” is an abstraction, that “life” in its fullness includes both essential and existential elements. This realization poses difficulties for his approach to alienation.)

A personal note: After the completion of my dissertation and while I was preparing the manuscript for publication, I arranged for an interview with Tillich at his University of Chicago office in 1963. I was low-tech in those days (still am) and went with note pad in hand and a series of questions with space for jotted down answers. From that interview, one exchange stands out as being of current interest. Noting that the influence of Schelling on his thought was well known, I asked about the relative influence of Hegel. He reminded me of the lectures on Hegel that he gave in Frankfurt in 1931-32 (which incidentally are in the *Nachlassbaende Zu Den Gesammelten Werken* and to my knowledge have not yet been translated. Several years ago I set out to do a bit of translating and have gotten to about page 40). Tillich also expressed the thought that Hegel had decisively influenced his approach to love—a somewhat surprising answer. (I later concluded that he had at least partly in mind the short fragment on love found in Hegel’s Early Theological Writings.)

Fast-forward a few years. During that time I turned out an introduction to Tillich for Bethany Press, but my scholarly research was rejuvenated in the early ‘70s principally by the reading of two books, *Theology After Freud*, by Peter Homans (1970), and *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, by Martin Jay (1973).

Homans’s book explores what he calls the “implicit psychological form” of Protestant theology

and he engages Tillich, among others, in dialogue with a number of “post-Protestant” interpreters of Freud, including Norman O. Brown, David Bakan, and Philip Rieff. One important theme that appears in the book is a discussion of the relationship between what he calls the “collapse of the superego,” documented by these thinkers, and the collapse of transcendence seen by the so-called “death of God” theologians. Although Homans does not deal significantly with Erich Fromm in this work, I could see the relevance of my study of Fromm and Tillich for this conversation. I wrote a review article for the *Journal of Religion* regarding theology after Freud that I called “The Recovery of Distance” (appearing in 1972).

In 1973, I came across Martin Jay’s book and was excited to find a chapter on Erich Fromm, along with passing references to Tillich’s interactions with key members of the Frankfurt School (and even a brief citation of my book, *Man in Estrangement*). Jay explained that Fromm had played an important role in the early development of the Frankfurt School, having joined their group in Frankfurt after his psychoanalytic training. Especially in his characterological studies of the 1930’s, Fromm had exerted a major influence on directions taken by the school.

This history piqued my interest to the extent that I found myself making my way to Harvard’s Widener Library to get my hands on *Studien Über Autoritaet Und Familie* (Studies Concerning Authority and the Family), a 1936 publication of the Institute edited by Max Horkheimer (which had not then and has not yet been translated in full). It interested me to find major philosophical investigation (as distinguished from sociological studies) of what was called the bourgeois family (after all, I thought I belonged to one), one of the essays being by Erich Fromm. Debates about what was also called the patriarchal family and more broadly about the internalization of the father image in the superego had become important in Institute circles as they tried to determine what it was in the German character that had enabled so many Germans to embrace Nazism in the 1930s. One of Fromm’s revisions of Freud became relevant here: he understood Freud’s superego—the internalization of parental moral authority—as a socially conditioned repressive authority, what he called “the authoritarian conscience.” Later, in his 1947 work, *Man For Himself*, and in *The Sane Society*, Fromm goes beyond Freud—and against him—in postulating another, “humanistic” conscience, which is the voice of one’s true self. Re-

sponses to Fromm's analyses of conscience lie behind the one Frankfurt School sponsored study that became widely read in the States in the nineteen fifties: *The Authoritarian Personality*, a large collection of papers edited by Theodor Adorno.

As I was reviewing this literature about the family and about conscience in the 1970s, another current of thought came into view: feminism and feminist theology. Recall that Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* came out in 1973. In going beyond patriarchal religion Daly was in some senses building upon, but also critiquing and going beyond, Tillich. I was not immediately taken by her theological "answers," but it was becoming clear that the issue of patriarchy and questioning patriarchal authority was one of the key "questions" being asked by contemporary culture. I had begun to see in the Frankfurt theorists a rich debate about the characterological, familial, and religious dimensions of patriarchy, and of the alternative paths toward its overcoming. At that point I was unclear as to the theological relevance of these discussions, or what a Tillichian "answer" might be. I published an article in 1978 entitled "Transformations of the Father Image," in the journal *Soundings*, in which I made no mention of theology in general or Tillich in particular. (I gave attention to psychoanalytic and structuralist thinkers, and to Herbert Marcuse of the Frankfurt School.)

Once again a new publication came to my aid: in 1977 a translation of Tillich's *The Socialist Decision* (translated by Franklin Sherman) appeared. This book was first published in 1933 and suppressed (*eingestampft*, a very expressive German word) by the Nazis. In this work Tillich examines, not primarily the patriarchal family or the internalized patriarchal superego, but father religion (the Freudian cultural superego). In this realm he finds two possibilities: most father religion harks back to origins, to traditions of family, clan, race, and locale; but elsewhere, especially in Israelite, prophetic religion (perhaps he implies that this is exclusively true of Israelite religion, but does not defend that notion here), the demand aspect is heightened to become self-critical, pointing forward toward a future consummation rather than backward toward restoration of an idealized past. Instead of a "myth of origin," as I was to summarize later, "father demand elevated into religious unconditionality looks toward the fulfillment of the origin in the goal of being. Here religion becomes ethical; mere being is overruled by 'oughtness.'" (Hammond, *Conscience and its Re-*

covery, 46). Here Tillich, in touch with Frankfurt School themes, combines Kantian ethical religion, Weberian analysis of prophetic religion, Freudian psychology, and Marxian historical utopianism. Father prophetic myth retains links to the powers of origination, but points toward the new, toward fulfillment of origin. In this material, I saw that Tillich could and did contribute to debates about patriarchy.

Something else was brewing in the mid-seventies that would give a great impetus to Tillich studies, which leads me to a brief digression. The organized study of Tillich under AAR auspices began as a "Consultation" in October, 1974. Soon papers were drawn up to incorporate formally as The North American Paul Tillich Society, with the first meeting held in St. Louis in 1976. Let me say just a word about a few of our founding members. Credit goes first to John Carey—a great bear of a man—who with energy and enthusiasm was instrumental in bringing the Society into being and was its first President. Furthermore, in editing collections of papers, John contributed to Tillich scholarship. My thought is that unless this has already been attempted, an effort should be made to bring John back to address the Society. Our second president was Victor Nuovo, who made a name for himself translating Tillich, along with some penetrating interpretive essays. I cannot resist an anecdote about Victor, with a little tease thrown in. After a Tillich Gesellschaft Conference at Hofgeismar in 1982, he and I hitched a ride to Marburg with Professor Carl Ratschow of the Marburg faculty. If memory serves, Victor said to me, "Why don't you sit up front; I don't speak German." My conversational German was and is poor, but if I was relatively speechless it was in part because of the ungodly speed at which we travelled on the autobahn. I envied Victor being safely ensconced on the back seat.

We Americans are such poor linguists, but such is not the case with our third President, Bob Scharlemann, who speaks and writes fluent German. As many of you know, Bob made immense contributions to the Society, not only serving on the incorporating committee and as our third President, but also as Secretary Treasurer for some years. I must mention the interactions of Bob—a very straight-laced and well-organized individual—with another of our founding members: Peter John. Peter made irreplaceable contributions as what we might call Paul Tillich's amanuensis. Jokes were made about Peter accompanying our mentor to the bathroom, but in fact his tapes have been of great value, and what re-

mains of them may still be of significance. Peter served as the Society's first Secretary Treasurer; unfortunately, keeping financial records was not one of his long suits. When Bob took over the duties from Peter, the records, shall we say, were not in the best of shape. Bob eventually arranged to go to Peter's house to help sort through the records, making an effort to separate Peter's personal affairs from the Society's accounts. Bob's dry narrations of these events in retrospect are hilarious, though no doubt it did not seem so at the time.

I visited Bob about three weeks ago at his retirement community in Charlottesville. He has recently been moved to the Alzheimers unit. His memory is failing, but he sent his greetings to the Society and to his friends.

The Society has nourished many other notable characters, but reference to them will have to await another occasion.

Returning to our discussion of Critical Theory, as the Frankfurt School perspective is also called, it is interesting to note the divergence of opinion that emerged regarding the bourgeois/patriarchal family. Fromm continued to regard this family, the corresponding Protestant religion, and the internalized conscience, as authoritarian. The family is "the agency of society," creating the type of individual the society wants. Horkheimer and Adorno, however, began to see a second potentiality emerging in the bourgeois family. Not only was this family the source of "internalized domination"; in its heyday it also strengthened individuals for resistance to the society, with Horkheimer and Adorno maintaining that this family, in their words, contained "the presuppositions for its own critique." I began to see a convergence between Horkheimer, Adorno, and Tillich: it was the bourgeois/Protestant conscience (grounded in patriarchal religion) that contained the presuppositions for its own critique. Adorno (in his usual convoluted style) summed up the point in his *Negative Dialectics* (translated in 1973): "But freedom need not remain what it was, and what it arose from. Ripening, rather, in the internalization of social coercion into conscience, with the resistance to social authority, which critically measures that authority by its own principles, is a potential that would rid men of coercion. In the critique of conscience, the rescue of this potential is envisioned" (275). For Adorno, it was conscience; for Tillich, it was prophetic/Protestant religion embedded in conscience, that which was capable of self-critique. I saw this as a key insight.

At another point, Tillich's thought regarding the family and conscience seemed to converge with that of Horkheimer and Adorno. For the Frankfurt theorists, the mother in the bourgeois family occupies an oppressed position; yet, in this very oppression she represents a utopian protest against present-day society. For Tillich, there is another potentiality in the Protestant, especially the Lutheran, conscience: the "transmoral" conscience. This conscience "gives what it demands." The moral conscience individualizes; the transmoral conscience reconciles and unites. Although Tillich says so only hesitantly, this is a motherly conscience, and we are not far from Erich Fromm's humanistic conscience as well. The prevailing trend of Critical Theory was pessimistic. Horkheimer and Adorno held that the "distance" of moral demand is diminishing in modern society. With the "failure of internalization," conscience is dissolved into direct social control. The utopian aspect of their perspective appears only as flashes of light in an otherwise bleak landscape. Tillich, on the other hand, wants to preserve the "spirit" of utopia. In *Systematic Theology*, vol. II, Tillich states that existentialism is the "good luck" of Christian theology, a natural ally. I have contended that he saw Critical Theory as an even more natural ally and dialogue partner.

Another digression: Two important events in 1986 celebrating the centennial of Tillich's birth might be mentioned here. A major conference was held at the University of Laval in Quebec in August of that year under the leadership of Professor Jean Richard among others (also Michael Despland and Jean-Claude Petit) with a significant publication of papers the following year (*Religion et Culture*), just 25 years ago (Jean is with us tonight—congratulations, Jean). And another conference was held in Atlanta at Emory University in November of that year, led by Jack Boozer—another of our early Presidents—and by Ted Runyon and others.

In the 1980s I began the project of pulling together my thoughts regarding the themes discussed earlier into a book-length manuscript, a project that was to consume the better part of a decade, and eventuated in my book, *Conscience and its Recovery: From the Frankfurt School to Feminism* (University Press of Virginia, 1993). To quote from the Preface: [Discussions of the theme of authority and the family by Frankfurt School members in the 1970s] "gave me a new focus upon earlier studies I had made of Erich Fromm, Paul Tillich, Herbert Marcuse, and others. [Also] they pointed forward to

the newly emerging critique of patriarchy in the feminist literature. I was subsequently to discover in the works of Christopher Lasch similarly provocative considerations of the same theme.

I gradually came to see the critique of the patriarchal conscience as one continuing thread in this entire literature. I found here at once an entree into a somewhat neglected aspect of Frankfurt School perspectives—their analysis of the formation of moral selves—and a valuable approach to contemporary issues of moral character. Of course, I devoted a chapter to Tillich in this study. However, looking back, I ask myself, what happens to the method of correlation? Do I simply look to Tillich and to Christian theology for answers to secular questions? To be sure, Tillich's main purpose is to deliver a message to Christian theologians: you cannot just retain a

**RELIGION AND CULTURE: WHAT DO
SEEKERS SEEK?**

THOMAS G. BANDY

Two of the most significant “Religion and Culture” story lines in North America since about 1965 are the decline of the churches and the rise of competing spiritualities. My publishing and perspective on this has always been somewhat different from the academy because it emerges from *continuous* experience and dialogue with faith communities and faith-based non-profits in the course of their ongoing and innovative work, rather than *occasional* conversations outside the academic circle to survey or test ideas.

My work as a consultant has placed me “on the ground” over the past 20 years in almost every state, province, and region in the United States, Canada, and Australia, working with Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and independent churches from a great diversity of cultural backgrounds, helping them figure out how to be effective *and* faithful in an explosion of diversity in urban core, urban, exurban, suburban, small town, rural, and remote contexts.

Most recently I wrote extended commentaries on ministry applications for all 19 lifestyle groups, and 71 lifestyle segments, currently identified by *Experian* in the USA. This commentary (available on line at www.MissionInsite.com) describes lifestyle segment preferences for leadership, hospitality, worship, education, small groups, outreach, facilities and technologies, fund raising, and communications.

timeless form to your theological formulations. Your answers must be tailored to real questions actually being asked in the present generation, not “thrown like a stone at the heads of your listeners.” Still, in my view the perspective has to be altered; we are in a more pluralistic situation. Rather than being an over-ruling voice, Christian theology must be seen as one important contributor to broader debates in contemporary Western culture—a long and valuable tradition of thought indeed, but one that benefits from interactions with other traditions, including other religious traditions. It is my conviction that, understood in this way, Tillich offers the best path for theological development in upcoming years, and that the Tillich Society can continue to make important contributions toward the creation of a vital and viable theology for our period. Thank you.

These are used by churches, church plants, seminaries and training centers, and faith-based non-profit agencies for strategic planning and leadership development.

The twin story lines of declining church institutions and rising competitive spiritualities have precipitated more than curiosity about the future of religion. Where I come from (so to speak), it has precipitated crises in vocation, planning, and resource development not only for churches, but for publishers, philanthropic foundations, municipal governments, boards of education, banking institutions, a host of related businesses and marketers, law enforcement, and the military. Everyone is urgently asking a single question. What do seekers *really* seek? What are the compulsions that are actually driving micro-cultures *away* from secularity and mere rationalism, and *toward* experiences of the holy beyond rationalizations?

The explosion of diversity is the subtext of the story lines related to declining churches and emerging spiritualities. It is the end of religious homogeneity in which denominations thrived, and the emergence of such radical heterogeneity that demographic, psychographic, and lifestyle segment data is being updated continuously. In just the last ten years, the number of lifestyle segments in North America has increased more than 33%.

The decline of the churches has been accelerating since the high-water mark for church membership and participation for most denominations in 1965. The decline has been even steeper in charitable giving. Church benevolences have declined sharply every year, even as charitable giving to all

other non-profits has risen dramatically every year except 2001.

The unexpected twist in this story line is the acceleration of decline in just the last ten years and the acceleration of church denial over the same period. In a recent survey soon to be released, participation in organized religion in the US has dropped 8.3% since 2002 to 39.5% of the population. Recent economic recessions since 2008 have finally tapped out the reserves of churches and denominations, accelerating staff downsizing and mergers. This is a steeper plunge than many church consultants anticipated even in the '90s. At the same time, many of the most creative and risk-taking leaders of the church have stepped away with many fulfilling their destinies in faith-based non-profits and faith-based for-profits. Churches that once considered transformation are now just talking about renewal. Most publishing is about "best practices," assuring churches that if they just work harder, doing the same things better, everything will be all right.

Church planting has accelerated in the past decade, but whether it is a success or failure largely depends on whether you view it from inside or outside Christendom institutional assumptions. The capital pool for church planting is diminishing rapidly, and between financial crisis and leadership burnout many new churches have proven to be unsustainable. On the other hand, experiments in alternative intentional Christian communities have flourished outside the direct control of parent organizations. In other words, the more relevant Christian community becomes to "what seekers seek," the less viable they become as denominational franchises.

The second storyline, however, is really the focus of this paper. The growth of other religions and competing "spiritualities" in North America has also been evident since 1965. The assumption through the late 1990s had been that these spiritualities are somehow definably organized as communities, networks, or non-profit entities. Instead, it is increasingly apparent that what is emerging are not "spiritualities" per se, but only powerful "spiritual yearnings." These yearnings are shaping life and lifestyle as never before, but are not particularly organized, networked, or the target of charitable contributions.

Among all the reasons people give for *non-participation* in organized religion, the top three that are most common (and represent over 65% of responses) are:¹

- Religious people are too judgmental;
- Religion in general is too focused on money;

- Religious leaders are essentially untrustworthy.

The proportion of current participants who are now considering *leaving* organized religion in the next few years for the very same reasons is even *higher*. At the same time, over 70% of the public at least believes in a God of love and living relationships, and less than 11% do not believe in God at all.

The story that lies behind such statistics is that when people are squeezed between the empty rationalizing of secularity on one hand, and their deep skepticism of organized religion and religious leaders on the other, what is left are unorganized and confused, but also powerful and compulsive, spiritual yearnings. These yearnings are no mere curiosities. They *drive* behavior. They *force* lifestyle changes. They *irritate* conscience, *aggravate* complacency, and *refuse* to let us simply get by, merely exist, consume material things, and lead a balanced life. The days of "church shopping" and "spiritual dilettantism" are ending. Today, if anyone does visit a church or read a religious book, there is a *compelling* reason.

This leads me to one of three connections with the intellectual legacy of Paul Tillich that is peculiarly relevant to contemporary seeking. I refer here to Tillich's conviction that life is a dialogue and a quest. People have a compulsion to ask questions and look for answers. Tillich's book *My Search for Absolutes*² is surprisingly relevant. Whether or not they believe in absolutes, they still search for them. What is interesting is how the questions are evolving and how the answers are changing.

In 2004 and 2005, returning from consultations across Australia and starting post-hurricane redevelopment work in New Orleans, I began categorizing the evolution of religious questions. I defined just three kinds of seekers for my book on leadership credibility (*Why Should I Believe You?*). The first were the spiritual dilettantes comprised of the majority of church people and adherents (CPAs) who believe in percentage giving and balanced living, and treated religions like a smorgasbord of alternative religious insights. The second were "People of Christian Memory" (PCMs) who were more intentional about doctrinal and liturgical traditions and often surfaced on congregational boards and denominational committees. The third were the "spiritually yearning, institutionally alienated" publics who were dropping out or on the fringe. The acronym SYiA can be read as "see 'ya"— as in "see 'ya

later...we're outa here." Despite the differences of culture and country, the patterns were similar.

Concerning Religion in General

Churchy people and adherents (CPA's) asked questions like: *Where is God? How can spirituality be part of a healthy lifestyle? What will the neighbors think?* Church board members (PCMs) asked questions like: *Does God make sense? Is the Bible relevant? What would Luther say?* Seekers (SYIA's) ask questions like: *How do I experience miracles? How can I associate with contemporary heroes of faith? What would Jesus do?*

Concerning Religious Leadership

Churchy people asked: *Does he care about me, honor our privileged status, and quote the right people?* Church board members asked: *Is he authorized to preach, politically correct, and defer to dead prophets?* Seekers asked: *Is he or she associated with miracles, live an authentic spiritual life, and speak from personal experiences of life struggle and spiritual victory?*

In other words, there has been a marked evolution in exactly what seekers are seeking, and what questions seekers are asking. I think their search resonates with Tillich's anticipation of the key questions for post-Christendom and post-secular world. There are four:

1. How can I experience the immediacy and immensity of God in my struggle in life? In other words, how can I not only connect with God, but be captured by God, without the mediation of any supposedly sacred properties, sacred persons, sacred programs, or sacred budgets; just me and God, face to face, heart to heart, gut instinct meets God above all gods?³
2. How can I participate in Spirit that frees me from the trap of "technical reason"? In other words, how can I intuit the hidden import that simultaneously employs and shatters all cultural forms to express the depth and power of being?⁴ How can I work through, and then transcend the constraints of reason, dogma, and context to know the truth?⁵
3. How can I experience the power of God to alter or reshape my lifestyle? In other words, how can I enjoy a "spiritual presence" that overcomes the ambiguities of daily living, and gives me the courage to make choices that impact intimate relationships, career, health, mobility, economy, and context?⁶

4. How can I discern my personal destiny? In other words, how can I recognize myself as part of God's reconciling mission? How can I take my place in human history and *be significant* in a universal, particular, and teleological sense?⁷

The critical insight is that the questions asked by dilettantish churchy members and by rationally reserved church boards are simply *not* the questions being asked by seekers today. The former are in pursuit of supposedly good worship, right doctrine, and politically correct ideology. The latter are searching for intimacy with God, freedom from addiction, the courage to act, and hope that endures the next hurricane.

Seekers bring to the search a method and purpose of inquiry that Tillich might have associated with his "dynamic-typological method," which he later described as "Religion of the Concrete Spirit."⁸ The three elements would resonate with many post-modern seekers:

- The "experience of the holy within the finite" as "the universal religious basis";
- The critical, "mystical" movement which preserves the sacramental by refusing to allow the Holy to become objectified;
- The ethical, prophetic element that is the moral imperative.

The truth about what seekers *really* seek can be discerned in the midst of demographic research. As I mentioned earlier, much of my current work involves demographic analysis and commentary on lifestyle segments in America. The power and detail of demographic search engines has increased exponentially in just the last ten years. International corporations like *Experian* and *Prizm* gather and synthesize immense quantities of data from every survey and swipe of a credit card, providing detailed information for corporate retail, community planning, social services, school boards, and all levels of government. Churches are only just starting to use this rich resource for church planning and planting. My commentary on the significance of lifestyle segment behavior for ministry applications, if printed out, extends to 586 pages.

Demographic research may sound rather prosaic in the academy, but it connects with Tillich's approach of "critical phenomenology." Demographic research describes a phenomenon of public behavior, and existential analysis uncovers the meaning that is manifest in the experience. Absolute concreteness and universal import are brought together.⁹

Demographic research functions like progressive lenses in a microscope. The largest and most general magnification is *pure demographics* (analyzing age, gender, race, national origin, family status, occupation, income, debt, generosity, and so on). Only 20 years ago this was about all anyone had. It led churches to wrestle with generation gaps and diversify worship *by style*. The second lens analyzes *lifestyle segments*. These are portraits of behavior. People are grouped according to how they live day by day: tastes, habits, outlooks, work ethics, recreational preferences, shifting relationships, consumer priorities, religiosity and so on. A third lens analyzes *psychographics*. These are comparative impressions about social inclinations and personal attitudes, mood and social values.¹⁰ Finally, a fourth lens reveals *heartbursts* that specifically link the unique identity and purpose of an organization (corporate, non-profit, government, or church) to a particular mission market.

For example, the demographic search engine of www.MissionInsite.com (and its parent company for school boards www.DecisionInsite.com) can now discern lifestyle and psychographic preferences in extraordinary detail from as wide a geography as the city of Chicago to as small a geography as a single residential block on Ogden Avenue.

As I indicated earlier, my work has been to write commentaries for church planners on all 19 lifestyle groups, and all 71 lifestyle segments current in the United States today, specifically for church and denominational clients who are involved in strategic planning (church transformation and planting, outreach and evangelism). Here is the key: Each lifestyle segment has distinct preferences for certain kinds of ministries. We can now anticipate what kind of pastor (out of seven distinct choices of spiritual leadership) any given lifestyle segment will prefer. We can also anticipate lifestyle segment preferences for all aspects of ministry:

- Four possible choices for hospitality (the basics, multiple choices, healthy choices, and take out);
- Seven possible choices for worship (inspirational, educational, transformational, coaching, care-giving, healing, & mission-connectional);
- Three possible options for Christian education (curricular or experiential formats, biblical or topical contents, and generational or peer group gatherings);
- Two possible options for midweek small groups (rotated or designated leaders, curriculum or affinity bonds);

- Seven possible choices for outreach (survival, recovery, health, quality of life, human potential, interpersonal relationships, and human destiny);
- Three possible options for properties and technologies (ecclesiastical or utilitarian facilities, Christendom or contemporary symbols, modern or postmodern technologies);
- Two possible options for stewardship (unified budgets or designated giving, and informed philanthropy or lifestyle coaching);
- Seven possible choices for communication (print, radio, television, telephone, internet, gatherings, and multi-sources);

The most revealing area of lifestyle segment research for our purposes here is the study of worship preferences.

Worship attendance today is now so counter-cultural and potentially embarrassing to the majority of the 71 lifestyle segments in America that it is safe to say people only attend worship if they are *compelled* to do so. There is *a reason* they worship. Even if worship attendance seems to be a habit and does not carry any observable emotional baggage, there is *a compelling reason* why people come back again and again now that much of the weight of culture discourages such behavior.

This is the second place Tillich's thought is relevant to the analysis of what seekers seek. The seven types of worship roughly correspond to the six existential anxieties Tillich identifies as persistent, inevitable stressors in life.¹¹ There is a direct correlation between the changing circumstances of one's life, and the kind of mission-targeted worship one seeks; and there is a direct correlation between the lifestyle segments, the anxieties that motivate them, and the kind of worship they seek.

The six existential anxieties are: emptiness, meaninglessness, fate, death, guilt, and condemnation (or shame). Tillich argues that these six anxieties lie at the roots of finitude, and describe both the plight and struggle of human beings.¹² Demographic research suggests that these anxieties can also be associated with distinct lifestyle segments.

The existential anxiety of *emptiness* is especially associated with lifestyle segments that experience lives in transition, dramatically changing community or neighborhood contexts, and high mobility. They feel "lost" and are looking for direction. They gravitate to *coaching* worship services that are informal, topical, practical, dialogical, and guide participants through the ambiguities of daily living.

For example, *Experian* describes¹³ a lifestyle segment called “Diapers and Debit Cards” that encompasses young, working-class families and single parent households living in small established city residences. Recently I worked with such people through a church outside of Kansas City. These couples and single parents are starting out or starting over. They are under 35, trying to raise kids on lower middle class incomes. They have modest educations and face tough challenges, in changing circumstances, and often single-handed. They are constant church shoppers, looking for tips and tactics to sustain optimism and improve their lives. Their religious perspective links God, Family, and Country in a single continuum. Their psychographic profile inclines them to be traditional, dutiful followers who value family and faith, yet are increasingly disappointed with both.

The existential anxiety of *meaninglessness* is especially associated with lifestyle segments that experience careers in transition, and broken relationships; and have liberal arts or professional backgrounds. They feel *lonely* and *confused* and are looking for authentic relationships that embody and clarify truth. They gravitate to *educational* worship services that provide theological insight and ethical perspective as well as liturgical, formal, and historical points to take home and ponder.

For example, *Experian* describes a segment called “Birkenstocks and Beemers” that encompasses upper middle-class, established couples living leisure lifestyles in small towns and cities. I worked with such people around Monterey, California, and north of Atlanta, Georgia. These 40-65 year olds are often divorced or widowed singles. Instead of accelerating to the top of their career, they achieved financial security and left the rat race for artsy communities where they can relax along walking trails and enjoy gourmet food. Their psychographic profile inclines them to be dutiful, moderate, restrained and in search of personal security. Faithfulness means being brand loyal and cost conscious. They suspect God might be dead, but are not entirely sure. If they go to church, they gravitate to small congregations with a lot of intimacy and a pastor with a Ph.D.

The existential anxiety of *fate* is especially associated with lifestyle segments that experience grinding poverty, lifeless routines, inescapable circumstances, or risk of addiction. They feel *trapped*, and long to be liberated by the intervention of a Higher Power. They gravitate to *transformational* worship

where they can be born again, liberated from deadly entanglements, and get a fresh start.

For example, another lifestyle segment is called “Dare to Dream.” This encompasses young singles, couples and single parents (mainly white with some Hispanics) with lower incomes starting out in urban core apartments. They cohabitate, but do not marry. Under 35, in crowded apartments, they tend to be rootless, transient, and uninvolved. While they work hard, they take shortcuts, behave unconventionally, and gamble addictively. They live in the moment, but more often than not their luck runs out. Their religious perspective is summed up by the phrase: *If you happen to meet God, tell him I need a break.* Psychographically, they tend to be indulgent, spontaneous, and self-absorbed. They may sustain their dreams through substance abuse but they are looking to experience the touch of a Higher Power that breaks them out of dysfunctional lives and gives them a new life. And they may attend anything from Pentecostal worship where they are slain in the spirit, to Eastern Rite orthodox worship with incense, holy smoke, and Gregorian chant.

The existential anxiety of *death* is especially associated with lifestyle segments that are aging, have health issues, or feel unsafe or at risk. They feel *hopeless* and yearn for strength for tomorrow with confidence that life is good, with confidence for eternity and the opportunities to celebrate God’s blessings. They gravitate to *inspirational* worship where they can be uplifted, feel good, and celebrate.

For example, the lifestyle segment called “Unspoiled Splendor” encompasses comfortably established baby boomer couples in town and country communities. These boomers have deliberately chosen to live in rural or even remote regions. These are not aging hippies seeking “flower power,” but conservative, hard working households that prefer to blend in rather than stand out. They dig deep roots, care about their neighbors, volunteer in social services, and lead municipalities. They believe religion should be reasonable, giving faithful people a privileged perspective on a better world. Psychographically, they tend to be globally conscious, progressive, and questing for personal fulfillment. They are sensitive to God in creation, and have strong opinions about a just society and faithful church. Nevertheless, they are often pessimistic about the environment, the economy, and society in general. They are afraid of global warming, pandemics, terrorism, recession, cancer, and things beyond their control. Inspiration may come from classical choirs or praise

choruses, but they would rather skip the sermon, pick up the tempo, and reinforce a positive attitude.

The existential anxiety of *guilt* is especially associated with lifestyle segments that experience broken physical or mental health, lost relationships, family divisions, and generation gaps. They feel responsible for failure and have low self-esteem. They long for comfort, reassurance, acceptance, a sense of belonging, and uninterrupted harmony. They gravitate to *care-giving* or *healing* worship that is: a “rock” or “oasis” and family friendly; punctuated by pregnant silences, passing the peace, and adorable children’s stories; predictable and friendly; constituted by fewer than 200 participants.

Two lifestyle segments immediately come to mind, representing very different American publics. The first are “Town Elders”: stable minimalist seniors living in older residences and leading sedentary lifestyles. They are downsizing, contented people who avoid radical views and hasty decisions, and value traditional churches and shape denominational policies. The second are “Ciudad Strivers”: mid-scale Hispanic families and single parents in gateway communities. They work hard for the future of their children. Certainly more transient than “Town Elders,” they share values for continuity in culture, traditions, and devotional practices. Both segments are confident in the dogmatic convictions of their ancestors, and convinced that life can and will get better. Both segments value faith and family. I may see them in the same ecumenical worship service in Corpus Christi.

Finally, the existential anxiety of *condemnation* (or *shame*) is especially associated with lifestyle segments that are economically disadvantaged, living as minorities in an insensitive environment, or at risk for victimization or abuse. They often experience low self-esteem and long for justice. They tend to gravitate to *mission-connectional* worship that emphasizes vindication and advocacy and motivates witness and outreach.

Again, two very different lifestyle segments come to mind. “Urban Edge” are extremely liberal, eclectic singles in their 20s and 30s. They are risk takers who may travel off the beaten path. Spirituality and artistic sensibilities flow together, but they are uncomfortable with traditional norms. They are notable for commitments to peace, human rights, and the environment and are tremendously skeptical of the church. “Asian Achievers” are affluent, mainly Asian couples and families enjoying dynamic lifestyles in metro areas. Both consider spiri-

tuality a part of a healthy lifestyle, but both suspect spiritual truths get buried beneath an avalanche of religious hypocrisy. “Asian Achievers” may not be as philosophically adventurous as the “Urban Edge,” but they share altruistic practices and all gravitate to experiences that are cross-cultural and inter-faith—focusing on local and global struggles, and commissioning and sending service teams.

Just as individuals may be driven by different existential anxieties at different points in their lives, so also people migrate from one lifestyle segment to another. The publics today tend to move among churches and faith communities, and transition from one kind of worship to another, driven by existential need.

“Incarnation” has become a key word to focus the spiritual yearning of seekers today. Somehow or other, through Christ, Koran, nature, or some other direct experience of the infinite, people seek to experience the fullness of God in a powerful way.

This leads me to a third connection with the intellectual legacy of Paul Tillich. His conception of Jesus the Christ as the “New Being” sets the stage for distinct “experiences” of incarnation that address each of the six existential anxieties in turn. Thus the “real presence” of Christ may be experienced: in different ways, in different worship experiences; at different times in the phases of life; or among different lifestyle segments in various contexts. Regardless of the unique experience of incarnation, the “New Being is essential being under the conditions of existence, conquering the gap between essence and existence.”¹⁴ Tillich may have anticipated the multiplicity of incarnational experiences in his seemingly offhand comment that “the greater the things we say about the Christ, the greater the salvation we can expect from him.”¹⁵ In the context of interpreting atonement, Tillich substitutes the concept of “participation” for the concept of “substitution” in order to capture both essence and existence.¹⁶ He goes on to develop a threefold character of salvation: participation in the New Being, acceptance of the New Being, and transformation by the New Being.¹⁷

The image of incarnation might be of arms outstretched reaching up prayer, and hands outstretched reaching down in grace. Where the fingertips touch is incarnation or, to use Tillich’s term, the “Eternal Now.” In the past, we have tended to say the words “Eternal Now” in a single breath, as if the “Eternal Now” were an experience of timelessness. Today, however, the 71 lifestyle segments in America have

inserted punctuation in the phrase. Each lifestyle segment wants “the eternal, now!” Right now. Right here. The fullness of God, right away. The “Eternal, Now!” is not timelessness, but timeliness.

Lifestyle segments today, even the religious ones, are generally drawing away from worship *services*. Attendance is rapidly declining. However, this does not mean that lifestyle segments are less *worshipful*. Ironically, as they are more *urgent* to experience incarnation, they are more *reluctant* to accept contrived, controlled, pseudo-experiences of the Holy take the place of the “Eternal, Now!”

The incarnational moment occurs when the fullness of God intersects with the spiritual yearning of human beings. The depth of being and the power of being connect but the outcome of the connection depends on the nature of the anxiety.

- Lifestyle Segments reach up from *emptiness*, looking for direction, and experience God as Spiritual Guide.
- Other Segments reach up from *meaninglessness*, looking for truth, and experience God as Perfect Human.
- Lifestyle Segments reach up from *fate*, looking for deliverance, and experience God as Higher Power.
- Still other Segments reach up from *death*, looking for new life, and experience God as Promise Keeper.
- Segments reach up from *guilt*, looking for forgiveness and wholeness, and experience God as Healer.
- Others reach up from *victimization*, looking for justice and self-esteem, and experience God as Vindicator.

Christians may well describe their incarnational moments as experiences of Jesus the Christ, but they will mean different things by it. There is no standardized, universal, “one size fits all” experience of Jesus Christ. Each lifestyle segment is driven by distinct existential anxieties, which in turn define the spiritual yearnings that compel, drive, or demand the search for absolutes and the quest for God.

Nevertheless, even incarnational experience is not ultimately what seekers seek. Tillich was aware of this as he belatedly wrote the last volume of his *Systematic Theology*. The ultimate goal is “Life in the Spirit.” For in the end, what is a “lifestyle segment” except another trap of finitude? And what seekers *really* seek is nothing less than culture under the impact of Spiritual Presence, which Tillich sums up by the word “theonomy”.¹⁸

¹ *Quadrennium Report* is sponsored by seven major denominations and produced by MissionInsite. It will be released in January 2013.

² *My Search for Absolutes* (Simon and Schuster, 1967). Tillich says that he finds absolutes “on both the subjective and the objective sides, in the midst of these relativities” (p.124). These include the categories of the mind that make sense impressions, language, and understanding possible; moral imperative and *agape* love that “unites the absolute and the relative by adapting itself to every concrete situation” (p. 125).

³ An interesting dialogue was recorded between Tillich and a student from a seminar in 1963. This is shared in *Ultimate Concern: Dialogues with Students*, ed. D. MacKenzie Brown (SCM Press, 1965), p.51. It is remarkably relevant to conversations today:

Student: The first day you threw out a term which I didn’t quite understand. You talked about the ‘God beyond God’. I didn’t understand that at all.

Dr. Tillich: Where were you when I talked about it? It was the second day. Now I do not really need to say anything new, after all this discussion, because that is precisely what I have been speaking about the whole time. If you add to it what my writing adds — ‘God above the God of theism’ — the term may be clear to you, since ‘the God of theism’ is God limited by man’s finite conceptions.”

⁴ See “The Conquest of the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion” in *What is Religion?* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969) p.144. Tillich argues that receiving knowledge is a mode of thinking that is “simultaneously employed and shattered” as Spirit demands fulfillment of meaning and yet transcends any concrete expression and ultimately negates it. James Luther Adams interprets a key concept of Tillich’s *System of the Sciences* to be the dimension of depth that relates to culture as a “form-creating” and “form-bursting” power that pulsates through the whole of reality (*Paul Tillich’s Philosophy of Culture, Science & Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965, p. 131.

⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 (Chicago, 1971), pp. 53-54. “There is a kind of cognition implied in faith which is qualitatively different from the cognition involved in the technical, scholarly work of the theologian. It has a completely existential, self-determining, and self-surrendering character and belongs to the faith of even the intellectually most primitive believer. Whoever participates in the New Being participates also in its truth. We shall call the organ with which we receive the contents of faith ‘self-transcending’, or ecstatic, reason, and we shall call the organ of the theological scholar ‘technical,’ or formal, reason. Ecstatic reason is reason grasped by an ultimate concern. Reason is overpowered, invaded, shaken by the ultimate concern. The contents of faith grasp reason.

But the situation is not so simple as it would be if the act of reception were merely a formal act without any influence on what is received. The ambiguity cannot be avoided so long as there is theology, and it is one of the factors that make theology a 'questionable' enterprise. The problem could be solved only if man's formal reason were in complete harmony with his ecstatic reason, if man were living in a complete theonomy, that is, in the fullness of the Kingdom of God."

⁶ *Systematic Theology* Vol. 3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971 [1963]), pp. 109-115. "The three symbols for unambiguous life mutually include each other ... but it is preferable to apply them in different directions of meaning: Spiritual presence for the conquest of the ambiguities of life under the dimension of the spirit, Kingdom of God for the conquest of the ambiguities of life under the dimension of history, and Eternal Life for the conquest of the ambiguities of life beyond history" (p. 109).

"The Spiritual Presence does not destroy the structure of the centered self which bears the dimension of spirit....The two terms 'inspiration' and 'infusion' express the way in which man's spirit receives the impact of Spiritual Presence. Both terms are spatial metaphors and involve, respectively, 'breathing' and 'pouring' into the human spirit....the Spiritual Presence is not that of a teacher but of a meaning-bearing power which grasps the human spirit in an ecstatic experience" (pp. 114-115).

⁷ *Systematic Theology* Vol. 3, p. 305. "The four characteristics of human history (to be connected with purpose, to be influenced by freedom, to create the new in terms of meaning, to be significant in a universal, particular, and teleological sense) lead to the distinction between human history and the historical dimension in general" (p. 305).

⁸ "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian," in *The Future of Religions* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 86-87.

⁹ *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 107. Tillich writes: "This is 'critical phenomenology', uniting an intuitive-descriptive element with an existential-critical element." See also: *What is Religion?*, p. 46 where Tillich suggests that phenomenology (and I would add "demographic research") "...has no organ for apprehending the uniquely creative character of the historical event." The significance of behavior must be interpreted by another "metalogical" means.

¹⁰ Comparative inclinations are local/global, traditional/progressive, retiring/sociable, restrained/indulgent, planned/spontaneous, dutiful/carefree, security/ fulfillment, simplicity/affluence, self/others, and follower/leader. Comparative values include drive for affluence, devotion to family, commitment to career, concern for environment, practice of altruism, and importance of faith.

¹¹ *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971 [1951]), pp. 191-204. Tillich writes: "Finitude is awareness of anxiety. Like finitude, anxiety is an ontological quality. It cannot be derived; it can only be seen and described...As an ontological quality, anxiety is as omnipresent as is finitude" (p. 191).

¹² *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 40-54. Tillich argued: "The three forms of anxiety (and of courage) are immanent in each other but normally under the dominance of one of them" (p. 42). Similarly, I suggest that each lifestyle segment experiences all forms of anxiety, but certain anxieties dominate the experiences of any given lifestyle segment.

¹³ In each example I paraphrase the much larger commentary from *Experian*, and combine that with my larger commentary on ministry applications.

¹⁴ *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, pp. 118-119. Tillich goes on to say: "Jesus as the Christ is the bearer of the New Being in the totality of his being, not in any special expressions of it. It is his being that makes him the Christ because his being has the quality of the New Being beyond the split of essential and existential being. From this it follows that neither his words, deeds, or sufferings nor what is called his 'inner life' make him the Christ. They are all expressions of the New Being, which is the quality of his being, and this, his being, precedes and transcends all its expressions. This assertion can serve as a critical tool against several inadequate ways of describing his character as the Christ" (p.121).

¹⁵ *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p.146. Tillich says this recognizing that Christology is only really interesting because of its Soteriological significance. He criticizes "high" and "low" Christologies as missing the paradoxical point. "The Protestant principle, according to which God is near to the lowest as well as to the highest and according to which salvation is not the transference of man from the material to a so-called spiritual world, demands a 'low Christology'—which actually is the truly high Christology" (p. 147).

¹⁶ *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p.173. Tillich critiques various theories of atonement as inadequate, and identifies six principles that should determine the further development of the doctrine (pp.173-176). One might compare these principles to the six experiences of incarnation defined here. These principles are:

- Atoning processes are created by God and God alone;
- There are no conflicts in God between reconciling love and retributive justice;
- The removal of guilt and punishment does not overlook the reality and depth of existential estrangement;
- Atoning activity must be understood as God's participation in existential estrangement and its self-destructive consequences;
- Divine participation in existential estrangement is manifest in the cross;

- We participate in the atoning act of God through participation in the New Being.

¹⁷ *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, pp. 176-180. Tillich also describes the threefold character of salvation in more traditional language (regeneration, justification, and sanctification). The experience of incarnation is really the gateway into the "Life of the Spirit" (p.180).

¹⁸ *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, pp. 249-265. Tillich writes: "What happens to culture as a whole under the impact of the Spiritual Presence? The answer I want to

give is summed up in the term 'theonomy'" (p. 249). Tillich defines three "qualities" of theonomy (pp. 250-251):

- The style and over-all form of culture expresses the ultimacy of meaning even in the most limited vehicles of meaning;
- Affirmation of the autonomous forms of the creative process;
- The permanent struggle against both an independent heteronomy and an independent autonomy.

AN ONTOLOGISATION OF HISTORY IN TILlich'S SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY?

JEAN RICHARD

The problem I would like to submit to your attention is the striking difference between the German and the American Tillich concerning the philosophy of history in relation to ontology. In the 1920s and 30s, in Germany, Tillich elaborated a deep and strong philosophy of history, according to a sharp distinction between being and event, between nature and history, between ontology and eschatology. In the *Systematic Theology*, that distinction is far from evident; it seems to disappear altogether. Then history is conceived as a dimension of life which itself is included in the general ontological frame of essence and existence. So the question is raised: Is there an ontologization of history in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*? And if so, what does it mean concretely, what are the social-political consequences of such a reversal?

To answer that question, a double investigation is required: first, about the philosophy of history in the German writings of Tillich; then, about the new shape of that philosophy in the *Systematic Theology*. I have already completed the first part of the research in an article written in French, which should appear in the Tillich Yearbook of this year. So, I will limit myself here to a brief summary of that study, before I get to the *Systematic Theology*.

Philosophy of History in the German Writings of Paul Tillich

1. First and foremost, in his article of 1927 on "Eschatology and History," and in his article of 1930 on "Christology and the Interpretation of History," Tillich puts forward the distinction between being (what is) and happening (what happens). History

(*Geschichte*) is defined by happening (*Geschehen*); thereby it differs from being. Of course, being also comprises movement; it is not static, it involves becoming, it includes dynamics. But this is not happening. There is a great difference between becoming and happening, the same difference as between nature and history. The movement of being as nature is symbolically represented by the circular line bent on itself. It is the movement of birth, growth, and decay. It is nothing more than the actualization of the possibilities of being, of what belongs to being. Happening is different. It breaks through the circular line of being toward something new that does not belong to the order of being.¹

2. What is that something new, that new realm which stands above being? It is meaning. So, as it is matter of happening, history is as well matter of meaning. One might say that meaning is also to be found in nature. In history, however, meaning is understood with a special feature. It is not merely rational and objective, like the physical laws of nature. It implies values, like the just and the good. So, beyond pure reason, it is a matter of will and freedom. In his English translation of 1936, Tillich makes it very clear:

The new, which occurs wherever history occurs, is meaning. In creating meaning, being rises above itself. For meaning – as we use this word here – is realized by freedom and only by freedom; in creating meaning, being gains freedom from itself, from the necessity of its nature. History exists where meaning is realized by freedom. The new which is produced in history is really new because it is produced by freedom. Freedom is the leap in which history transgresses the realm of pure being and creates meaning.²

3. If history is a matter of freedom and decision, it follows that a true knowledge of the meaning of history cannot be achieved without a commitment, without a concrete participation in history: "We actually know of history, only as we stand active

within it, and as we are able to transform every foreign history into our own history through our own decisions.”³

Here we see how the philosophy of history differs from the science of history, the science of the historian. *First*, the aim of the historian is to reach the most possible objective knowledge of history. He is concerned with the facts, according to their causal relations, not with the meaning of history as understood here. *Second*, the historian is concerned especially with the past, while the philosopher of history is mainly concerned with the present situation, since the active participation in history can be achieved only in the present. This is exemplified by Tillich’s book of 1926: *Die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart (The Religious Situation of the Present Time)*. *Third*, the historian is mainly concerned with the explanation of the facts, according to the relations of causality between the facts, while the philosopher looks at the meaning of the facts. And since the interpretation is dependent on one’s active commitment in history, there will be different and opposite interpretations of the same events. For instance, the events of 1933 in Germany have been interpreted very differently by Paul Tillich and by Emanuel Hirsch. Once more, the distinction appears clearly between being (what is, the facts) and happening (what happens, the significance of the facts).

4. Let us consider now, with Tillich, the transcendent aspect of the meaning of history. Here the comparison and distinction between being and history appears very clearly, since the transcendence of the meaning of history is analyzed and stated in a parallel way with the transcendence of being. Everything existent is finite being: it is precarious, insecure, futile. Nevertheless it is, in spite of the threat of non-being. This is interpreted by faith as a participation in the unconditioned, in being itself. It enjoys a part, not the totality of being. This kind of reflection is called here theological ontology, or “protology,” because the unconditionally transcendent is first, giving being to whatever is.⁴

The same type of analysis is used to show the transcendent import in the meaning of every event and of history as a whole:

Every event, like every being, has the dual character of seriousness and insecurity.... It has the inexhaustibility of meaning as well as the threat of plunging into the abyss of meaninglessness and nothingness.... This points to an unconditioned meaning of the event, which is not fulfilled in the event, but which bears the event [...]. This is not

the transcendence of the origin, but the transcendence of the end.⁵

In other words, this is not “protology” but “eschatology.” In the English translation of 1936, the contrast and parallel between the transcendence of being and the transcendence of history is still more evident: “History transcends itself, as being transcends itself, for a believing intuition. It points to a transcendent meaning of history in which the threat of meaninglessness is warded off. ... Therefore this transcendence is implied in history —for belief, of course— with the same certainty, as the other transcendence is implied in being.”⁶

5. We understand better now what Tillich means with the phrase “metaphysics of event” or “metaphysics of history.” This is the title of a lecture he gave in 1927: “Die Metaphysik des Geschehens.”⁷ We see there the same comparison and distinction between the metaphysics of event and the metaphysics of being: “The metaphysics of event is the consideration of the event in so far as it stands in the transcendent. Of course, such an endeavor is anyhow conditioned by the solution of another task, which we call the metaphysics of being, that is the consideration of the existent in so far as it stands in the transcendent.”⁸ In that lecture, metaphysics of event and metaphysics of history are manifestly equivalent.

If we ask about the distinction between philosophy of history and metaphysics of history, we find clear definitions in the article of 1925, on “The Augustinian Doctrine of the State according to the *De Civitate Dei*.”⁹ Philosophy of history refers to “an understanding of history on its own terms,” for instance, a matter of meaning, a production of something new, and so on. While metaphysics of history means a “comprehension of what stands behind [and beyond] every external event, that is the struggle of the divine and the demonic.” Then, “the opposition between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world is for Augustine the principle of a metaphysics of history.”¹⁰

6. A last reference is needed here, which opens new perspectives—religious, philosophical and political—on our topic. This is the Introduction of *The Socialist Decision* (1933).¹¹ There we find a distinction between natural being and human consciousness, where we hear the echo of the former distinction between being and meaning. Tillich writes: “Nature is a unified life-process, unfolding itself without question or demand.... Humanity is a life-process that questions itself and its environment,

placing demands on itself and its environment....”¹² Note that the human life-process (*Lebensprozess*) is not conceived here as a mere development of the nature life-process; it is life split in itself: “It is not one with itself. Rather, it has these two aspects: to exist in itself and simultaneously to stand over against itself.”¹³

In the same Introduction, we hear also the echo of another important distinction: the origin (the *proton*) and the end (the *eschaton*). These are the two sides of the human consciousness of life. The question of the origin arises first. It is “the human question concerning the ‘Whence’ of existence.” It may be called the question of being, of what is, of what is given by nature. Here we find again the idea and analogy of the circular line bent on itself: “Our life runs its course in terms of birth, development and death. No living thing can transcend the limits set by its birth; development is the growing and passing away of what comes from the origin and returns to it.”¹⁴

The religious expression of such a consciousness of origin is the sacred and the sacerdotal: “This orientation of consciousness to the origin is maintained and made explicit by the *priesthood*. The priesthood preserves the sacred tradition; it preserves and presents anew the connection with the powers of origin. It stands in an enduring special relation to the ‘Whence’ of human being.”¹⁵ Ontology, for its part, is the philosophical expression of that consciousness of origin: “For being is the origin of everything that exists.... Ontology is rooted in the myth of origin.... Ontology is the final and most abstract version of the myth of origin.”¹⁶ The political result of such a consciousness bent toward the origin is clearly expressed in the following thesis: “The consciousness oriented to the myth of origin is the root of all conservative and romantic thought in politics.”¹⁷ This is indeed a consciousness oriented to the past, to the traditions and institutions of the past, in order to save one’s own national and religious identity. What is most fearful here is that the power of being, as power of the origin becomes the norm: “Being constitutes the criterion of everything that exists: the power of being is the highest standard. Being is itself the truth and the norm.”¹⁸

Here becomes clearly evident the necessity of another principle, a critical principle, the principle of justice, which stands against the power of the origin. This is the consciousness of the end, which arises with the question of whither, of where to go, of where we should go. It implies the consciousness of

a demand which opens the way to the end, the way of justice: “Human beings not only find themselves in existence; they not only know themselves to be posited and withdrawn in the cycle of birth and death, like all living things. They experience a demand that frees them from being simply bound to what is given, and which compels them to add to the question ‘Whence?’ the question ‘Wither?’.”¹⁹ Under the influence of such a demand of justice, the bond of origin is not eliminated, it is broken. By the same token, the human being is liberated, elevated beyond the cycle of life and death: “With this question [Wither?], the cycle is broken in principle and humankind is elevated beyond the sphere of merely living things. For the demand calls for something that does not yet exist but should exist, should come to fulfillment. A being that experiences a demand is no longer bound to the origin.”²⁰

The transition from the pole of origin to the pole of the end implies a shift in the realm of the religious, of the philosophical, and of the political. In religion, it means the shift from the sacerdotal to the prophetic: “It is the significance of *Jewish propheticism* to have fought explicitly against the myth of origin.... On the basis of a powerful social myth of origin, Jewish propheticism radicalized the social imperative to the point of freeing itself from the bond of origin.... The bond of origin between God and his people is broken if the bond of the law is broken by the people. Thus the myth of origin is shattered, and this is the world-historical mission of Jewish propheticism.”²¹

The philosophical expression of the tension between the sacerdotal and the prophetic is the tension between the ontological and the ethical, that is, between what is and what should be. What should be is not part of being; rather it opposes being as a rupture of being: “The question of the ‘ought’ cannot be answered by reference to what is. ‘The good transcends being’ (Plato). There can be no ‘ought’ on the basis of unbroken being.”²² Let us note here the equivalence of ethics and philosophy of history in so far as they relate to ontology. Both are rooted in the prophetic and opposed to pure ontology. Tillich makes it clear in a footnote: “Ontology thus has the same degree of justification as does the bond of origin as such, i.e., it is justified only insofar as it has been broken by a philosophy of history. The notion of an abstract ‘fundamental ontology’ free of any relation to history is thereby excluded.”²³

The political significance of that transition to the pole of the end, to the pole of the “ought to be,” is

stated by Tillich in the second main thesis of the Introduction: "The breaking of the myth of origin by the unconditioned demand is the root of liberal, democratic and socialist thought in politics."²⁴ If one looks for the distinction between pure liberal thought and religious socialism, he or she has to get back to the "Basic Principles of Religious Socialism"²⁵. There we see that the sacramental attitude is grounded on the sacred, on the import (*Gehalt*), while the liberal stance is purely formal and rational.²⁶ "In contrast to both of these tendencies, religious socialism adopts the prophetic attitude. It is the unity and the higher form of both of the former tendencies. The demand of the holy that should be arises upon the ground of the holy that is given."²⁷ Here we see that, for Tillich, religious socialism is no other than prophetic socialism.

Ontology and the Philosophy of History in the American Writings of Paul Tillich

1. Up to this point, we see a fully coherent thought of Tillich about the relation of history to being, and of philosophy of history to ontology. What happens to that synthesis in his American writings? Let us begin with an interesting point of comparison, the lectures published in 1954 under the title: *Love, Power, and Justice*.²⁸ There, ethics is no longer opposed to ontology; it is not the counterpart of ontology. Rather, it is brought into ontology, where it finds its foundation: "Ontology is the way in which the root meaning of all principles and also of the three concepts of our subject can be found."²⁹

What does it mean for the relationship of power and justice? Power is the first characteristic of being: "The concept I suggest for a fundamental description of being as being is one within our triad of concepts, namely the concept of power."³⁰ Thus, the power of being is understood according to the Heideggerian interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy of life as will to power. Will to power is "a designation of the dynamic self-affirmation of life." It is "the drive of everything living to realize itself with increasing intensity and extensity.... The will to power is the self-affirmation of life in its self-transcending dynamics, overcoming internal and external resistance."³¹ (1) Therefore, according to *Love, Power, and Justice*, the power of being is no longer, as in the German writings, the power of origin which is broken by the counter-principle of the end; it overcomes all resistance. (2) Similarly, the life-process is no longer assimilated to a circular line bent on itself,

with the cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death; it is a dynamics of constant self-transcendence. A few pages later, Tillich has these lines, where one seems to read Teilhard de Chardin: "Metaphysically speaking, one could say that the molecule wants to become a crystal, the crystal a cell, the cell a centre of cells, the plant [an] animal, the animal [a] man, the man [a] god, the weak [the] strong, the isolated [the] participating, the imperfect [the] perfect, and so on!"³²

What becomes of justice in such an ontological context? It is no longer opposed to the power of being, as a prophetic claim. It is included in the wide frame of being, as an ontological element, according to the polarity of dynamics and form. In that polarity, power represents the pole of dynamics, and justice the pole of the form: "Actualized being or life unites dynamics with form. Everything real has a form.... That which has no form has no being."³³ "Justice is the form in which the power of being actualizes itself."³⁴ So, justice is no longer a brake on power. On the contrary, every form of being is doomed to be overcome by the power of being: "Everything real drives beyond itself. It is not satisfied with the form in which it finds itself. It urges towards a more embracing, ultimately to *the* all-embracing form. Everything wants to grow. It wants to increase its power of being in forms which include and conquer more non-being."³⁵ If, in 1933, instead of *The Socialist Decision*, Tillich had published such a marvelous piece of Nietzschean and Heideggerian philosophy of life, he would certainly not have been dismissed by the Nazi regime.

2. Let us now turn to the question of history and its relation to being in the *Systematic Theology*. What is most interesting here is to realize the difference between the *Dogmatics* of 1925-1927 and the *Systematic Theology*. The two main parts of the *Dogmatics* are divided according to the distinction of the natural and the historical. The first part is headed: "The Existent as Natural in the Final Revelation (The Creation. Theological Interpretation of Being)."³⁶ And the second: "The Existent as Historical in the Final Revelation (The Redemption. Theological Interpretation of History)."³⁷

The first part of that work is itself divided into three sections: "The Existent as Consonant with Essence," "The Existent as Contrary to Essence," "The Existent as Together Consonant and Contrary to Essence." In the *Systematic Theology*, this latter subdivision becomes the main structure of the system:

man's essential nature, man's existential self-estrangement, and the ambiguities of life.³⁸

Thus, the difference appears quite clearly between the two constructions. In the *Dogmatics*, the main difference stands between nature and history, while in the *Systematic Theology*, it stands between essence and existence. History then loses much of its importance. It is relegated to the last part of the system, as a mere annex to the previous part on life: "The fifth part of the theological system [on History and the Kingdom of God] is an extension of the fourth part [on Life and the Spirit]."³⁹

3. There is another important difference between the two systems: what I would call the surreptitious introduction of the concept of life into the *Systematic Theology*. In the *Dogmatics*, there is much about the ambiguities of existence, without any reference, however, to the concept of life.

Moreover, in the *Dogmatics*, as well as in the German writings of Tillich as a whole, life stands on the side of nature, as opposed to history. Life is understood in the context of the life-death cycle, comprising birth, growth, decay, and death. The concept of life in the *Systematic Theology* is quite different. It is no longer opposed to history; it now comprises history. It is the wide, universal concept of life, co-extensive with being. From the beginning, in that fourth part of the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich distinguishes between two concepts of life: the *generic* concept of life, which designates a specific kind of beings, that is, "living beings"; and the *ontological* concept of life, which is the universal concept including all beings.⁴⁰ The ontological character of the latter concept is stated by Tillich as follows: "This concept of life unites the two main qualifications of being which underlie this whole system; these two main qualifications of being are the essential and the existential."⁴¹ Moreover, Tillich makes clear that he will use here that ontological concept of life: "We use the word 'life' in this sense of a 'mixture' of essential and existential elements."⁴²

4. Up to this point, no quarrel. Such a concept of life is well founded, and it is fully consistent with the ontological character of the whole system. The problem arises when the concept of history comes in since history then is integrated into that ontological concept of life. As in the case of life, here also a distinction is introduced between two concepts of history: a strict and a larger concept, history proper and history *per analogiam*: "Analogues to history proper are found in all realms of life. There is no history proper where there is no spirit. It is therefore neces-

sary to distinguish the 'historical dimension' which belongs to all life processes, from history proper, which is something occurring in mankind alone."⁴³

Here we see a great difference between the former and the latter Tillich. In his German writings, he makes a sharp distinction between the natural processes and the historical events, while in the *Systematic Theology*, the historical character is attributed to all the processes of life, so that one can talk of "natural history": "The processes of life themselves are horizontally directed, actualizing the historical dimension in an anticipatory way.... It would certainly be possible to call the birth, growth, aging, and dying of a particular tree its history.... The term 'natural history' directly attributes the dimension of history to every process in nature."⁴⁴

Consequently, the historical dimension is potentially present in all the processes of life, from the lowest to the highest levels. There is a continuous actualization of such potentialities from one level to another: "The historical quality of life is potentially present under all its dimensions. It is actualized under them in an anticipatory way, i.e., it is not only potentially but in part actually present under them, whereas it is fully actualized in human history."⁴⁵ This means that the historical dimension is coextensive with life, and that the continuous development of life leads finally to history proper, to human history. But this is contrary to the previous conception of the German Tillich, who so clearly makes a distinction between the natural *development* of life and the *event* that characterizes history.

Provisionary Conclusions

As a result of the preceding inquiry, I am led to draw a few provisional conclusions. I say "provisionary" because I realize that a much fuller investigation would be needed in the *Systematic Theology*, as well as in the American writings of Tillich in general. Nevertheless, in my opinion, there is enough divergence from one period to another, to raise the question of an ontologization of history in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*.

1. First, we realize there is a significant difference between the German and the American Tillich concerning the concept of history. In the German writings of the 1920s and 30s, history is sharply distinguished from being; what happens is different from what is (and from what becomes). What happens in history is dependent on human consciousness and freedom; it is a matter of demand, of deci-

sion, and of commitment. Thus, being and event differ like what is and what should be.

In the *Systematic Theology*, this sharp distinction is blurred. The historical process is no longer opposed; it is included into the general process of life. Moreover, life becomes coextensive with being; it becomes an ontological concept, so that history itself is drawn into being, as a modality, a dimension, or an element of being.

One might say that the difference is not so important, that it is merely a matter of semantics, whether we use a stricter or a larger concept of being. I disagree with this point a view. In my opinion, it does make a real difference whether or not there is a critical, a prophetic stance above being. Anyhow, we do realize an important change in Tillich's mind on that issue. In the *Socialist Decision* (1933), he writes: "Being loses its immediacy through the 'ought'. The question of the 'ought' cannot be answered by reference to what is. 'The good transcends being' (Plato)."⁴⁶ However, in 1954, in *Love, Power, and Justice*, the same idea is attributed to the philosophy of values, against which Tillich is arguing: "The good, the beautiful, the true are beyond being. They have the character of 'ought to be' but not of 'is'. This was an ingenious way to save the validity of ethical norms, without interfering with reality as seen by reductionist naturalism. But the way was blocked from both sides."⁴⁷

2. We reach a similar conclusion when we look at the difference between the *Dogmatics* of the 1920s and the *Systematic Theology* of the 1950s and 60s. I noted that the *Dogmatics* is built according to the distinction between the natural and the historical, while the main difference that covers the whole *Systematic* is that of the essential and the existential. If we consider now that the starting point of the German Tillich's philosophy of history is the *kairos* of religious socialism, we may say that the transition from the *Dogmatics* to the *Systematic Theology* means the evolution from the socialist Tillich to the existentialist Tillich.

Here one might say that Tillich has not repudiated his religious socialism in the United States. Moreover, he considers himself as an existentialist right after the First World War.⁴⁸ However, a difference remains. It is the transition from the particular to the universal. For instance, in Germany, Tillich was denouncing the specific concrete demonries of his time,⁴⁹ while in the *Systematic Theology* he is considering in general the ambiguities of historical

self-integration, of historical self-creativity, and of historical self-transcendence.⁵⁰

We might go further, saying that the reason why the American Tillich no longer relies on a particular *kairos* to build a committed theology, is that here, in America, he did not feel the appeal of a significant *kairos*. In a lecture given in 1946, he says: "While after the first World War the mood of a new beginning prevailed, after the second World War a mood of the end prevails. A present theology of culture is, above all, a theology of the end of culture, not in general terms but in a concrete analysis of the inner void of most of our cultural expression."⁵¹ In other words, Tillich, at that time, was experiencing the meaninglessness of the present situation, and he was making every endeavour to assume and overcome such meaninglessness. Thus, *The Courage to Be* (1952) would be the perfect expression of the existentialist Tillich, and the perfect opposite of *The Socialist Decision*, that is, the socialist commitment.

3. Finally, I would like to add a last reflection concerning a word from the "Call for Proposals," in the Tillich Group of the AAR this year. We read there: "How was Tillich's mature thought developed during his time in Chicago?" For my part, I think that the thought of Tillich in Germany was no less mature than it was in Chicago. It was different, that is all. Of course, Tillich completed here, in America, his monumental *Systematic Theology*. There is no equivalent, no writing of such magnitude in his German years. However, magnitude is not the only, not even the main criterion here. Let us recall a word of Tillich himself in the Introduction of the *Systematic Theology*: "One could say that in each fragment a system is implied which is not yet explicated."⁵² There are many fragments of that sort in the German writings of Tillich. Moreover, I would like to point out here an article of 1938, which is especially relevant to our theme: "The Kingdom of God and History."⁵³ This article, written here in America, is a perfect synthesis of the thought of the German socialist Tillich. The systematic construction is magnificent. But it is totally different from the fifth part of the *Systematic Theology*. For instance, there is not a single hint there at the philosophy of life.

Now, who is the "real" Tillich: the German, the younger Tillich, or the older one, the American Tillich? In the Foreword of *The Socialist Decision*, Tillich asks the same question about the "real" Marx, and his answer is the following: "The 'real' Marx is Marx in the context of his development, hence the unity of the younger and the older Marx. Only if the

one is interpreted by the other, is a true understanding of Marx possible.”⁵⁴ We might say the same of Tillich. However, each of us will emphasize the one or the other according to his own point of view. If one is more ontologically, spiritually, and mystically oriented, then he will certainly prefer the Chicagoan Tillich; whereas if he is more politically committed, he will enjoy the younger Tillich. Since I myself am strongly bent toward liberation theology, my privileged Tillich is the younger, the socialist Tillich.

¹ Cf. “Eschatologie und Geschichte” (1927), MW 6, p. 111; “Christologie und Geschichtsdeutung” (1930), MW 6, p. 190-191.

² “Eschatology and History,” in *The Interpretation of History*, New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936, p. 273.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 270-272.

⁵ “Eschatologie und Geschichte”, MW 6, p. 111-112 (my translation).

⁶ “Eschatology and History”, in *The Interpretation of History*, p. 273-274.

⁷ “Die Metaphysik des Geschehens”, EGW XI, p. 175-188.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 176 (my translation).

⁹ “Die Staatslehre Augustins nach De Civitate Dei” (1925), GW XII, p. 81-96.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87 (my translation).

¹¹ *The Socialist Decision*, translated by F. Sherman, New York, Harper & Row, 1977 (“Die sozialistische Entscheidung”, MW 3, p. 283-419).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17-18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17-18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 166, note 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵ “Basic Principles of Religious Socialism,” (1923), Transl. by James L. Adams and Victor Nuovo, in *Political Expectation*, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, p. 58-88.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 58-60.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁸ *Love, Power, and Justice. Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (1954), A Galaxy Book, New York, Oxford University Press, 1960.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36-37.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁶ *Dogmatik-Vorlesung (Dresden 1925-1927)*, EGW XIV, p. 121.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

³⁸ *Systematic Theology*, I, p.66-67.

³⁹ *Systematic Theology*, III, p. 297.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁴⁶ *The Socialist Decision*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ *Love, Power, and Justice*, p. 73-74.

⁴⁸ *On the Boundary. An Autobiographical Sketch* (1936), New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966, p. 83 : “It was an altogether different issue that led me to the boundary of idealism. The idealists claim that their system of categories portrays reality as a whole, rather than being the expression of a definite and existentially limited encounter with reality.”

⁴⁹ Cf. “The Demonic. A Contribution to the Interpretation of History” (1926), in *The Interpretation of History*, p. 115-122.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Systematic Theology*, III, p. 339-346.

⁵¹ “Religion and Secular Culture” (1946), in *The Protestant Era* (1948), The University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 60.

⁵² *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 58.

⁵³ “The Kingdom of God and History” (1938), in *The Theology of Peace*, Edited by R.H. Stone, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990, p. 25-56.

⁵⁴ *The Socialist Decision*, p. 163, note 4.

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**EVENTAL FIDELITY, ULTIMATE CONCERN,
AND THE SUBJECT: READING ALAIN
BADIOU WITH PAUL TILLICH**

HOLLIS PHELPS

This paper is an attempt to begin a dialogue between the work of the French philosopher Alain Badiou and Paul Tillich. In what follows I argue, albeit in extremely condensed fashion, that, when taken on its own terms, Badiou's formal theory of the subject remains ineffectual, in that it lacks an analysis of the conditions under which individuals determine to become subjects. I suggest that turning to Tillich's notion of faith as ultimate concern can be of help here, particularly if we juxtapose his understanding of the different relationships between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern and the role that anxiety play in them, with Badiou's deviant forms of the subject.

To begin, we focus on Badiou's theory of the subject, in particular how his understanding of the subject differs from other, commonly held notions. At a basic level, it is important to note that Badiou's subject does not immediately correspond to the human individual. Subjects certainly presuppose the activity of individuals, but there is in Badiou's theory no one-to-one relationship between them. This gap between individuals and subjects rules out thinking of the subject in finite terms, as a category of morality, a locus or register of experience, or an ideological fiction. We can take each of these in turn.

First, concerning the subject as a category of morality, it does not matter for Badiou if it is the (neo) Kantian subject of human rights or the Levinasian subject that underpins the "ethics of difference": both tend to flatten the subject "onto the empirical manifestness of the living body. What deserves respect is the animal body as such."¹ Conceiving the subject primarily in moral terms ultimately reduces the human being to "the status of victim, of suffering beast, of emaciated, dying body, [it] equates man with his animal substructure, it reduces him to the level of a living organism, pure and simple."² These claims are, perhaps, a bit overdrawn, but Badiou's main point is that understanding the subject as a category of morality confines the subject to finitude, to the limitations constitutive of individual human beings. Indeed, this reduction of the subject to finitude is part and parcel of what he pejoratively refers to in *Logics of Worlds* as "democratic materialism,"

whose axiom is: "There are only bodies and languages."³ Democratic materialism, and the subject that corresponds to it, takes as its horizon "the dogma of our finitude, of our carnal exposition to enjoyment, suffering and death."⁴ The claim that "there are only bodies and languages" amounts to little more than a "bio-materialism" that reduces "humanity to an overstretched vision of animality."⁵

Second, if the subject is not a category of morality, it is also not "a register of experience, a schema for the conscious distribution of the reflexive and the non-reflexive; this thesis conjoins subject and consciousness and is deployed today as phenomenology."⁶ The phenomenological or existential subject is, as Badiou points out, irrevocably bound to meaning, to the circulation of sense. It does, to be sure, exercise a transcendental function in relation to experience, but this subject can only conceive of the infinite as a horizon, as a negative correlate of the immediacy of its own essential finitude.⁷ Moreover, if we accept Badiou's conflation of "religion" with "everything that presupposes continuity between truths and the circulation of sense,"⁸ then the phenomenological or existential subject is at bottom a religious subject. It is little surprise, then, that the so-called "turn to religion" in philosophy is bound up with the continental phenomenological tradition.⁹ Badiou, however, has little time for such things: philosophy's task is not to resurrect religion and its dispositions; rather it must proclaim God's death more forcefully than ever, even if this proclamation goes against the current fascination with religion's apparent return.¹⁰

Because Badiou's rejection of any attempt to locate the subject in experience touches on some of the problems inherent in his theory of the subject, I will return to it below. For now we can simply note that although Badiou rejects conceiving the subject in either moral or existential terms, this does not lead him to reduce the subject to a mere ideological fiction, an "interpellation" of the state and its apparatuses as Louis Althusser thought.¹¹ At both the political and the ontological level, the state certainly reproduces itself through various ideologies and their mechanisms. But strictly speaking the state exerts this pressure through the re-presentation individuals, which latter, we have said, do not correspond to subjects for Badiou.¹²

If the subject for Badiou does not refer to category of morality, a locus or register of experience, or an ideological fiction, then what is it? Badiou's subject is, at root, a formal category. More specifically,

in *Being and Event*, Badiou gives the following definition: “I term *subject* any local configuration of a generic procedure from which a truth is supported.”¹³ Badiou’s subject is the “*local* status of a procedure, a configuration in excess of the situation.”¹⁴ To understand this definition, a little background is necessary. Badiou’s mature philosophy, from the austere mathematical ontology outlined in *Being and Event* to the modes of appearance in *Logics of Worlds*, has as its goal the construction of a contemporary theory of truths. Philosophy itself, to be sure, does not produce truths; philosophy rather formalizes the conditions under which truths appear in history in four domains: science, art, politics, and love. Drawing on mathematician Paul Cohen’s use of non-constructible sets to demonstrate the independence of the continuum hypothesis, Badiou refers to the production of truths in each of the four domains as generic procedures. That is, they are procedures that subtract themselves from the finite logic and language governing the situations (*Being and Event*) or worlds (*Logics of Worlds*) in which they appear. Put in the simplest terms possible, truths break with established knowledge and force new trajectories in thought and action, trajectories that are infinite in scope.

How this occurs is the subject of Badiou’s major works, and it would be impossible to discuss it in detail in this context. Nevertheless, we can give a rough sketch of the basic structure of generic procedures. At the foundation of any generic procedure is an event, the occurrence of something that poses a challenge to, and thereby has the potential to rupture with, the dominant logic and language that constitute the knowledge of a situation or world. In Badiou’s words:

For a process of truth to begin, something must happen. What there already is—the situation of knowledge as such—generates nothing other than repetition. For a truth to affirm its newness, there must be a *supplement*. This supplement is committed to chance. It is unpredictable, incalculable. It is beyond what is. I call it an event. A truth thus appears, in its newness because an evental supplement interrupts repetition.¹⁵

There is a direct correlation here between an event as supplement, or exception as Badiou often refers to it, and the unpredictable and the incalculable. Because the event occurs as an interruption in excess of knowledge, the knowledge of a situation, which depends on repetition, cannot grasp it: an event is unpredictable and incalculable for the

knowledge of the situation. To use the language of *Being and Event*, the belonging of an event to a situation is undecidable in that situation. If an event in its essence is undecidable, the only way to grasp it, to determine it as an event, is to decide on its belonging. Badiou understands this decision along the lines of Pascal’s wager, Mallarmé’s dice-throw, and Kierkegaard’s either/or, and he describes it in the following terms: “Since it is of the very essence of the event to be a multiple whose belonging to the situation is undecidable, deciding that it belongs to the situation is a wager: one can only hope that this wager never becomes legitimate, inasmuch as any legitimacy refers back to the structure of the situation.”¹⁶

Badiou refers to this wager or decision as intervention, which he defines as “any procedure by which a multiple is recognized as an event.”¹⁷ Intervention, in turn, takes the form of nomination, the attachment of a signifier to an event that makes it available for decision. To quote Badiou on this point:

The act of nomination of the event is what constitutes it, not as real—we will always posit that this multiple has occurred—but susceptible to a decision concerning its belonging to a situation. The essence of the intervention consists—within the field opened up by an alternative hypothesis, whose *presented* object is the site (a multiple on the edge of the void), and which concerns the ‘there is’ of an event—in naming this ‘there is’ and in unfolding the consequences of this nomination in the space of the situation to which the site belongs.¹⁸

Without nomination, the interventional naming of an event for a situation, an event would remain caught in the essence of its own undecidability, impotent with respect to its potential to interrupt the situation in which it occurs. Because of this, nomination functions almost as a second event, the event of an event that makes the original event available for the production of truth.

Once made available, the consequences of an event are drawn through fidelity to it. Fidelity, or faithfulness, has quite an obvious religious ring to it, especially when we situate it in light of an event’s undecidability. I will return to this point below. For now, we can simply note that, just as there is no general subject, there is no universal faithful disposition that would subtend all situations. Badiou emphasizes that fidelity is not “a capacity, a subjective quality, or a virtue” but rather “a situated operation

which depends upon the examination of situations.”¹⁹ Fidelity is always particular to an event, referring to the procedure through which a truth is constructed from an event. In Badiou’s words:

I call *fidelity* the set of procedures which discern, within a situation, those multiples whose existence depends upon the introduction into circulation (under the supernumerary name conferred by an intervention) of an evental multiple. In sum, a fidelity is the apparatus which separates out, within the set of presented multiples, those which depend on an event. To be faithful is to gather together and distinguish the becoming legal of chance.²⁰

So understood, fidelity takes the form of mathematical deduction: fidelity is a disciplined enquiry into a situation, the purpose of which is to divide those terms or multiples connected to an event from those that are not. Fidelity, then, constitutes the form of generic procedures. Fidelity is the name for the procedure through which the truths of science, art, politics, and love are produced.

We can now return to Badiou’s definition of the subject as the “*local* configuration of a generic procedure from which a truth is supported.”²¹ A subject for Badiou is not coextensive with either intervention, and thus the event, or the procedure of fidelity. A subject is rather “the advent of their Two, that is, the incorporation of the event into the situation in the mode of a generic procedure.”²² It is “the process of liaison between the event (thus the intervention) and the procedure of fidelity (thus its operator of connection).”²³ Badiou’s subject is the torsion or between-two of the event and the generic procedure.²⁴ Badiou’s subject is thus a subject of truth, in a dual sense: truth produces the subject and the subject produces truth.

It is at this point in Badiou’s theory of the subject, however, that difficulties begin to arise. Badiou’s theory of the subject, as articulated in *Being and Event*, rests on a fundamental distinction between subjects and non-subjects, between subjects of the generic procedure and non-subjects outside a procedure’s trajectory. Badiou does, however, seem to recognize that at an empirical level such a distinction is far more complex. As he points out in Meditation 23 of *Being and Event*, in which he discusses fidelity, there can be different fidelities to the same event in the same situation. “At the empirical level,” he says, “we know that there are many manners of being faithful to an event: Stalinists and Trotskyists both proclaimed their fidelity to the event of October

1917, but they massacred each other.”²⁵ Nevertheless, Badiou does not work this claim out in any detail, opting instead for a more formal analysis that focuses only on the operator of connection involved in all faithful procedures. In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou’s revises his theory of the subject, considering it under three formal, subjective types (faithful, reactive, and obscure) that organize a relation to a post-evental truth in the present in four destinations (production, denial, occultation, resurrection). I will return to this in more detail below, but as the names of these types and destinations suggest, Badiou’s revised theory still assumes the primacy of fidelity. Badiou considers the reactive and obscure subjects, and their corresponding destinations, as deviations from the norm of the faithful subject: the reactive subject denies truth; the obscure subject occults truth.²⁶

The problem, however, is the following. As we have said, Badiou’s theory of the subject, both in its basic form in *Being and Event* and its revised form in *Logics of Worlds*, considers the faithful subject as normative. But Badiou’s theory makes it difficult to identify the faithful subject with any degree of certainty, as seen for instance in Badiou’s claim that “there are many manners of being faithful to an event.”²⁷ More to the point, Badiou insists throughout his writings that truths are fragile and rare; their production is always radically contingent, lacking any ultimate guarantee in regards to duration, trajectory, and content. This is what Badiou means, when he describes the subjects of truths as constituting “a militant and aleatoric trajectory.”²⁸ There is no necessary connection between an event, which is undecidable, and its consequences, hence the role of intervention in Badiou’s theory of truths. Not only does the contingency of truths make it difficult to determine with any precision what constitutes fidelity and, consequently, reaction and obscurity. It also leaves open the question of what would motivate individuals to become subjects of truths in the first place. Consistent with his Platonism, Badiou seems to assume that truths are immediately attractive, that individuals would—and should—be willing to enter into procedures of truth with little to no resistance, *because* we are dealing with truths. The sheer dearth of truth procedures that Badiou constantly rails against, however, would seem to preclude any such notion. Indeed, given the fact that truths for Badiou are fragile and rare, radically contingent in regards to duration, trajectory, and content, it is perhaps more surprising that individuals would take up and

maintain truth procedures in the first place; hence the overabundance of what Badiou refers to as “reactive” and “obscure” subjects. Otherwise put, individuals in Badiou’s theory must leap into the subjective position through intervention, a leap that we can characterize as an immediate passage from the finite to the infinite. But it is precisely this leap that remains a problem for Badiou since he does not have recourse to anything outside truth procedures themselves. Sam Gillespie has thus observed that Badiou’s theory of the subject “hinges upon the ability of a select number of human beings to recognize events....Badiou does not appear to think that the conditions under which events occur require any other foundation than naming and recognition as such. The problem with this is that it is tautological: subjects constitute events at the same time that subjects are miraculously constituted by the naming and recognition of events.”²⁹

Things do not get much better if we turn to fidelity, which sustains a truth in its becoming. Without belaboring the point, Badiou appeals variously to the importance of “belief,” “confidence,” “courage,” even secularized versions of the theological virtues of “faith,” “hope,” and “love,” to indicate the constitution of subjects in truth procedures.³⁰ Given the sheer contingency of truths, such dispositions, if we can call them that, are required to assure that “the operator of faithful connection does not gather together the chance of the encounters in vain.”³¹ That is, these dispositions serve as the basis for an ethic of truths, providing resources for the subject to “Keep going!”³² Nevertheless, we run into the same problem here as previously mentioned: the dispositions required to sustain fidelity are internal to fidelity itself, in that fidelity produces these dispositions.

Now, if Badiou’s theory were solely concerned with a description of what actually occurs for subjects in truth procedures, then we might not have much of an issue. Badiou certainly pitches his theory at this level, when he stresses that philosophy “does not itself produce truths.”³³ However, even the most cursory reading of Badiou would conclude that he is not concerned merely with description. Badiou’s goal is, rather, to use formalization in the service of the actual production of truths, as is clear in the normative status that he attaches to the faithful subject. Philosophy, then, is concerned with description, but it also, “in its very essence, elaborates the means of saying ‘Yes!’ to the previously unknown thoughts that hesitate to become the truths that they are.”³⁴ It is difficult to see how saying “Yes!” is possible, how-

ever, unless we supplement Badiou’s theory of the subject with the conditions under which individuals determine to become subjects or not, conditions that concern the state of human finitude.

In order to provide an initial account of what such a supplementation might look like, we turn to Paul Tillich, in particular his notion of faith as ultimate concern. We should note from the outset, however, that turning to Tillich as a resource for thinking through the difficulties inherent in Badiou’s theory of the subject is at first glance by no means obvious, for at least two reasons. First, at the most general level, despite Tillich’s attempt to think God in non-objective terms as being-itself, it is often assumed that Tillich’s theology remains too close the onto-theological tradition to be of much use in contemporary discussions.³⁵ Indeed, Tillich’s theology would seem to be one more ontology of presence, which, as Badiou notes, assumes that “being cannot be signified within a structured multiple, and that only an experience situated beyond all structure will afford us an access to the veiling of being’s presence.”³⁶ Against this disposition, Badiou proposes a mathematically-based subtractive ontology, which rests on the assumption that “being qua being does not in any manner let itself be approached, but solely allows itself to be *sutured* in its void to the brutality of a deductive consistency without aura.”³⁷ There would seem, then, to be little rapport between Tillich’s theology and Badiou’s philosophy.³⁸

Second, and more directly related to the concerns of this paper, Tillich’s reliance on existential categories to construct his theology would seem to confine his understanding of subjectivity to a form of experience. As we mentioned above, however, Badiou distinguishes his formal theory of the subject from any attempt to conceptualize the subject as a register of experience. Fair enough, but if the problems with Badiou’s theory of the subject I outlined above hold any weight whatsoever, it seems to me that Badiou needs to account for this experiential register. That is, Badiou needs to take into consideration the existential conditions in which individuals find themselves when confronted with truths.³⁹ Indeed, Badiou seems to presuppose these very conditions when he appeals to “belief,” “confidence,” “courage,” and the like, even if he dissolves the existential sense of these through formalization. Turning to Tillich, in this respect, is helpful, in that it allows us to provide the type of analysis that I am claiming Badiou lacks. Moreover, although there are certainly irrevocable differences between Badiou and Tillich,

Tillich's insistence on the formal character of theological reflection allows his theology and its categories, particularly those associated with the notion of faith as ultimate concern, to be put to use in different contexts.⁴⁰

Turning to Tillich, then, faith for him does not primarily take an objective form; that is, faith as such is neither an act of knowledge directed towards the otherwise unknowable nor trust in external authority. Although faith may certainly be an element of these and similar situations, faith is not ultimately a matter of content, a matter of mere ascent to and acceptance of specific propositions, doctrinal formulations, texts, and so on. Faith is, rather, an existential category; it "is the state of being ultimately concerned."⁴¹ On the one hand, as a state of being, faith has a "subjective" quality, in that it refers to "a total and centered act of the personal self, the act of unconditional, infinite, and ultimate concern."⁴² On the other hand, this act is directed towards that which is unconditional, infinite, and ultimate for the individual; the "unconditional concern which is faith is the concern about the unconditional," Tillich says.⁴³ For this reason, faith as ultimate concern unites both "subject" and "object" in one act, which also means that any substantial division between these categories is overcome in faith. We see this, for instance, when Tillich notes that ultimate concern

excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance; it makes them preliminary. The ultimate concern is unconditional, independent of any conditions of character, desire, or circumstance. The unconditional concern is total: no part of ourselves or of our world is excluded from it; there is no "place" to flee from it. The total concern is infinite; no moment of relaxation or rest is possible in the face of a religious concern which is ultimate, unconditional, total, and infinite.⁴⁴

Ultimate concern is, then, all-encompassing, encapsulating all the preliminary and penultimate concerns that constitute human being. Faith, as the state of being ultimately concerned, literally determines our being or not-being.

In actuality, however, the relationship between ultimate concern and preliminary concerns varies. According to Tillich, at a formal level there are three basic relationships between ultimate concern and preliminary concerns. In the first relationship, that of mutual indifference, the line between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern is blurred, a blurring

that has the effect of demoting ultimate concern to the status of preliminary concerns. Tillich takes this relationship of indifference between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern as "predominant in ordinary life with its oscillation between conditional, partial, finite situations and experiences and moments when the question of the ultimate meaning of existence takes hold of us."⁴⁵ Ultimate concern in this relationship is not entirely lacking, but its position as ultimate is called into question and, in the end, devalued, to the extent that it is viewed as one concern among others. We could say that in the relationship of mutual indifference, ultimate concern is viewed in terms of the conditional, partial, and finite rather than the other way around, where the conditional, partial, and finite is viewed in terms of ultimate concern.

In the second relationship, the issue is not so much the blurring of the distinction between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern, as it is the implicit or explicit misidentification of preliminary concerns as ultimate. Tillich notes that this relationship is "idolatrous in its very nature," in that "[s]omething essentially conditioned is taken as unconditional, something essentially partial is boosted into universality, and something essentially finite is given infinite significance."⁴⁶ Whereas in the relationship of mutual indifference ultimate concern is devalued in the direction of the conditional, partial, and finite, idolatry revalues the conditional, partial, and finite as ultimate. The idolatrous relationship between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern thus elevates the former to the position of the latter, endowing that which is and should be conditional, partial, and finite with absolute significance. The result is, as Tillich says, "a conflict of ultimates," a clash that is by no means necessary, since the "ultimates" involved are not all ultimate at the ontological level.

The third and final relationship is, of course, Tillich's own preference, and it understands preliminary concerns as media for ultimate concern. Rather than devaluing ultimate concern, as in mutual indifference, or elevating preliminary concerns, as in idolatry, the relationship here involves seeing preliminary concerns as potential vehicles for ultimate concern. Preliminary concerns in this schema still retain their status as conditional, partial, and finite, ruling out any idolatrous understanding of them. But, crucially, preliminary concerns are here not confined to their own limited perspectives, as is the tendency of mutual indifference. When understood

in light of ultimate concern, preliminary concerns can point beyond themselves, towards ultimate concern. As Tillich puts it, “In and through every preliminary concern the ultimate concern can actualize itself.”⁴⁷

This schema, I want to suggest, is helpful for understanding Badiou’s own theory of the subject. We can begin by identifying truth procedures, and the subjects that correspond to them, as matters of ultimate concern. Consistent with Tillich’s understanding of ultimate concern, Badiou’s subject exercises absolute commitment to its generic procedure, a commitment that takes the form of fidelity. Badiou’s faithful subject, then, is that subject whose being or non-being is determined by its concern for truth, a concern that redirects and reconstitutes the finite towards the infinite or, in Tillich’s terms, preliminary concerns towards ultimate concern. For this reason, Badiou can say, in language that cannot but call Tillich to mind, that an event compels the subject towards “a new way of being and acting in the situation”; fidelity entails that “I must rework my ordinary way of ‘living’ my situation” in light of truth.⁴⁸

Concerning Badiou’s reactive subject and obscure subject, we can say that they correspond to Tillich’s categories of mutual indifference and idolatry, respectively. We have said that the reactive subject denies truth, and it does so by creating “arguments of resistance” against “the call of the new.”⁴⁹ Such denial can take various forms, but at root the reactive subject attempts to adjudicate the absoluteness of truths through a measured appeal to finite opinion. The adjudication of truths, however, demotes truths to that which they are not, in the end resulting in a denial of their very possibility. For this reason, the reactive subject is the subject of what Badiou pejoratively calls “democratic materialism,” whose calling card is the axiom: “There are only bodies and languages.”⁵⁰ Translated into Tillich’s terms, the reactive subject elevates preliminary concerns at the expense of ultimate concern, viewing the latter as one more preliminary concern among others. Badiou’s obscure subject, in contrast, has as its impetus the occultation of truths: the obscure subject does not so much deny truths as does the reactive subject; rather, it actively fights against such truths as a means of warding off the new. To do so, the obscure subject draws from particular concerns in order to create some transcendent principle—an “atemporal fetish,” as Badiou says—set over against the subject, as a means of giving meaning in and to

the present. Invoking Tillich, we could say that Badiou’s obscure subject is idolatrous, in that it endows the conditional, partial, and finite with absolute significance. The obscure subject elevates a preliminary concern to the status of ultimacy, resulting in clashes among these concerns. It is not surprising, then, that Badiou often identifies the obscure subject with various forms and degrees of fundamentalism.⁵¹

What Tillich adds, however, is an emphasis on the conditions under and through which we can understand how the relationship between ultimate concern and preliminary concerns devolves towards either mutual indifference or idolatry; how, in Badiou’s terms, the faithful subject may veer towards reactivity and obscurity. Key here is Tillich’s understanding of anxiety. Anxiety, in Tillich’s existential theology, manifests itself at the individual and social level and can take numerous forms (the anxiety of death, the anxiety of meaninglessness, and the anxiety of condemnation).⁵² Common to all these forms, however, is the recognition that anxiety concerns the threat of non-being, the loss of the ground of our existence. Anxiety is, of course, common to the human condition, to our finitude. Indeed, according to Tillich, “Finitude is awareness of anxiety.”⁵³ Tillich stresses, however, that existential anxiety is not “an abnormal state.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, when anxiety, the threat of non-being, overtakes existence, it can and does manifest itself abnormally. Tillich notes, for instance, that the anxiety of emptiness and meaningless can lead either to “indifference or aversion” or “fanaticism.”⁵⁵ In the terms that we have used, the threat of non-being can manifest itself as mutual indifference, the loss of ultimate concern to preliminary concerns; or idolatry, the elevation of preliminary concerns to the status of ultimacy. Translated into Badiou’s theory of the subject, anxiety helps explain the reactive subject and the obscure subject: it is precisely anxiety, as Tillich understands it, that leads to the constitution of reactive and obscure subjects, to the denial of truths and their occultation.

In conclusion, supplementing Badiou’s theory of the subject with Tillich’s notion of ultimate concern helps us make sense of the conditions under which individuals confront truths and why they decide to take them up, continue in them, or not. Now, Badiou would likely claim that the introduction of existential categories such as anxiety into his theory of the subject orients the latter towards finitude. Indeed, it is precisely this orientation that we must overcome, if we are to think of the subject as constituted

through its relation to truths. However, we cannot just rail against finitude, insisting that it must be overcome, without also taking it seriously as the condition in which we initially confront truths. It is only by doing so that we can ever hope to elaborate “the means of saying ‘Yes!’ to the previously unknown thoughts that hesitate to become the truths that they are.”⁵⁶

¹ Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, trans. Alberto Toscano (New York: Continuum, 2009), 48. For Badiou’s discussions of Kant and Levinas on this issue, respectively, see Alain Badiou, *Ethics*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), 4-29.

² Badiou, *Ethics*, 11.

³ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2005), 391.

⁸ Badiou, “Definition of Philosophy,” *Manifesto for Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Norman Madarasz (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 143.

⁹ See for instance Dominique Janicaud, et al., *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Badiou, “God is Dead,” *Briefings on Existence*, ed. and trans. Norman Madarasz (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 21-32.

¹¹ See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001).

¹² For Badiou’s discussion of the re-representative function of the state, see *Being and Event*, 104-111.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 391.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 392.

¹⁵ Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, ed. and trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (London: Continuum, 2004), 62; emphasis in original.

¹⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 201.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 233.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 232.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 391.

²² *Ibid.*, 393.

²³ *Ibid.*, 239.

²⁴ Badiou uses the language of “torsion” to describe the subject in his *Theory of the Subject*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Continuum, 2009).

²⁵ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 234.

²⁶ See the discussion in Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 45-78.

²⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 395.

²⁹ Sam Gillespie, *The Mathematics of Novelty* (Melbourne: re.press, 2008), 102.

³⁰ Badiou appeals the importance of such dispositions throughout his writings, but see for instance *Being and Event*, 391-409 and Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 75-97.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 397.

³² Badiou, *Ethics*, 71.

³³ Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, 35.

³⁴ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 3.

³⁵ For a discussion of Tillich’s legacy in this regard, see John. J. Thatamanil, “Tillich and the Postmodern,” *Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁸ But see Kenneth Reynhout, “Alain Badiou: Hidden Theologian of the Void?,” *The Heythrop Journal*, (2008): 219-233. Reynhout attempts to dialogue Tillich with Badiou at the level of ontology, identifying Badiou’s void with Tillich’s concept of God as the ground of being. Although I am skeptical of this identification, Reynhout’s article is important for any attempt to think the relationship between Tillich and Badiou at the ontological level.

³⁹ Gillespie, 104, has suggested that “Badiou needs a framework through which one can speak of how subjects are gripped by events.” Our concerns are thus similar, though Gillespie draws on Lacan’s notion of drive to provide this framework.

⁴⁰ For Tillich’s discussion of the formal nature of theological reflection, see Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 3-28.

⁴¹ Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 1.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁸ Badiou, *Ethics*, 42.

⁴⁹ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 54.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵¹ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 59.

⁵² See Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 40-63.

⁵³ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 191.

⁵⁴ Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 48, 49.

⁵⁶ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 3.

**SPIRIT AND NATURE AS ULTIMATE
CONCERN: TILlich's "RADICAL" ONTOLOGY
IN CONVERSATION WITH CONTEMPORARY
PENTECOSTALISM**

WOLFGANG VONDEY

The doctrine of the Spirit is crucial to both Tillich's theology and Pentecostal experience.¹ However, since Tillich developed a systematic pneumatological focus only late in life, and Pentecostals have just begun to formulate their own theological propositions, little has been written about the pneumatology of either.² This essay attempts to bring both worlds into dialogue by arguing that Tillich's work forms a bridge for contemporary Pentecostal thought to both Protestant liberalism and German idealism in a way that creates a synthesis of Schelling's philosophy of nature and Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. My goal is to shed light on the ontological and pneumatological foundations of Tillich's thought and to provide thereby a basis for a Pentecostal pneumatological ontology. In turn, I am also allowing Pentecostal theology to engage critically Tillich's proposal. I begin with an oversimplified summary of Schelling's and Schleiermacher's pneumatology, which have received little attention despite the fact, as I shall argue, that they are indispensable for understanding Tillich's pneumatological proposal and, in turn, for dialogue with Pentecostal pneumatology.³ The results shed light on what might be termed the "radical" ontology of Tillich and its prospects for dialogue with Pentecostal theology.

I. Spirit and Nature in the Works of Schelling and Schleiermacher

Schelling's widely read *Philosophy of Nature* influenced the Romantic period of the early nineteenth century in at least one decisive way: it was rejected—precisely on the very premise it sought to establish, namely, that nature and spirit are a single concern. Schelling arrived at this premise from his fundamental dual proposal of the autonomy and the autarchy of nature.⁴ At the center of this proposal stands the notion of "spirit."

Schelling understood "spirit" as a potency inherent in nature.⁵ Contrary to his contemporaries, only one principle governed all reality: spirit *and* nature.⁶ Put differently, there exists an identity of everything that is both real and ideal. Natural phenomena are

always related to both nature and spirit, even if in different potencies.⁷ Thus, no natural body lacks a spiritual dimension, just as spirit does not lack a manifestation in nature. Schelling rejected the artificial separation of the natural and the spiritual as fundamentally opposite principles of reality. Instead, he understood the history of nature as the journey of spirit from the unconscious productivity of nature to consciousness and eventually to self-consciousness in the human mind.⁸ Spirit *is* the organizing principle of the history of nature.

Theologically, Schelling identified the fabricated separation of nature and spirit as a segregation of the natural and the divine principle of things, ultimately positing God over against nature. His own formulation of the reality of nature is cast in the language of trinitarian theology. At the heart of this language stands a pneumatology that interprets the experience of the divine in nature decisively in terms of the Spirit of God.⁹ Although Schelling did not further pursue the theological dimensions of this pneumatological proposal, his philosophy suggests that the abandonment of the ultimate distinction of nature and spirit can lead to a discovery of the absolute.

Schleiermacher adopted Schelling's early philosophy to a large measure: nature and spirit are interrelated.¹⁰ However, Schleiermacher was more directly concerned with the consequences this union has for the understanding of the human being and its relationship with the divine. Following Schelling, Schleiermacher defined human nature as the highest advance of spirit in the material.¹¹ He followed Schelling's idea of the progressive development of nature with theological intentions and anthropological, i.e., ethical, focus. The development of nature from inorganic origins to intellectual processes emerges from the mutual interpenetration of nature and spirit.¹² For Schleiermacher, this interpenetration is not based on an already firmly established system of nature, as it was for the early Schelling, but is tending toward the full realization of spirit in a process that has yet to be completed.¹³ The history of the unity of nature and spirit, therefore, also contains an emphasis on their distinction: while God is found in this unity without any contradictions, the world represents this unity including contradictions.¹⁴ This concept of contradictions became the ground for Tillich's notion of the ambiguity of life.

Closely connected to Schleiermacher's philosophy of nature is also his often-misunderstood concept of feeling. The correlation of nature and spirit bears witness in human intuition as "the conscious-

ness of being absolutely dependent, or, which is the same thing, of being in relation with God.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, this “God-consciousness” remains for Schleiermacher suppressed in the real conditions of life, evidencing the struggle of nature and spirit to come to full communion in the world.¹⁶ The balance between nature and spirit, and thus the completion of the creation of nature in human nature, is found only in the incarnation of Christ.¹⁷ Redemption is integrated in nature as an act of both nature and spirit and as the presupposition for the possibility that Christ’s new humanity is mediated to the world.¹⁸ The union of nature and spirit, actualized in Christ, is mediated to the Christian through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ This mediation not only signifies the union of nature and spirit but also transforms human life from mere imitation to participation in Christ.²⁰ In Schleiermacher’s pneumatology, the attribution and perpetuation of redemption are deeply embedded in ecclesiology.²¹ The Spirit is the “public spirit”²² of the church, the principle of the historical realization of the divine presence in the world. These thoughts shape the central ideas of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* and its identification of God as the ground of being, the mediation of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, and the divine Spirit as the actualization of his pneumatological ontology.

II. The Great Synthesis: Tillich’s Continuation of Classical German Philosophy

Tillich’s own work is often seen as a continuation of classical German philosophy, and his indebtedness to Schelling and Schleiermacher is well known.²³ Indeed, Tillich himself indicated that his whole identity as a theologian was indebted to the identity of nature and spirit.²⁴ He esteemed Schelling as the initiator of a great synthesis between the principle of identity, the participation of the divine in all things, epitomized by Spinoza, and the principle of detachment, the impossibility of participation in the divine, exemplified by Kant.²⁵ Tillich’s own work is in large measure an attempt to bring this great synthesis to its conclusion.

Tillich’s two doctoral dissertations on Schelling portray the idealist as a significant link between philosophy and religion.²⁶ For Tillich, “the nerve of Schelling’s development”²⁷ was the principle of identity of nature and spirit, which he echoes in his own account of the ontological structure of the cosmos.²⁸

Spirit is the unity of the ontological elements and the *telos* of life. Actualized as life, being-itself is fulfilled as spirit. The word *telos* expresses the relation of life and spirit more precisely than the word “aim” or “goal.” It expresses the inner directedness of life toward spirit, the urge of life to become spirit, to fulfill itself as spirit.²⁹

For Tillich, Schelling provided reasons for a new synthesis of spirit and nature that found further development in Schleiermacher’s emphasis that there exists an awareness of this *telos* in the human being.³⁰ While he dislikes Schleiermacher’s use of the term “feeling” and its frequent misinterpretation, Tillich nonetheless adopts Schleiermacher’s idea and reinterprets the “feeling of absolute dependence” ontologically as “the impact of the universe upon us in the depth of our being” that could also be described theologically as the “intuition of the universe, and...an awareness of the divine immediately.”³¹ Schleiermacher’s emphasis on teleological dependence is transformed in Tillich’s thought to “a dependence which has moral character, which includes freedom and excludes a pantheistic and deterministic interpretation of the experience of the unconditional.”³²

The marriage of Schelling’s principle of identity with Schleiermacher’s feeling of absolute dependence arises in Tillich’s ontology as the well-known emphasis on the ultimate concern.³³ Schelling and Schleiermacher direct him to the important synthesis of spirit and nature, the significance of the human being, the importance of human history, and the role of the community. These elements constitute the framework for the culmination of Tillich’s systematic theology.³⁴ Yet, this framework is less concerned with a philosophy of nature.³⁵ Neither is Tillich directed to pneumatology proper, if by that is meant the classical discussion on the essence and person of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Rather, he understands “spirit” initially as the union of power and meaning, a synthesis of the ontological elements of life with each other and with the transcendent.³⁷ In this union, the spirit is the “all-embracing function in which all elements of the structure of being participate.”³⁸ Tillich’s primary concern is the comprehensibility of the identity of nature and spirit, that is, the implications this identity has for human existence.

There is no spirit without nature, just as there is no nature without spirit. In the spirit, nature comes to itself, and spirit is nothing other than this coming-to-itself of nature... This union of spirit and nature arrives in the human being not

at a separation, but nonetheless as a break. The human being is broken nature. Nature asks for itself, demands something from itself. By so doing, nature accomplishes what succeeded nowhere else in nature: nature finds itself... Nature had to lose itself in the human being in order to find itself. And this losing-itself and finding-itself-again is what we call spirit....³⁹

The identity of nature and spirit defines for Tillich the extent of existential concerns: Tillich can be described as a theologian of being only insofar this title takes account of Tillich's theology of spirit.⁴⁰ From Schelling, Tillich adopts the insight of the fundamental unity of God and world: in spirit, nature comes to itself. From Schleiermacher, Tillich implements the idea that history is the process in which this reconciliation of spirit and nature is actualized in the community of faith through religion, morality, and culture. Tillich's notion of "ultimate concern" emphasizes within this existentialist framework the reconciliation of God and nature in the activity of the divine Spirit. Tillich's pneumatological ontology unites nature and spirit and reconciles a theology of nature with the idea of God by portraying God as both immanent and transcendent in the Spirit. This foundational aspect of Tillich's work, comprising the largest section of his systematic theology, has yet to be fully examined.⁴¹

III. Tillich's Pneumatological Ontology: A Dialogue with Pentecostalism

In the concluding section of this essay, I intend to shed light on the foundational aspect of Tillich's work in dialogue with Pentecostalism and its experiential pneumatology. Modern-day Pentecostalism shares with Tillich a concern for the ultimate, an emphasis on the Spirit, and a focus on concrete existence. However, Pentecostals lack a thorough theological formulation of any of these emphases. On a popular level, the ultimate concern is typically framed by the goal of salvation; the emphasis on the Spirit is an emphasis on empowerment, sanctification, and mission; and Pentecostal existentialism centers on the affections and the charismatic life. At a more complex level, Pentecostalism does not offer an independent ontological system. Pentecostals do not possess a developed theology of nature and most tend to a basic dualism between the divine and the natural realm.⁴² Tillich, therefore, directs Pentecostals to develop their pneumatology more explicitly in an ontological framework.⁴³

In Tillich's insistence on the identity of nature and spirit, both realms are interwoven in the struggle for the self-actualization of life. Three basic functions characterize the multidimensional unity of life: self-integration, self-creativity, and self-transcendence.⁴⁴ Each function represents a core element of Tillich's pneumatological ontology and testifies to his indebtedness to Schelling and Schleiermacher and their insistence on the identity of nature and spirit that tend toward a transcendent union.⁴⁵ Tillich's religious symbol for this pneumatological quest is the Spirit of God, or "Spiritual Presence."⁴⁶ The pneumatological starting point allows Tillich not only to embrace the synthesis of nature and spirit but also to create a pneumatological ontology that is directed toward the divine Spirit without succumbing to the error of pantheism. In this quest, the relationship between Spirit and spirit forms the heart of Tillich's pneumatology. He rejects a descending pneumatology, in which the Spirit of God can be compelled to enter the realm of spirit, in favor of an ascending or ecstatic pneumatology, in which "the spirit, a dimension of finite life...goes out of itself under the impact of the divine Spirit."⁴⁷ In this ecstatic process, the divine Spirit creates unambiguous, transformed life within the structures given by the union of nature and spirit.

Pentecostals are no stranger to ecstasy but they have failed to make the ecstatic a defining moment for their pneumatological ontology. Instead, from an existentialist perspective, Pentecostals are more likely to equate the ecstatic with the charismatic dimension of life. This hermeneutic is based on a descending pneumatology strongly influenced by a reading of Luke-Acts that favors the imagery of the "outpouring" of the divine Spirit from above, the "falling" of the "latter rain," or more prominently, the "baptism" of the Spirit.⁴⁸ Contemporary Pentecostal theology continues to struggle with expanding the boundaries of Spirit baptism along existential questions and ontological categories.⁴⁹ As a result, most Pentecostals maintain the subject-object distinction that Tillich endeavored to overcome.

Tillich, on the other hand, describes these ecstatic manifestations of the divine Spirit as "sacramental" acts, understood in the broadest sense as "everything in which the Spiritual Presence has been experienced."⁵⁰ Tillich's broad use of terms is both liberating and cautioning as he admonishes that "within these limits the Spiritual Community is free to appropriate all symbols which are adequate and which possess symbolic power," while maintaining

that “the decisive question is whether they possess and are able to preserve their power of mediating the Spiritual Presence.”⁵¹ Tillich’s work directs Pentecostals not only to the “liberty in the Spirit” but also to the importance of “judging the Spirit.” Within these two poles, the Spiritual Presence is actualized in the Spiritual Community.

Tillich’s emphasis on the church as Spiritual Community finds no equivalent among Pentecostals, who have yet to develop a genuine Pentecostal ecclesiology. His emphasis on the manifestation of the divine Spirit in history through the unity of religion, culture, and morality represents a starting point for Pentecostal ecclesiology that is both pneumatological and ontological. At the same time, Tillich’s account of the Spiritual Presence lacks the charismatic component central to the Pentecostal experience. His insistence on “word” and “sacrament” as “the two modes of communication in relation to the Spiritual Presence”⁵² leaves Pentecostals with a paradox, namely, the fact that they participate in the identity of nature and spirit, on the one hand, and that they are “empowered,” to use Pentecostal language, to transcend that identity. In Tillich’s thought, “word” and “sacrament” are media of participation in the divine Spirit, but the union is one of faith and love, not charismatic endowment. At this point, Tillich forsakes the realm of nature and spirit and locates the spiritual union in the transcendent to which the human spirit must ecstatically move.⁵³ Pentecostals would admonish Tillich that at his own admission the transcendent union must remain rooted in the finite union of nature and spirit. How exactly the Spiritual Presence is manifested pneumatologically and ontologically as faith and love in the church remains vague from a Pentecostal perspective. In Tillich’s emphasis on the concrete manifestation of the Spiritual Presence in Jesus Christ and the church, the charismatic dimension is absent as a defining moment of the new ontological reality. Despite Tillich’s emphasis that “the Spirit transforms actually in the dimension of the spirit,”⁵⁴ the charismata are not included as fruits of that renewal.

IV. The Charismatic Life: A Pentecostal Response to Tillich

For Pentecostals, the charismata are gifts of God’s Spirit. In Schelling’s terms, spiritual gifts can be seen as a concrete manifestation of the union of nature and spirit. Charismatic experiences reject the artificial separation of the natural and the spiritual as

fundamentally opposite principles of reality. At the same time, Pentecostals follow Schleiermacher’s hesitancy to collapse spirit completely into nature. The difficulty of the charismatic life shows that the union of nature and spirit as such remains ambiguous. These ambiguities are brought to light by the Holy Spirit. For Pentecostals, the charismata are the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the union of nature and spirit. Charismatic manifestations dismantle the false distinction of “natural” and “supernatural.”⁵⁵ As gifts of the Spirit, the charismata require both the union of nature and spirit and the Spiritual Presence of the divine.

The association of charismata with gifts of the Spirit emphasizes the inability of finite creation to create the Spiritual Presence; it signifies, in traditional terms, the dependence of nature on grace. This dependence is the primary “intuition of the universe,” as Tillich called it. It is the original idea of what some Pentecostals have labeled the “pneumatological imagination.”⁵⁶ This imagination is dependent upon the charismatic dimension of life. Simply put, the reception of charismata is subsequent to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, this descending order is complemented by an ascending pneumatology that acknowledges that the reception and exercise of spiritual gifts transforms and elevates the bearer of the Spirit. The Pentecostal terminology of being “filled” with the Spirit reflects this complementary perspective. The exercise of the charismata, in Tillich’s terms, confronts the ambiguities of life from within the unity of nature and spirit driving towards the transcendent. In Pentecostals’ terms, the charismata are the participation in the Spirit of the coming kingdom of God.⁵⁷ With this argument, we have arrived at the closest point of contact between Tillich and Pentecostalism.

Pentecostals have been following Tillich’s pneumatological quest unintentionally. Both quests are framed by a passion for the coming kingdom of God. Yet, while for Tillich eschatology forms the conclusion, Pentecostals possess a more causative or realized eschatology at the beginning of their theology.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, for both, the in-breaking of God’s kingdom demands a discernment of spirit. Tillich’s emphasis on discernment amidst the conflict between the Spiritual Presence and the presence of the demonic finds its concrete counterpart in the Pentecostal experience of spiritual warfare as a concrete manifestation of the charismatic dimension of the struggle against the demonic. In Tillich’s language, it is a function of the churches in relation to

the Spiritual Presence.⁵⁹ For Pentecostals, the charismatic dimension must be added to the constitutive, expansive, constructive, cognitive, communal, personal, and relating functions of the Holy Spirit. The demonic is the most concrete manifestation of the opposite of the divine Spirit. Pentecostal demonology is, of course, more radical than Tillich's, that is, more personified and apparent than hidden in the structures of life. More than Tillich's general ontological identification of the demonic in history,⁶⁰ Pentecostals envision the demonic as a radically embodied manifestation of evil. The confrontation of the charismatic and the demonic constitute a central feature of Pentecostal worldview and cosmology that is missing from Tillich's pneumatological ontology. This confrontation represents the most concrete manifestation of the troubled union of nature and spirit and its struggle toward the divine. Here, the union is most intimate and volatile. The demonic is the most concrete starting point for the development of a pneumatological ontology that is genuinely Pentecostal while remaining indebted to Tillich and his expansion of Schleiermacher and Schelling. The global expansion of Pentecostalism and the accompanying ecumenical dissemination of the charismatic life underscore the importance of this dimension. In Pentecostalism, Tillich's idea of the great synthesis finds its most radical completion.

¹ This essay is a shortened and revised version of Wolfgang Vondey, "Spirit and Nature: Pentecostal Pneumatology in Dialogue with Tillich's Pneumatological Ontology," in *Spiritual Presence and Spiritual Power: Pentecostal Readings of and Engagement with the Legacy of Paul Tillich*, ed. Nimi Wariboko and Amos Yong (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

² Cf. Andrew O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 93; Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 133-53.

³ Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 386-410; idem, "Schelling und die Anfänge des Existentialistischen Protestes," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4, *Philosophie und Schicksal*, ed. Renate Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959), 133-44.

⁴ See F. W. J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 13, 17. Emphasis original.

⁵ Cf. Marie-Luise Heuser-Keßler, *Die Produktivität der Natur: Schellings Naturphilosophie und das neue Paradigma der Selbstorganisation in den Naturwissen-*

schaften (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1986), 50-51. See F. W. J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature as Introduction to the Study of this Science*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 49-50.

⁶ F. W. J. Schelling, *Bruno or On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things*, trans. Michael G. Vater (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1984), 3-7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

⁸ Cf. Heuser-Keßler, *Die Produktivität der Natur*, 95-110.

⁹ Schelling, *Bruno*, 152; F. W. J. Schelling, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1858), 252.

¹⁰ Cf. Herman Süskind, *Der Einfluss Schellings auf die Entwicklung von Schleiermachers System* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909), 57-98.

¹¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Doctrine of Goods" (1816/17), in Louden, *Lectures on Philosophical Ethics*, 168 (no. 1).

¹² Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Über den Unterschied zwischen Naturgesetz und Sittengesetz," in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 11, *Akademievorträge*, ed. Martin Rössler and Lars Emersleben (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 431-51.

¹³ Cf. Ueli Hasler, *Beherrschte Natur: Die Anpassung der Theologie an die bürgerliche Naturauffassung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982), 86.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁵ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 476.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 365-69.

¹⁸ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 724.

¹⁹ Cf. Kevin W. Hector, "The Mediation of Christ's Normative Spirit: A Constructive Reading of Schleiermacher's Pneumatology," *Modern Theology* 24, no. 1 (2008): 1-22.

²⁰ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 377-85.

²¹ See Wilfried Brandt, *Der Heilige Geist und die Kirche bei Schleiermacher* (Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1968).

²² Brandt, *The Heilige Geist*, 33.

²³ Cf. Christian Danz, "Tillich's Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 173-88.

²⁴ Paul Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 12, *Begegnungen: Paul Tillich über sich selbst und andere* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1972), 49-50.

²⁵ See Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 370-71.

²⁶ Paul Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles*, trans. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1974); idem, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, trans. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1974).

²⁷ Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 23.

²⁸ See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *Reason and Revelation, Being and God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 168-71.

²⁹ Ibid., 249.

³⁰ Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 448.

³¹ Ibid., 392.

³² Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 42.

³³ Ibid., 14. Cf. Michael F. Drummy, *Being and Earth: Paul Tillich's Theology of Nature* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 13-58.

³⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, *Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

³⁵ Cf. Drummy, *Being and Earth*, 77.

³⁶ See Frederick J. Parrella, "Tillich's Theology of the Concrete Spirit," in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 74-90.

³⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 156-157, 180, 249-251.

³⁸ Ibid., 250.

³⁹ Paul Tillich, "Natur und Geist im Protestantismus," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 13, *Impressionen und Reflexionen* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1972), 101. My translation.

⁴⁰ Langdon Gilkey, *Gilkey on Tillich* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 164.

⁴¹ Cf. Parrella, "Tillich's Theology of the Concrete Spirit," 74.

⁴² Cf. James K. A. Smith, "Is There Room for Surprise in the Natural World? Naturalism, the Supernatural, and Pentecostal Spirituality," in *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*, ed. James K. A. Smith and Amos Yong (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 34-49.

⁴³ See, for example, Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

⁴⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 30-110. Cf. Parrella, "Tillich's Theology of the Concrete Spirit," 76-79.

⁴⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 38-96.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 108.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁸ See Koo Don Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Ecumenical Theology of Spirit Baptism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003), 23-44.

⁴⁹ See Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 61-88.

⁵⁰ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 120-21.

⁵¹ Ibid., 123-24.

⁵² Ibid., 120.

⁵³ Ibid., 129-30.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 277.

⁵⁵ See Walter J. Hollenweger, "Creator Spiritus: The Challenge of Pentecostal Experience to Pentecostal Theology," *Theology* 81, no. 1 (1978): 32-40.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 27-30. See Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 16-46.

⁵⁷ See Steven Jack Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 49-116.

⁵⁸ Cf. Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 26-34.

⁵⁹ See Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 182-216.

⁶⁰ See Paul Tillich, "Das Dämonische: Ein Beitrag zur Sinnbedeutung der Geschichte," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, *Der Widerstreit von Raum und Zeit*, ed. Renate Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959), 42-71.

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