



BULLETIN

The North American Paul Tillich Society

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<p>ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016</p>
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P18-105
Friday - 9:00 AM-11:00 AM
Convention Center-303B (3rd Level)

North American Paul Tillich Society
Theme: *Paul Tillich: Dialogues in Pittsburgh*
Charles W. Fox, SUNY Empire State College,
Presiding

While Tillich was a professor at Harvard University, he lectured at Pittsburgh Theological Sem-

nary and engaged in four dialogues on theology of culture with professors Robert Johnson, Walter Wiest, and Gordon Jackson. The dialogues, now on DVD, were produced by WQED TV. Each dialogue is 25 minutes in length, and there will be time for discussion with Ronald Stone. Additional background for the subject can be found in *Dialogues of Paul Tillich* (Mercer University Press, 2002) by Mary Ann Stenger and Ronald H. Stone.

Panelist:
Ronald Stone, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

P18-106**Friday - 11:00 AM-1:00 PM***Convention Center-303A (3rd Level)***Books under Discussion****North American Paul Tillich Society****Theme: *Complete Works of Paul Tillich in English Editorial Board Meeting***

P18-214**Friday - 1:00 PM-3:30 PM***Convention Center-303B (3rd Level)***North American Paul Tillich Society****Theme: *Tillich and the Future of Theology*****Bryan Wagoner, Davis and Elkins College, Presiding**

Johanne S. T. Kristensen, University of Copenhagen

Between Pluralism and Commitment: The Possibility of the Religion of Concrete Spirit?

Jaime Fowler, Graduate Theological Union

Exploring New Dimensions: Applying the Method of Correlation to the Interaction of the Natural Sciences and Christian Theology

Devan Stahl, Michigan State University

Tillich and the Future of Interdisciplinary Ethics

Russell Re Manning, Bath Spa University

Belief-ful Realism Revisited: Tillich's Theology of Art and the Realist Turn

P18-322**Friday - 4:00 PM-6:00 PM***Convention Center-303B (3rd Level)***North American Paul Tillich Society****Theme: *Tillich and Political Theology*****Devan Stahl, Michigan State University, Presiding**

Observing how the tacit White House political theology steals symbols from religion—especially

the symbol of sacrifice in Christianity—this session constructs an alternative political theology framed by Paul Tillich's theology of culture. The superstructure includes coherent definitions of key terms such as political theology and religion. Then it builds on a Tillichian foundation with idol hunting as the method and scapegoat theory as the lens through which to view the American war-culture. This proposed political theology launches a critique of the American myth, according to which America is both holy and salvific due to the blood sacrifice of its soldiers. Recent presidents declare at civic liturgies that the blood shed by America's scapegoated soldier is an efficacious sacrifice for freedom. The irony is that the official attempt to replace religious violence with secular peace becomes, in fact, the launching of a new state religion that justifies never ending warfare.

Presenter: Ted Peters, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary*Constructing a Political Theology on Tillich's Theology of Culture***Responding:**Bryan Wagoner, Davis and Elkins College
Adam Pryor, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, NJ
Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Moravian College

Friday, 7:00 – 9:30 PM**The Annual Banquet of the North American Paul Tillich Society***See below for details and reservations.*

Saturday – 7:30 AM – 8:45 AM**North American Paul Tillich Society****Theme: *Board Meeting****Location will be announced Friday at the meeting and the banquet.*

A19-135**Saturday - 9:00 AM-11:30 AM***Convention Center-304C (3rd Level)***Ricoeur Group and North American Paul Tillich Society****Theme: *A Tale of Two Pauls*****Adam Pryor, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, Presiding**

Kyle Schiefelbein, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

The Two Pauls and Implications for the Liturgical Act of Forgiveness

Verna Marina Ehret, Mercyhurst University

*Constructing Theology through a Hermeneutic of Narrative*Kenneth A. Reynhout, Bethel University, St. Paul
*Correlating Ricoeur with Tillich on the Question of Theological Method***Responding:**

Forrest Clingerman, Ohio Northern University

P19-125**Saturday - 12:00 PM-1:00 PM***Grand Hyatt-Presidio A (3rd Level)***North American Paul Tillich Society****Theme: *Business Meeting*****A20-125****Sunday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM***Convention Center-207A (2nd Level - West)***Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture and Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Group****Theme: *The Courage to Be...Alright*****Presiding: Unknown**

This papers session, co-sponsored by *Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Group* & the *Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group* fosters a cross-generational, cross-cultural conversation

provoked by the unexpected coincidence of Paul Tillich and Kendrick Lamar as generational voices illuminating the dogged determination to be in the face of the annihilating forces of modernity.

Songs like "Alright" and "I" celebrate a courage to be and privilege self-affirmation in ways that are embodied, aural, and theologically-weighty, giving shape, form, and (much needed) color to *The Courage to Be*.

James McLeod, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

If God Got Us: Kendrick Lamar, Paul Tillich, and the Advent of Existentialist Hip Hop

Benjamin Taylor, Brite Divinity School

The Courage to Be Kanye: Anxiety and Self-Affirmation in "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy"

Matthew Linder, National University

"Am I Worth It?": The Forgiveness, Death, and Resurrection of Kendrick Lamar

Adam Wert, Princeton Theological Seminary

*Tensive Reflexivity: Kendrick Lamar through the Lens of Paul Tillich's Ontology***Responding:**

Stephen G. Ray, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

A20-332**Sunday - 5:00 PM-6:30 PM***Marriott Rivercenter-Conference Room 7 (3rd Level)***Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group****Theme: *When We Might Not Be: Tillich and Our Environmental Crisis*****Hannah Hofheinz, Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Presiding****Focus on Sustainability**

This session will deal with the issue of Climate Change and how aspects of Tillich's thought

might be helpful in 1) interpreting the current political moment; 2) offering a theological interpretation that better situates humanity in the midst of the larger creation; or 3) discovering discrete resources in Existentialist philosophy and or theology which might motivate particular cultural responses to this looming threat.

Anne Marie Reijnen, Catholic University of Paris
Tillich's Theology in Today's Quest for Life in the Universe: Correlating Inner Space, Outer Space, and Deep Space

Paul H. Carr, AF Research Laboratory
Paul Tillich: Climate Prophecy versus Profit

A21-138

Monday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Convention Center-216 (2nd Level - West)

Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group

Theme: *Paul Tillich's Philosophical Theology on the Resurgence of Religious Extremism*

Presiding: Eric Weed, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Paul Tillich's philosophical theology grappled with the existential norms and extremes of the human condition, understanding how we can become fragmented both as individuals and as societies when we are pulled apart by the poles of our relatedness. How might Tillich's corpus provide entryways to interrogate the dimensions of violent religious extremism, especially with regard to the origins, recruitment, construction of new religious narratives, establishment of community, and apocalyptic vision that has been demonstrated by global events of the past decade?

Daniel Miller, Landmark College

Heteronomy, Theonomy, and Finitude: Active Nihilism and Religious Radicalism

Kirk MacGregor, McPherson College

Applying Tillich's Creative and Transformative Justice to the Problems of Middle Eastern Violence

Mary Ann Stenger, University of Louisville

The Promise and Challenge of Tillich's Idea of Transforming Justice

Stephen Butler Murray, Ecumenical Theological Seminary

A Tillichian Approach to Religious Extremism

Business Meeting:

Devan Stahl, Michigan State University

Stephen G. Ray, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

ANNUAL BANQUET

The Annual Banquet of the North American Paul Tillich Society will be held Friday evening, November 18, 2016:

Time: 7:00 – 10:00 pm

Location: THE IRON CACTUS MEXICAN GRILL AND MARGARITA BAR, AGAVE ROOM
200 River Walk, Suite 100
San Antonio
210.224.9835

Banquet Speaker: Frederick J. Parrella, Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Santa Clara University

Menu:

- Chips, Salsa, Tea or Soda
- Watermelon Mint and Cotija Bites
- Matazalan Salad
- Green Chile Mashed Potatoes
- Grilled Asparagus and Carrots

- Choice of:

- Pescado del Mar (mahi mahi, shrimp, and scallops)
- Pecan-Crusted Chicken
- Shiner Bock Grilled Strip Steak

- Choice of:

- Mexican Chocolate Mousse
- Vanilla Bean Espresso Crème Brûlée

Price: The dinner will cost 60 USD per person, payable to the Secretary Treasurer by mail before the banquet by regular mail, or at the banquet itself.

Anyone student or retired member who cannot afford the banquet but would like to attend, accommodations can be made. Please contact the Secretary Treasurer

• N.B. Cash Bar. Wine and alcoholic beverages are *not* included in the cost of the banquet.

Reservations: fparrella@scu.edu

Or U.S. mail: Frederick J. Parrella

3565 Ivalynn Circle, San Jose, CA 95132

NEW PUBLICATIONS

• Tillich, Paul. *The Ground of Being. Neglected Essays of Paul Tillich*. Edited by Robert Price, with a Preface by Thomas J. J. Altizer. Charleston, South Carolina: Mindvendor Publications, 2015. Essays include:

“What is Wrong with ‘Dialectic’ Theology?” (1935)

“Introduction” to *The Kingdom of God and History* (1938).

“The Gospel and the State” (1938)

“Freedom in the Period of Transformation” (1940)

“Existential Thinking in American Theology” (1941)

“Faith in the Jewish-Christian Tradition” (1942)

“Kierkegaard in English” (1942)

“Vertical and Horizontal Thinking” (1946)

“Redemption in Cosmic and Social Thinking” (1946)

“Existentialism and Religious Socialism” (1949)

“The Present Theological Situation in the Light of the Continental European Development” (1949)

“A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Incarnation” (1949)

“The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition in the Reformation” (1950)

“The European Discussion of the Problem of the Demythologization of the New Testament” (1952)

“Victory in Defeat: The Meaning History in the Light of Christian Prophetism” (1952)

“Jewish Influences on Contemporary Christian Theology” (1952)

“Religious Symbols and our Knowledge of God” (1955)

“The idea of God as Affected by Modern Knowledge” (1959)

• Bandy, Thomas G. *Spiritual Leadership: Why Leaders Lead and Who Seekers Follow*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2016.

Why Leadership?

Why Clergy?

The *Constant* Leader

The Constant Visitor

Care Giver

The Constant Gardiner

Enabler

The Constant Builder

CEO

The *Organic* Leader

The Faith Tutor

Discipler

The Life Coach

Guru

The *Extreme* Leader

The Relentless Futurist

Visionary

The “Greek” Interpreter

Mentor

The Determined Traveler

Pilgrim

Transitions and Blends

Transitions and Blends *within* Type

Transitions and Blends *beyond* Type

Who Am I?

Leadership Inventory

*Letters to the Editor and
Book Reviews always
welcome.*

**REMEMBERING GUYTON B. HAMMOND
(1930 - 2016)**

MARY ANN STENGER

My first acquaintance with Guy Hammond came through his first two books on Tillich: *The Power of Self-transcendence: An Introduction to the Philosophical Theology of Paul Tillich* and *Man in Estrangement: A Comparison of the Thought of Paul Tillich and Erich Fromm*. I was working on an undergraduate honors thesis on Tillich's ontology, and these clear analyses of Tillich's thought were invaluable. But Guy Hammond in person was an even greater gift to me and so many other Tillich scholars—especially for his warm, enduring friendship but also for his ongoing support of our scholarship. We knew that if Guy asked a question of us after delivering a paper that it would be supportive and directing us to a new insight.

Guy B. Hammond was Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Virginia Tech University. He had spent 38 years teaching undergraduate students, serving in the faculty senate, and helping to create their Center for Studies in the Humanities. He was a founding member of the NAPTS and served a term as president.

Guy wrote numerous articles and book chapters on Tillich as well as reviews of other works on Tillich. In recent years, he published a book on the Frankfurt School (*Conscience and Its Recovery: From the Frankfurt School to Feminism*) and had begun to translate Tillich's early lectures on Hegel. He offered us a beautiful summary of his scholarly connections to Tillich in his NAPTS Banquet address in Chicago in 2012 (published in the *Bulletin* 39: 1, Winter 2013).

Through scholarly conferences and social gatherings sponsored not only by the NAPTS but also by the German and French Tillich societies, Guy and his wife, Jean, became our good friends, updating each other on our families and enjoying our discussions of politics, travel, and, of course, connections to Tillich. I have many memories of wonderful dinners with them and several other Tillich friends, but the last one in November 2015 stands out. Part way through the evening, Guy stood up and offered a toast of thanks to all of us

present for our many years of friendship and enjoyable gatherings. He knew his cancer was spreading, and I marveled at his courage but was not surprised at his gracious gift to us. We toast you, Guy Hammond, for your friendship, your scholarship, and your many gifts of your presence to us.

TILlich AND THE "PERSONAL" GOD

A. DURWOOD FOSTER

Author's Note: This paper was first presented at a Tillich Society panel with Rob James and Jean Richard, November 17, 2006. It had been lost for years but recently recovered; it is now slightly revised and offered in dialogue with Ted Farris's evocative read of *The Courage to Be*.

I

Taking Tillich from me at Duke 50 some years ago was a brainy young Baptist brimming with theological energy. Drawn to the System, Rob James balked at what he deemed its insufficiently personal God. I gave him "A" for striking a core Tillich nerve, then, where Rob cited impersonal passages, I cited personal ones, sometimes on the same page. I moved to the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, and the spat went on in me between Tillich and Tillich on the personal God. I titled some lectures "Tillich's Two God-Models," to have the shootout Rob prompted. Using the rubric "God does not exist" [ST I, 205], I traced Paulus's non-personal deity. In Lecture Two I stressed the personal "Lord and Father" manifest as "Son and Brother" [Ibid., 289]. The last lecture set Tillich against Brightman and Hartshorne in his witness to the *paradox of revelation*.

Much Tillich on the issue was yet unpublished, or still not thought out. But since 1960, I felt Paulus's God should not be seen as a single prototype. There was always tension between fluctuating "models," one of them quite non-personal, the other ostensibly personal, though different than many would prefer.

In 1960 printed Tillich, a clash of the God-

models was notable in ST I, 144-5. Paulus affirms the “symbol ‘personal God’ is absolutely fundamental” and twenty-three lines later says with equal force that a “‘personal God’ is a confusing symbol.” There were other jarring discords, especially when *Courage To Be*’s “God-above-God” was adduced. Tillich’s two models were not just the interface, as in St. Thomas or Schleiermacher, of the “absolute” and “personal” divine attributes. That stance on God is plausibly one position—as is “complementarity” in physics. Tillich *also* endorses such complementarity. But that is not the whole or the main story of him and the personal God. His stance could better be seen sometimes not simply as two models but as two *positions* in dialectical oscillation. Which position was dominant at a given time depended on (a) the audience he “correlated” with, and (b) the degree of doubt with which he struggled. Moreover, no one then suspected how inchoate the final Tillich still was.

II

At my Union, Tillich was always under fire for slighting the personal God. Muilenberg, guru of Hebraism, implied such in Introduction to the Bible. Kroner, who helped bring Tillich to Dresden, carped at Paulus’s “Hegelianism.” Van Dusen, systematics chair, published *his* take on God shortly after ST I. That the title was *Spirit, Son, Father*—reversing Tillich to climax with the personal Father—was no coincidence. One could go through the roster. Ethicists Niebuhr and Bennett were uneasy with ontology, as was philosopher of religion Roberts. “If born in America,” Paulus would sigh, “you are nominalist by fate”—meaning you could not handle his notion of being. Not one of the other professors could vouch for Tillich’s deity, as they knew it. They could not know it very fully, being clueless of the *Dogmatik* and the 1913 *Systematic Theology*, while the system’s last parts are post Union. But what they did glean about God as “being-itself” tended to baffle them.

Still Union *liked* more about Tillich than it choked on, and there was campus joy when he made TIME’s cover as “Mr. Theology,” crowding Reinie in the public eye. Besides, there were lots

to assure he *did* somehow hang with the biblical God. How it added up was puzzling, but he was a church theologian. He was ordained and, if you could stifle the fear of knocking at his office, he exuded ministry. His preaching and counseling had impact, and his was the anchor figure down front at chapel. In 1940, when Einstein bashed a personal Deity, Tillich was the one to whom Union turned for reply. He wrote in the *Union Seminary Quarterly* that the famed scientist was right literally but he overlooked the *symbolism* of religious speech. God is suprapersonal—more than, not less than personal.

The “Ground of Being,” Paulus warned, is not liturgical. Rather than displace, it links Bible words with today’s mind. After talks with Bultmann, Paulus returned from Germany in 1947 to stress his own program was not to eliminate myth but to deliteralize it. *The* bar to religious insight was literalism. Tillich praised Barth’s boosting the kerygma, while *he* would enact Schleiermacher’s answering of culture. When ST I at last appeared, and throngs crowded the seminary bookstore to get their signed copy, the air was that of a Roman triumph. But the beaming author knew more than one “lean Cassius” lurked in Union’s Gothic corridors. He never stopped grinding his teeth.

When there had been time to read it, the faculty met to salute the volume. President Van Dusen, swallowing his own slant, oozed school pride in holding this text would serve the next century. Among colleagues, not even Jim Muilenberg was going to be a spoilsport that evening. But after some blandishments, Ed Cherbonnier broke the spell. He was inspired by Abraham Heschel at the Jewish Theological Seminary and had gone to France to work with Claude Tresmontant, a biblical philosopher strongly into Hebrew versus Greek. Ed sat under Tillich, squirming, and had now read, more intently than most, the opening volley of the magnum opus. He sailed into Tillich that evening with fierceness that cut through the tameness but was too outspoken for the occasion. Paulus declined to repeat what he said was previously (though unsuccessfully) explained to Ed, and the colloquy adjourned.

Ed was not the only Union student swayed by Heschel, nor the latter by any means the only lo-

cal challenge to Tillich's impersonal God. There were strict Barthians not buying Paulus's kerygmatic Protestations. There were followers of Brunner, whose son sat in Tillich's lecture with an inscrutable smile. Boston Personalism, going back to Lotze and Bowne, would rumble now and again. A scholar at Sarah Lawrence named Friedman, author of a book on Martin Buber, led a group through *I and Thou*. Process Thought badmouthed the "substance thinking" it saw in Tillich. A few were even reading Wieman, for whom Paulus's God was *too* personal. Overall, Union was a menagerie of feuding theisms during Tillich's heyday, and his account of the personal God was more assailed than espoused by faculty and students. One could ask: was it ever comprehended, unconcluded as it was? Rob James's new questioning drives me to think not. At Duke that thought would have been unwilling. Now I think Tillich's *unconcludedness* about God may enhance his vision.

III

In February 1906, ending his first Halle term, 19-year-old Tillich wrote an essay on Fichte and John's Gospel. The first lines of this fledgling effort posit the duality I dub "two God models."

Human spiritual life presents itself as two-fold, as thinking and willing...[S]eldom is the ideal of a full balance between the two attained...[O]ne side is more or less dominant, in the individual or the folk. This...finds its strongest expression in the...religious consciousness, the most central...manifestation of spirit. If voluntarism dominates, God appears as the...personal One who invades history...willing and acting, loving and wrathful...with whom I enter a personal religious relationship. With the intellectualist, on the other hand, God becomes the absolute, eternally identical Idea in which all appearance dissolves, to which is possible only a relationship that eradicates individuality [FW, 4].

Tillich is sure a "full balance" ideally obtains between the absolute and the personal God. But already at Halle obtrudes the tension he would lifelong thematize as "Mystik und Schuldbewusst-

sein," or as the "Gott über Gott" opposing theism. In the tautly cogitated "Monismusschrift" of 1908, he finds the main problem to be "the concept of the Absolute, which forms the bridge of the Lord God and Father of religion with philosophy's ultimate principle for explaining the world" [FW, 31]. Kähler had called the Absolute an idol, but Paulus sides with Kaftan: the concept "is in fact indispensable: God the ultimate Cause, the ultimate Ground, the ultimate Goal of the whole of reality—that is obviously just as much a religious as a metaphysical assertion" [*idem*].

How about viewing God's personhood as itself absolute, à la Fichte's Absolute Ego? Paulus engaged this idea at Halle." The concept (of an Absolute Personality) requires the Personal should be so thought that it is freed from all limits that would contradict the concept of the Absolute, and that such a content be given the Absolute that what is essential to the concept of personality not be destroyed" [FW, 134].

Tillich did not choose this route, but it is engrossing to ponder his provisionally rather open analysis of it. The text continues:

Regarding the first requirement, the distinction between individuality and personality is helpful. It is implicit in the concept of individuality that what belongs to one as its very own is what does not belong to the other, thus that the one individuality has its boundary in all others. Naturally that is not valid for the Absolute, which would lose its essence as unlimited if it had a limit in some actual being...Now however there must be given from the other side a definition of the real and therewith a content to the Absolute which allows it to be known as personality. This content is love and truth, and herewith the double requirement is fulfilled. God is love, that is, everywhere love is he is; and God is truth, that is, everywhere truth is he is. And formally the same, everywhere there is self-consciousness and will, the divine reality can attain full representation: 'can attain representation,' does not have to. This... thought... becomes decisively significant for the relation of the finite to the infinite personality. For in it is given that the form of personality does

not...guarantee the divine content, that this is purely present only in God, and that therefore a distinction and separation of the finite personality from the infinite can occur without there following from that a separation of the spiritual content. For the form of personality as highest point of the psycho-physical basis definitely has its teleology in the divine content and therewith as much reality as it has content. The relation of absolute and finite personality can thus be so described, that the finite personality is a limit of the absolute so far as it is not yet filled with the divine content, and that it is a representation of the absolute so far as it has appropriated this content, that is, in so far as it has gained freedom.

IV

In this blob of cogitation are cues to such later Tillich themes as “essential God-humanhood” and “eschatological panentheism.” On the personal God as well, the embryo of Paulus’s mature position is emerging, though that will mean dropping the phrase “absolute personality.” What replaces it finds pithy expression in the 1925 *Dogmatik*, 166: “We say personlikeness in order to avoid the impression of an isolated personality. Personlikeness, that means what sustains (or carries) the personality in the creature-relationship. Therewith the conflict is solved...”

Here is Tillich’s reprise, two decades later, of the “Monismusschrift.” Much of this would appear in ST I two decades later still.

Confession of the living God is the basis of confession of the personal God. Here lie an abundance of the hardest, historically most generative problems, all of which follow from the conflict between the unconditionality of the divine being and the conditionedness of the concept of personality. One can address this conflict by seeking to remove the character of conditionedness from the concept of personality. But that is impossible and contradicts the religious meaning of the concept, through which we are supposed to know ourselves as grounded in God and cannot know that if our Thou and his I speak to each other,

if the separation, the otherness is not expressed. But if it is so expressed that the standing over against each other assumes the character of a concrete I-Thou relationship, then the conditionedness is again there. That personalizing of God which grounds us as creaturely cannot be reached this way. Every objective resolution of the paradox works directly against what is at stake in the correlation of revelation. [Idem]

V

To savor here “the paradox” one must go back to the 1913 ST. Sometime after the “Monismusschrift,” Paulus stopped trying to unify rationally the two poles of his God-concept, the Unconditioned and the Personal. But he became the more convinced their paradoxical union, *breaking through as revelation*, is the essence of theological truth [See Uwe Scharf’s incisive study, 1999]. Tillich enthrones this revelational breakthrough of *the* theological principle” [FW, 317, *passim*]. Its unsurpassable manifestation in Jesus makes Christian theology *the* theology [as per ST I, 16]. Shorthand for it is “the paradox” [Cf. FW, esp. 314 f.] The American Tillich begins diluting this very high Christology. Jaded by overuse of paradox, he stresses that revelation *transcends* rather than defies reason, while the root Christian paradox becomes the fact that “existence is conquered under the conditions of existence,” which contravenes “all human opinion and possibilities” [ST, I, 17].

On the issue of the “personal” in re God, there is in the 1913 ST the following extraordinary declaration [Prop. 18, FW 373].

Through the Son of God’s enhumanization and elevation individual personality as individual personality has attained eternal meaning in God; accordingly for it dying does not mean annulment but fulfillment [Italics in original]. Beyond the destiny of nature in general arises what distinguishes human being from nature and through the becoming human and elevation of Christ has been effected. Personality, which is at once the highest fulfillment and the overcoming of selfhood, and this personality which Christ himself affirmed when he became an individ-

ual, is through the transition into eternity brought to fulfillment...[T]he individuality as such...is in unity with Christ who has become an individual covered and protected as it were from the consuming fire of the divine life.

Tillich thus finds the warrant of God as personal in the Christ—an idea he will modify but never retracts. Consider the end of ST I (p. 289): “Here again we must stress the possibility of using the symbols ‘Lord’ and ‘Father’ without rebellion or submissiveness, is provided for us by the manifestation of the Lord and Father as Son and Brother under the conditions of existence.” In the modern sense of “person,” God the Father and God the Spirit are never for Tillich “persons.” As facets of the overall divine reality they are “personlike” [personhaft]. But Jesus Christ *is* in his essential God-humanhood “a person” as we are. We recall here that 6th Century Boethius defined *persona* as *naturae rationis individua substantia* (“an individual substance of rational nature”) and this gradually eclipsed its meaning in Christian creedal parlance (ostensibly that of Greek *hypostasis*) as well as the original meaning of “mask through which actors speak.” Tillich assumes the Boethian definition. His preferred language for the Nicene *personae* is “creative power, saving love, and ecstatic transformation” [ST III, 283]. These “ways of God being God,” singly or together, are in modern parlance “personlike,” but the central one, saving love, is manifest in the life, death and resurrection of a human person in the modern sense. It was Buber who apparently burned into Tillich’s hard drive the Boethian individuation of “person,” after he had examined different possibilities at Halle. In unmistakably Buberian conceptuality, ST III, 40, typically formulates:

Personal life emerges in the encounter of person with person and in no other way. If one can imagine a living being with the psychosomatic structure of man, completely outside any human community, such a being could not actualize its potential spirit. It would be driven in all directions, limited only by its finitude, but it would not experience the ought-to-be. Therefore, the self-integration of the person as a person occurs in a community, within which the continuous encounter of

centered self with centered self is possible and actual.

VI

In his poignant eulogy for Buber [1965, GW XII, 320-3] Tillich not only credits him for conceiving “person” as constituted by interpersonal encounter. He thanks him too for insisting on the non-objectifiability of religious encounter wherein the Absolute is rightly addressed personally. This distinct point was crucial for Tillich, as I saw when Hartshorne came for a forum in 1953. Sitting behind Paulus, I sensed nervous vibes between him and Jewish scholar Jacob Taubes, whose Buberian critique of Hartshorne’s *Philosophers Speak of God* had lately upset our Whiteheadians. The discomfort in front of me rose as the Process pundit diagrammed how dipolarity gave an Absolute Person who was also relative, solving the Bible’s paradox. Afterward a group gathered in Tillich’s apartment, without Hartshorne, for a much needed drink. Taubes and Paulus expressed shock at the conceptual “blasphemy” of seeking to objectify the self-revealing Thou of biblical faith.

Long before Rob’s plan to bolster Tillich by adding Buber, Paulus himself stressed how Buber had *already* improved him, though not perhaps as Rob would have. Was there another religious sage to whom Paulus expressed such admiring debt as to Buber? In the eulogy of 1965, Tillich praises him as the wider ecumenical ally he would most hope to follow vocationally and personally. As Buber transcended Judaism while deeply rooted in it, so would Paulus Christianity. Here was the “concrete universalism” the final lecture of the coming October would plug as world religion’s authentic future. On God specifically, Buber had spontaneously combined mysticism and prophetism.

For Buber it was a matter of mystical experience of the divine presence in the encounters and activities of the everyday. Buber knew the prophetic element without the mystical element distorts into rigid legalism and moralism while the sole dominance of the mystical element leads to a flight from reality and the

claims of the here and now [Ibid., p.323].

For him God was present in the whole of nature and history. This openness for the profane—with which I always agreed in the name of the protestant principle—emphatically assumed something which was enacted in the earliest phase of Protestant theology: freedom from every concrete religion, including its religious institutions, in the name of that to which the religion pointed [Idem].

This last sentence cues what Paulus means in his final line at Chicago, October 1965—“being free from and for” one’s religious foundation. Further, the “principles of sanctification” [ST III, 228f.] which Renate Albrecht called “das Schoenste” in all Tillich—“increasing awareness, freedom, relatedness, and transcendence”—these are nowhere so employed by Paulus as in praising Buber. Paulus not only dubbed Buber a prophet; he actually paints him—him only—as a Tillichian saint.

In lauding his Jewish peer, Tillich seems unaware his thoughts on God ever differed from Buber’s, except in one matter. Though he once bowed to Buber’s protesting an “artificial facade” of circumlocutions (like “ultimate reality”) to speak of God, he tells of asking, in later talks with Martin [Ibid., 321], whether there can be a pure “I” or “Thou.” Tillich felt not, since every I and Thou is particular. If so, it is needful after all to use structural concepts to cue the leap between human I-Thou encounter and that with God. This does not imply any difference in understanding God as such, by Tillich and Buber respectively. On the contrary, it assumes agreement about *God Godself*. It pertains rather to how *discourse about God* should be made more adequate. Tillich leaves it there, without reporting any response from Buber.

This is not, on Tillich’s part, an adequate parsing of his difference with Buber. Further questions cry for answer, e.g., In what sense may we say or not, God is personally encountered as *the* centered transcendental Thou? Buber and most monotheists affirm this, in contrast to Tillich and religious naturalists. Be that as it may, we are left with our two protagonists, face to face, gingerly

desisting from further reciprocal critique.

However, after the talks, appended to the 1957 edition of *I and Thou*, one finds [pp. 134f.] Buber saying:

Of course we speak only of what God is in his relation to a man. And even that is only to be expressed in paradox...” God, the “ground and meaning of our existence constitutes a mutuality...such as can subsist only between persons.” “The concept of personal being is indeed completely incapable of declaring what God’s essential being is, but it is both permitted and necessary to say that God is *also* a Person. If as an exception I wished to translate this into philosophical language, that of Spinoza, I should have to say that of God’s infinitely many attributes we men do not know two, as Spinoza thinks, but three: to spiritual being...and to natural being...would be added...personal being.”

In Friedman’s exhaustive *Life and Work* of Buber, the last reference to Tillich [Vol. III, 265] summarizes a message from Buber about 1963. “If he did not replace the name God by a general concept, that was not because he disagreed with Heraclitus, who held it to be inadmissible to say only ‘Zeus,’ but because, unlike Tillich, he had no doctrine of a primal Ground [Ger. *Urgrund*] to offer. I must only witness for that meeting in which all meetings with others are grounded, and you cannot meet the Absolute.”

Plainly, Buber grants Tillich’s point. They differ, but both affirm God as personal *and* suprapersonal. With others, Buber disliked “being” as *the* concept to denote God. Tillich knew this, and it must have counted as his own witness to God crested. In Paulus’s late work “being” is noticeably demoted. Instead of the *sole* non-symbolic term for God, it becomes [ST II, Intro] *also symbolic*, and its use dwindles after the late ‘50s in favor of the language of Otto, panentheism, and the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, at the very end of ST III an interpersonal motif abruptly enters with the theme of essentialization. [Cf. My explication of this in “Tillich’s Notion of Essentialization,” *Tillich-Studien, Band 3, pp. 365-83*], I conclude Tillich and Buber did really listen to each other, and in both it made a difference. At the same time, the

dialogue between them cries out to be pursued, and we must thank Rob for spurring us thither.

VI

Pondering afresh “the Personal God and Paulus,” I see the problem’s best frame as Tillich’s trinitarianism. My *two* models still bespeak a polarity in his fluctuating take on deity. They fit best an early phase in which he wanted to supplant trinitarian with binitarian conceptuality. [Cf., e.g., “Die christliche Gewissheit und der historische Jesus,” 1911, Satz 127, *Hauptwerke* 6, p.33]. For that matter, a different version of divine biunity emerges in the late Tillich via “Spirit Christology,” as we shall see. But ostensibly, there are in the full-blown Tillich, as in the Christian and most religions, three or maybe four “God-models” that invite analysis. There are the trio of “creative power, saving love, and ecstatic transformation,” plus a fourth put classically as the “Godhead” or *deitas*. Let us examine discretely these four modes that have roles, at some point, in Tillich’s drama of God.

Most problematic is the first trinitarian “person,” “the Father Almighty.” Full inquiry might delve in Paulus’s psyche; here we can only say he backs off, after positive beginnings, from theological use of God’s Fatherhood other than as *symbol* of divine loving care, while conversely he is always at pains to warn of this symbol’s misuse. In the *Fruehe Predigten* [pp. 470f.], there is a homily, from the trenches of 1916, on human need for “our Father in heaven.” In this sermon, the parental God has the valence of a substantive reality. But in the 1925 *Dogmatik*, [425ff] for all the positive erudition with which the symbol is unpacked, it is only a symbol. In ST I [pp. 286ff.], as well, there is exemplary exposition of the symbol “Father,” balanced by that of “Lord” and buttressed by “the manifestation of the Lord and Father as Son and Brother” [289]. Here too, however, while the *manifestation* as Son and Brother marks the real event of the Incarnation, the symbol “Father” does *not* denote anything structural in God’s being. We know, of course, that nothing agitated Tillich more than to hear “only a symbol.” Therefore, we ask for the symbol’s *fundamentum in re*.

The answer is “creative power” as expressing being-itself, and what we have here is an annulment of the Fatherly triune *persona* into, or its ontological reduction to, the traditional “Godhead” or “deity as such” (*deitas*). “God the Father” disappears *as a distinct divine hypostasis*. Correlated with this “Aufhebung” of the hypostatic Father into the Ground of Being, Tillich begins regularly to protest against a “personalistic theism” which would make God “a being.” His most trenchant rebuke of this theism may be in the *Courage To Be*, [184-5], following a sketch of two innocuous senses of the phrase:

Theism in the third sense must be transcended because it is wrong. It is bad theology...The God of theological theism is a being beside others and as such a part of the whole of reality...He is seen as a self which has a world, as an ego which is related to a thou, as a cause which is separated from its effect, as having a definite space and an endless time. He is a being, not being-itself...[H]e is an object for us as subjects. At the same time we are objects for him as a subject...This is the God Nietzsche said had to be killed because nobody can tolerate being made into a mere object of absolute knowledge and absolute control.

This rejected theistic figure is Tillich’s annulled trinitarian *persona*, God the Father as an ontological subsistence distinct from being-itself. Nietzsche is aptly cited; this Father God is indeed the corpse of the “God is Dead” theology. Do some here recall Tom Altizer arguing at meetings back in the 1970s that Paulus had inspired *him*? Tom would tell how Tillich leaned over and whispered, “Ja, der real Tillich ist der radical Tillich.” Paulus vehemently insisted he was *not* in the “Death of God” camp. What I am suggesting is that he *was* one-fourth in it. More or less from the beginning—or was it from when he read Nietzsche?—God the Father as a structural hypostasis *is* dead for Tillich. This is what I believe largely creates the vacuum many sense as a deficiency of the Personal God. On the basis of my experience of Christian spirituality, as well as the biblical witness compacted normatively in the God-relation of Jesus, I have to agree there is this deficiency in Paulus. On the other hand, I doubt *his* critique of our usual theism has been fully heard or assessed.

Does he ever show that espousing theistic personalism entails demeaning nature? Does his attack unjustly isolate God the Father, ignoring a wider matrix of divine immanence posited by most theists, and ironically of a piece with his own trinitarianism? Tillich versus theism is pressing unfinished business, and again we bow gratefully to Rob for stirring these waters.

Although the hypostatic Father is repudiated by Tillich, he does not deny distinctions in God underlying the trinitarian moments. He says the manifestations of God as (a) creative power, (b) saving love, and (c) ecstatic transformation “are reflections of something real in the nature of the divine for religious experience and for the theological tradition” [ST III, 283]. This formula avoids choosing between an “immanent” and “economic” Trinity. We will let it stand as vintage Tillich and pass on to the three other God-models that need checking out regarding our basic question of “the Personal God.” These are, again, the “Son” or “Logos” who becomes incarnate, the “Holy Spirit,” and the Godhead or “God as such” (*deitas*).

In all three of *these* instances, Tillich *does*—almost all the time—bear strong witness to the personlike [Ger. *personhaft*] God. In the case of the second trinitarian moment, we noted above, in the 1913 ST, how the Christ instantiates the supreme paradox (the union of the Unconditional and the finite) which is for Tillich *the* theological principle. In 1915 *Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen* [FW, 496] proclaims Jesus “the concrete Supernatural in person.” Even as late as the *Theology of Paul Tillich*, 1952, replying to Hartshorne’s plumping for a literally finite God, Paulus writes (p. 385):

My resistance against this doctrine...is rooted in the overwhelming impression of the divine majesty as witnessed by classical religion. This makes any possible structural dependence of God on something contingent impossible for me to accept. The justified religious interest...is much better safeguarded by Luther’s symbolic statement that the intolerable “naked absolute” makes himself small for us in Christ. In such a formula God’s unconditional freedom is safeguarded in spite of

his participation in finitude.

It comes out clearly here that Tillich espoused a *duality* of theological rules, corresponding to reason and revelation. Frankly, it is not unlike the theory of “two truths” of some great minds of medieval Islam. What could not be asserted rationally *could* be held as true “symbolically” or “paradoxically” by means of revelation. The fissure along these lines in Tillich is reflected lifelong in such fundamentals as “living on the boundary” and the “method of correlation,” and, yes, the “two God models” I described in 1960. Paulus labored to deal adequately with the fissure and made progress, though he never completed the task—which is arguably incompletable, seemingly grounded as it is in the transcultural *aporia* of subject and object. For Tillich its originative matrix involves being born a cognitive prodigy under the conservative authority of his doting and possessive father. Let me cite a suggestive tidbit from Hannah Tillich’s *Time to Time* [pp. 99-100]. After their wild romance and respective divorces, the newly wed Tillichs receive visits from “Vaterchen.” In spite of the older man’s gracious dignity, Hannah found affection difficult when she “sensed the terror Paulus felt in his company.” Later, she recounts, “when Little Father visited us in Frankfurt, a long-delayed theological discussion took place. Paulus tried to evade the issue by claiming a misunderstanding. At this point I broke in, screaming at both of them that there was no misunderstanding., they were on opposite sides of the fence and they both knew it and had better admit it.” I do not think, though, they ever did admit it.

In any event, it is not widely noticed how sanguinely the earlier Tillich construes the historic Christ as the Divine Logos made flesh and how this leaves an indelible imprint on his later work, even as he undertakes to modify—or indeed at the end abandon—it. He modifies in two respects: first by adopting a more Antiochean Christology of “essential God-humanhood”—wherein what incarnates is the divine-human *relationship*, not the eternal Logos as such; and second, by dropping his early view that through the Incarnation and Ascension “God bears the features of Jesus.” That, avers the 1913 ST [FW. p. 365],

“is the enormous religious paradox which lies at the root of the trinitarian idea.”] ST III [p. 290] bluntly revokes this. “One cannot attribute to the eternal Logos in himself the face of Jesus...or historical man...or any particular manifestation of the creative ground of being. The God seen...in trinitarian symbolism has not lost his freedom to manifest—for other worlds in other ways.” “But,” Tillich still affirms [*idem*], “certainly the face of God manifest *for* historical man is the face of Jesus as the Christ.” This face of God, as ST II puts it [p. 157], is the saving reality of the New Being “indissolubly united” through the Resurrection with the “concrete picture of Jesus,” so that “He is present wherever the New Being is present.”

Of course, Tillich’s “restitution theory” of the Resurrection does not view Jesus’ ongoing presence as that of a revived body or individual soul. It is not what evangelicals mean by “the Living Christ” who in the Garden” speaks as a focused personal being. The speaking especially would conflict with Tillich’s eschewal of “the inner Word” [ST I, 125-6]. Paulus’s risen Jesus rather “*is* [my italics] the Spirit’ and we ‘know him now’ only because he is the Spirit. In this way the concrete...life of Jesus is raised above transitoriness into the eternal presence of God as Spirit” [*idem*]. Tillich’s strong Logos Christology thus transitions in ST, Pt. IV, to a strong Spirit Christology. It is the Spiritual Presence fully indwelling Jesus which makes him the Christ and into which his active risen identity mutates and merges. This new approach to understanding “God in Christ” is loaded with implications that conflict with other (Logos oriented) asseverations of Paulus about the second triune mode. Most of these are clearly chronologically earlier. Some, however, occur in ST III (e.g., in Part IV, 4, on the Trinity) posterior to the thematization of the new Spirit Christology [ST III]. These *may* still devolve from an earlier time. In any event, there is a standing challenge, from which we here must desist, to elucidate the chronology of Tillich’s thinking beyond what has so far been attempted.

For our issue of the Personal God it is accordingly difficult in the later Tillich to trace firmly the role of the second trinitarian moment. If Christ is the “concrete supernatural in person,”

then at least for the interval of his earthly epiphany, there was actual personal interaction with God the Logos, the salient thrust of which Scripture preserves. The same would hold for Tillich’s later thematization (e.g., in ST II and the Trinity section of ST III) so far as one should fasten onto assertions such as “Jesus is the face of God (i. e., of the Logos) for historical mankind.” On the other hand, if what incarnates is the divine-human relationship (a la Antiochean Christology—which is, I think, clearly the direction in which the mature Tillich moves)—then it is the *human* Jesus (albeit in his normative relation to God) that the biblically preserved “words of the Lord” offer. Finally, if it is the consummate pitch of being grasped and indwelt by the Spirit which constitutes the second triune mode, that seems to obviate the role of “Son” or “Logos” in any hypostatic sense at all. It simplifies Tillich’s God to a binitarianism comprised of the Ground of Being and the Spiritual Presence. This God, while “personlike” as well as suprapersonal, never in any sense becomes a person.

Apart from Christ’s earthly epiphany, Tillich nowhere provides for being in personal communication with the second trinitarian mode distinctively. For post-Ascension Christian experience, as the hypostatic Father was annulled into the Godhead, so the Son is annulled into the Spirit. One must ask what implications may lie for Tillich in the shift in the grounding events of Christian faith from the earthly epiphany of the Christ to the “Lord being the Spirit” in the ongoing experience of the Church from the Ascension onward. He repeatedly makes clear throughout the ST that his norm as a theologian is “the New Being in Jesus as the Christ” [ST I, 50]. “New Being” does in part point to the transformation actually experienced here and now in the Church, but Tillich guards against an un-normed “enthusiasm” or “Schwaermerei.” He affirms “the content of the norm is the biblical message” although it is only through the church’s contemporaneous experience that a “norm can come into existence at all” [ST I, 52]. His discussion of this matter recognizes its hermeneutic circularity and is profound. Its upshot is that for Tillich the inmost Christian norm is the biblical picture of Jesus as

the Christ. Why, then, is he not more guided, like Ritschl or Pannenberg, by the biblical Jesus' own axial consciousness, in prayer and generally, of God his Father and ours? The answer involves Tillich's "engram" or "negative block" against the personal Father, and also the shift of his Spirit Christology [cf. esp. ST III, 146] to the *faith* and *love* of the Christ construed as "Spiritual realities in themselves" distinct from the spirit of the man Jesus. The systematic problems ensuing from this shift, as already suggested, are huge and way beyond broaching here.

The third way of God being God—ecstatic transformation or the Spirit—taxes even Tillich to conceptualize deftly. It is a diaspora of the Divine that spills outward in—and comes inward from—all directions, without ever in history permeating, since sin, until the eschaton, contends against it. The manifoldness of the Spirit is indeed nothing new in Christian doctrine. From early on It was the internal witness to revealed truth; It was God present and active in pre- and extra-Christian experience; It was the unique gift breathed by Christ; and It was the fructifying grace inducing sanctification. Augustine saw It as Almighty Will and also the Love that unites God as Ground and Logos. For Hegel, who partly shaped Paulus, Spirit was the Crown of Being in time and eternity. Of all this Paulus welcomed everything he could existentially verify into his own conceptual cornucopia, certainly including Otto's *mysterium tremendum*. His foundations *shook*, were ecstatically renewed in *being*, glimpsed at times *eternity now*. Tillich's Spirit-mysticism, as Jerry Brauer called it, was cosmic, mediated through nature and history. With Wordsworth above Tintern Abbey it was that deep-downness "far more deeply interfused," something "unforethinkable" [Schelling's *Unvor-denklich*] in, under, now breaking through., circumferential, grasping, panentheistically mending and upholding, in what ST III dubs the "transcendent unity of unambiguous life": not a centered person, but "personlike" as it impinges upon us and we contemplate and prayerfully address the Godhead it manifests.

In his 1943 letter to Thomas Mann [GW XIII, 26], Tillich speaks of a "romantic relationship to Nature which...put over against the alienation

from Nature in all my current colleagues." He attributes this relationship to his backpacking through Thuringia, in company with Halle fraternity brothers. The similarity to nature-enraptured young Wordsworth is striking. At the same time Paulus betrays to Mann the *ressentiment* toward personalistic theism (here of his Union peers) that was perhaps his most settled theologic engram or negative block. Apart from the aversion to a centered transcendental *person*, one might have expected Tillich's emphasis that the "Lord is the Spirit" to induce a more personal—rather than merely "personlike" (Germ "*personhaftig*") account of the Spirit.

The fourth God model, the *deitas* or *God as such*, becomes Tillich's third operative model when the Father-*persona* (as explained *supra*) is annulled. Or—if the late developing Spirit Christology be given final sway—the *deitas* becomes at the end the *sole* other model besides the Spirit, and Tillich is back to a biunity. In 1911, the two poles of that biunity were the Absolute and the Christ. Now they would have become the Absolute and the Spirit. I am not quite ready to let the implications of the Spirit Christology call the whole tune so tightly. But, for now, we must leave this issue on the table.

At the same time, since Tillich continues to credit aboriginal or "creative power" as signifying something distinctive in God—thus giving it a hypostatic subsistence—one can hardly avoid saying the *deitas* has the dual function for Paulus of expressing the primordial taproot of deity as well as what remains of the first classical trinitarian *persona* after the "Father" is nullified. Moreover, there is in fact a third role which the *deitas* plays for Tillich, that of the consummate entirety of God or "God altogether," as one might say—what Whitehead calls God's "consequent nature." Tillich, perhaps wisely, does not pursue such distinctions, and they would seem to serve no purpose here. We will simply note that what we are calling the *deitas* does have the triple function of expressing for Paulus the primordially, the creative power, and the culminating actuality of God, though usually it is only one of the three attributions Paulus has in mind when he speaks simply of God.

There is always for Paulus, even in deepest

doubt, a backdrop of deity, an inescapable and unbudgeable screen on which all holy symbols are posted. To express this, for sixty years a restless conceptuality, rigorous *and* colorful, keeps coming up to and through the Tillichian firing line. We forego trying to inventory the shell casings. Memorable are: the Absolute, the truth-itself, the Infinite, the Unconditioned, the Holy, Ultimate Concern, the ground and power of being, being-itself, and “that about which everything we say is symbolic.” Should we include God above God—the “ground of being without a special content”? Surely, we must! Barth, after all, with a parting smile [in KD IV, 4, the final fragment, p. 146 ET] chooses “mit Paul Tillich zu reden” in praise of the “God above God.”

It is *The Courage to Be*, [last chapter, *passim*] which explicates this Tillichian theme—and, indeed, could seem to take it off the chart. “God above God” appears when the theistic God disappears in the abyss of doubt. It is the ground of being “without a special content.” The “absolute faith” which is being grasped by this God “says Yes to being without seeing anything concrete which could conquer the nonbeing in fate and death” [p. 189]. “It is the accepting of acceptance without somebody or something that accepts” [p. 185]. Clearly, *this* God is *not* personal at all. Now Tillich held previously, and holds generally, that a God lacking personal relatedness cannot be God. The *Dogmatik* avers in no uncertain terms [p. 166]: “this holds unconditionally, that what concerns me unconditionally cannot appear otherwise for the person than in the I-Thou relationship.” We cannot get around the fact that such typical Tillich asseverations are contradicted in *Courage to Be*. At Union Theological, we asked Paulus about this in 1952. Not to worry, he replied; it was a matter of correlation; the Terry Lectures were for agnostic philosophers, not the theological circle. I am reminded of Tillich telling Polanyi he envied the latter’s freedom to speak his own mind, whereas *he* mostly had to address students for ministry. What can we make of this element of Buddhist *upaya* in Paulus? Granted the Terry Lectures are not meant as Christian theology, which Tillich expounded with fidelity to what he saw as biblically normative. But he also made clear he was a

doubter who stood on the boundary—not only decades back under Kähler but continually—within the theological circle professionally but sometimes outside it existentially. I read the last chapter of *Courage to Be*, more than most Tillich, as personal confession.

Come hell or ascending water the impersonal orifice of deity, or of anything absolutely—that which even to deny we have to posit—is what Tillich was always surest of. In his first theological paper, 1906, what else is “the eternally identical Idea in which all appearance dissolves” [*supra*, p. 3].but the “God above God” of 50 years later? Ironically, it is also “the Formless Self” he wrestles *against* in Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, Harvard 1957 [Terrence Thomas, 1989, p. 81ff.], going on from there to his flagship principle of East-West dialogue [ST III, p. 143], viz.: “Communication between East and West is most difficult...with the East affirming a ‘formless self’ as the aim of all religious life, and the West...trying to preserve in the ecstatic experience the subjects of faith and love: personality and community.” Paulus could neither live without nor with the “naked absolute,” as he joined Luther in calling the *Gott über Gott*. In *Das Daemonische* [Main Works 5, p. 109], some of his most purple prose on the subject equates “the Unconditioned as the abyss of Nothingness” with the “pure demonization” of the divine. “Except for grace God is...judgment driving to despair. As antithesis to demon, he becomes God through grace.”

The bottom line for Tillich is the *wholeness of the triune (or the bipolar) God*. He wobbles somewhat, in *Courage to Be*, on whether God’s absoluteness *alone* can really be God, but clearly such a God cannot be *all the God we need*. The Christian—and not only the Christian—is spoiled. Without the manifestation of saving love—made normative in Jesus and his cross (but also anticipated and reverberated throughout history)—both ontological power and ecstatic experience become ambiguous and destructive, as without them conversely Jesus’ story becomes just another tragedy. Paulus’s Trinity is looser and more centrifugal than the obsessively taut circumincision of Rubleiev’s icon, partly because Paulus sublates the “Father Figure” into the *deitas*. But the mutual

necessitation for the sake of universal healing—the full-fledged Gospel—is there loud and clear. Generally, in Tillich, it induces a homogenization of God-conceptions in which “the Lord is the Spirit” and the Unconditioned is concretely manifest as personlike and transforming. But while the taproot hereof is rationally indubitable, the ecstatic reception is by participation of faith.

In his summary comments on trinitarian symbolism, ST III, pp. 293-4, Tillich’s concern is the indictment of Christian imagery as egregiously masculine. He does not address the personal character of God. Nevertheless, his thematizing of the distinct trinitarian modes accords with our discussion through most of this paper, though it does not reflect the shift in Part IV of the system to Spirit Christology. The hypostasis of God the Father disappears, and Tillich claims that, in fact, construing the first trinitarian mode as “the power of being in all being is...a way of reducing the...male element in the symbolization of the divine” [p.294]. Well, obviously, inasmuch as the hypostatic Father is annulled (!), and then further, at least Tillich so argues, “ground of being” as symbolical “points to the mother-quality of giving birth, carrying and embracing...”[idem]. The second mode, the Logos manifest in Jesus, as explained above, is the one divine aperture where personality as such is present for Tillich. He now argues, in behalf of feminism, the self-sacrifice of Christ “transcends the alternative male-female” [idem]. The Spirit, the third God model, transcends the male-female dichotomy by virtue of its ecstatic character. Tillich’s stresses the Trinity doctrine is not closed. “[I]t must be kept open to fulfill its original function—to express in embracing symbols the self-manifestation of the Divine Life to man” [idem].

Paulus’s commitment to openness and universality, above all on God, waxes stronger as his witness culminates. In the post-System Earl Lectures, for “God” he simply invokes the “vertical” to keynote Christianity’s relevance. “Let us avoid objectifying statements about the holy. Let us avoid giving it names, even the traditional ones of theology,” he says [*Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, p. 60]. “When we do give it names—as we must in speaking of it, or even in

silent prayer—then let us always have a yes and a no in our statements. It is remarkable how the biblical language...presents a very concrete God whom it seems everyone could make into an object alongside other objects, but try it. This God will evade you. You can never fix this God” [idem].

When Karl Barth chose “mit Paul Tillich zu reden” in praise of the “God beyond God,” that could have been thought to take the cake. But what Barth salutes as that God sounds much more like this one of the Earl Lectures than it does “the ground of being without a special content” (*supra*). Barth says: “This God is more than the various mysteries of the natural and the historical macrocosmos and microcosmos in which man...thinks he can see...now this and now that ultimate reality. Knowable in his special work and word, He is God over the gods of the religions. He is also more than the quintessence of being, origin, transcendence, the all-embracing, the wholly other. He is also God over the God of the philosophers, however he be named...He and He alone is God above God, over all that which might commend itself as God to general thought” [op. cit.]

Barth extols here the biblical God, but so does Tillich in *his* culminating witness. The epiphany of this God he calls “the appearing of an ungraspable power...This ‘yes and no’ is the foundation of all speaking about the divine” [Ibid, p. 61] Thus, ring out in this late resume by Paulus the “Protestant Principle” along with “Catholic Substance,” and with them too their norm, the “*reality* which radiates through Jesus’ image.” The normativity of Jesus’ image, as emblem and guarantee of the personal, never disappears in Tillich. At the same time, toward the end, the “ground of being with no special content” becomes more audible. This could surprise in view of Tillich’s once embarrassed attempt to justify *Courage to Be* within the theological circle. It has to do with his return, after decades as mainly “church theologian,” to the “theology of culture” of Harvard and Chicago, and specifically it reflects, I believe, his 1957 encounter with the “Formless Self” of Buddhist Hisamatsu. In any event, even in what is most unholy, Paulus insists there is “the divine ground

that shines thru every creative human act” [p. 62]. As Augustine intoned, “being as being is good,” and, as Augustine did *not* intone, but Barth and Tillich do, there is good hope for all.

Compared to the segmenting ST—spread over twelve years and via antecedents much longer, there resounds in the final phase of Tillich’s witness a symphonic fugue of his evolved God-models. Their contrapuntal identities are identifiable and interactive though not sharpened off. It is searching music. Undoubtedly, the repression of personalist theism generates dissonance. Yet there is, along with compelling beauty and power, a glorious *incompleteness* in Tillich’s conception of God. For him as much as Augustine, “if you comprehend it is not God” [*si comprehenderit non est deus*]. Consider that near the very end of ST III, just after the “ground of being without qualities”

**CONSTRUCTING A POLITICAL
THEOLOGY ON TILlich’S
THEOLOGY OF CULTURE**

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Background Reading: Ted Peters, *Sin Boldly!*

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Abstract. Observing how the tacit White House political theology steals symbols from religion—especially the symbol of sacrifice in Christianity—this essay constructs an alternative political theology framed by Paul Tillich’s theology of culture. The superstructure includes coherent definitions of key terms such as *political theology* and *religion*. Then it builds on a Tillichian foundation with idol hunting as the method and scapegoat theory as the lens through which to view the American war-culture. This proposed political theology launches a critique of the American myth, according to which America is both holy and salvific due to the blood sacrifice of its soldiers. Recent presidents declare at civic liturgies that the blood shed by

surges strongly in the Earl Lectures, there is the totally serendipitous epiphany of a God whose love “finds fulfilment only through the other...who has the freedom to reject and accept love” [ST III, 422]. As Alex McKelway astutely says in his precis of the ST, his terminating coda “brings into the system a radical reversal of approach” [p. 247]. Through six decades of incandescent thematizing Tillich’s Ultimate is always suprapersonal and almost always “personlike,” infinitely transcendent yet (somehow, though ever less tightly) normed in Jesus the person, the Risen Lord who for us and all is the fulfilling Spirit. None of this is revoked. Yet, at the last, we are challenged to begin unreservedly afresh—especially with the issue of the “personal God.” So, Paulus left it. He could have it no other way.

America’s scapegoated soldier is an efficacious sacrifice for freedom. The irony is that the official attempt to replace religious violence with secular peace becomes, in fact, the launching of a new state religion that justifies never ending warfare.

Key Terms: political theology; civic liturgy; scapegoat; soldier; religious violence; White

House, Paul Tillich, Langdon Gilkey, Eric Voegelin, René Girard, Kelly Denton-Borhaug. Our world cries out for a viable political theology, even if no one seems to hear it. National promises and international threats charge the Internet cloud with lightning bolts of warnings and counter warnings. The two feet of citizens may be planted on the turf of their own nation-state, but their eyes and ears are open to a global crisscross of worldviews and ideologies. Political leaders must rely on roaring rhetoric combined with digitized media persuasion to sustain the delusion that their single nation is united in spirit, resolve, and might. Only an “...ism” such as nationalism or patriotism can glue a diverse population into a single social unit.

On everyone’s mind is terrorism. Terrorism today represents not only death but also chaos. To counter terror, the spirit of the nation must cloak itself in symbols of order, community, and

power. If state-sanctioned death can be justified by symbols of sacrifice, then the national spirit can delude itself into believing an invisible providential force will transform that sacrificial death into the salvation of the nation's order, community, and power. No political leader comprehends the spiritual power he or she wields, let alone grasps the religious mechanisms by which the secular state runs. The truth before everyone's eyes remains hidden, curiously. For anyone thirsting for truth, he or she will need a drink poured by an insightful political theologian. An insightful political theology is needed today to slake our thirst for authenticity.

In what follows, we will look at the tacit White House political theology as it is currently practiced in civic liturgies such as Memorial Day ceremonies or State of the Union speeches. We will then counter White House theology with a political theology of our own construction based on Paul Tillich's theology of culture. We will treat White House theology as secular, religious, and demonic. Government may appear secular, but the political theologian has tools to pry beneath the appearance to uncover the sub-surface religious and demonic energy on which the secular society runs.

The existing White House political theology is tacit, *sub rosa*, presumed. To counter, I will propose a constructive Christian political theology. The superstructure for a constructive political theology will rely on the strength of four supports: (1) a clarification: illuminating definitions of terms such as *political theology* and *religion*; (2) a foundational framework: theology of culture; (3) a method: idol hunting; and (4) an analytical lens: scapegoat theory. The task of the prophet is to measure the current political reality against the biblical symbol of the Kingdom of God and, then, to announce the results of this measurement.

Large-scale confusion distorts national self-understanding, especially in the United States. This is due to what I call *symbol stealing*. By stealing Christian symbols, America's secular culture can run on Christian electricity without paying the religious power bill. The tacit White House theol-

ogy steals religious symbols and incorporates them into its national myth. To unmask the thief, in what follows I will construct an illuminating political theology by broadening Tillich's theology of culture with Eric Voegelin's new science of politics plus the scapegoat theory of René Girard. I will press Tillich's concept of prophetic revelation into the service of exposing the scapegoat mechanism by which national self-justification produces both visible and invisible scapegoats (visible scapegoats are enemies and invisible scapegoats are friends), establishing the state as the virtual ultimate reality—the idol—in the lives of its citizens.

The constructive political theology I propose will ask the church to (a) provide a religious analysis of the self-serving secular narrative; (b) render a prophetic critique of idolatry and injustice; and (c) proclaim a counter-narrative based upon the gospel of Jesus Christ with its promise of an eschatological kingdom of justice.

Tacit White House Political Theology

Why does national self-understanding suffer from distortion? Because of symbol stealing by the White House. To unravel the strings that tie us to confusion, we will analyze the tacit political theology presumed by most if not all U.S. presidents since World War II.

The term, *political theology*, can be used descriptively to describe an existing political ideology that surreptitiously plugs into religious electricity. Or it can be used prescriptively as a normative theological position. For the moment, let us use the term descriptively to explicate just what the White House says it believes. We will explicate the leadership of President Barack Obama (2008-2016) largely because he is recent and resources abound that record his thinking. Commitment to Obama's tacit political theology may be unavoidable for any U.S. president espousing White House orthodoxy in the near future.

Obama's tacit theology establishes the hegemony of a single secular state over a plurality of religious perspectives. The former president states, "Whatever we once were, we are no longer

just a Christian nation, but also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, a Buddhist nation, a Hindu nation, and a nation of nonbelievers.”ⁱ In this new post-Christian nation, he contends, religious believers and nonbelievers must learn the fine art of compromise, a sense of proportion, an ability to subordinate their tradition-specific beliefs to a vision of an inclusive American public life. Even if past theorists thought they could perceive a conflation—conflation of a Protestant version of Christianity along with Roman Catholic and Jewish augments into a shared civil religion—today’s president denies the conflation in the name of religious pluralism. Religious perspectives are plural, whereas the secular state is one. Whereas religious perspectives divide, the secular state unites. The president’s self-assigned task, then, is to devise a political narrative or myth within which all American citizens can feel a communal bond.

After consigning sectarian religious views to pluralism, the president conjectures, *e pluribus unum* cannot demand the complete elimination of America’s religious self-understandings within its secular self-understanding. If we “scrub language of all religious content...we forfeit the imagery and terminology through which millions of Americans understand both their personal morality and social justice.”ⁱⁱ Therefore, religious language may remain in American political rhetoric, he contends.

Obama’s political theology “requires all religious people to translate their specific religious concerns and vision for public life into universal rather than religion-specific values,” observes Gastón Enrique Espinoza.ⁱⁱⁱ Then, Espinoza adds with a faint tone of complaint, “However, in exchange for this olive branch of peace and acceptance, he also asks Evangelicals and other Christians to relinquish the belief that America is a distinctly Christian nation in exchange for a new belief that America is a pluralistic deliberative democracy in which there are many equally important religious nations all contributing to *e pluribus unum*...In short, he is saying I will recognize your fundamental right to exist and claim to the land historically, but in exchange I ask that despite your overwhelming numbers and influence you

freely give up your claims to nationhood in the name of a pluralistic deliberative democracy.”^{iv} In short, American Christians are being asked by their nation’s leader to press their sectarian beliefs into the service of a single secular democracy.

We must appreciate how clever a hoodwink this is. It co-ops both liberal and conservative Christians into the American myth. Liberal Protestants champion the doctrine of pluralism that renders Christianity only one religion among many, thereby ceding American unity to the secular mindset. Conservative Protestants conflate their reliance on God’s saving atonement in Christ with the saving atonement of the American soldier who dies for our freedom. We dare not underestimate the sheer cultural power of the White House political theology.

This means, among other things, the U.S. White House has surreptitiously resolved a debate taking place elsewhere in the world, especially Europe. Granted that modern nation-states have no truck with theocracy, a public debate remains: should each nation-state identify with its inherited religious tradition (what Germans call *Leitkultur*, the dominant culture)? Or, should a modern nation-state forsake its religious tradition for a politically designed multiculturalism?

Philosopher Slavoj Žižek asks whether it is realistic for a society to abandon its dominant culture on behalf of a socially engineered multiculturalism. No, he answers; it is not possible. For Western European and North American nation-states, Christianity is not the only component to their *Leitkultur*. So also is modernity; and it is modernity that has given rise to democracy, pluralism, and multiculturalism. If Muslims move from an Islamic theocracy to a modern liberal democracy, they must adapt to an alien culture even if that nation denies privileging its Christian heritage. “Western multiculturalism is not truly neutral,” Žižek observes; we should “shamelessly accept this paradox: universal openness itself is rooted in Western modernity.”^v Pluralism is culture-specific; it is not universal. The implication for Obama’s political theology is clear: his post-Christian multiculturalism will be unable to maintain neutrality toward every tradition-specific reli-

gion in the American collection.

A president must live with this tension because the White House has a bigger fish to fry, namely, uniting the nation's community. To accomplish this, the White House will need to rely upon powerful unifying symbols. How will the nation's leader accomplish this? By inventing new symbols? No, this will not work because, as Tillich reminds us, symbols cannot be invented or discarded. "Symbols cannot be invented."^{vi} This leaves the White House with only one other option, namely, to steal somebody else's symbols. To symbol theft we now turn.

White House Symbol Stealing

Symbols exert power because they participate in the reality toward which they point. "The symbol represents something which is not itself, for which it stands and in the power and meaning of which it participates," notes Tillich.^{vii} This makes symbols valuable. This makes the symbols of disestablished religions—such as Christianity—tempting for thieves who might want to steal their power.

The most frequent occasion for the White House to pickpocket Christian symbols is during crowded civic liturgies, especially civic events referring to America's soldiers. I will provide some examples. Here is the first. On Memorial Day, 2011, President Barack Obama's speech linked today's warriors into a chain with his nation's first patriots in the Revolutionary War of 1776; and he linked this chain with God's holy word. "What binds this chain together across the generations, this chain of honor and sacrifice, is not only a common cause—our country's cause—but also a spirit captured in a Book of Isaiah, a familiar verse, mailed to me by the Gold Star parents of 2nd Lieutenant Mike McGahan. 'When I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'" Regardless of the specific text, the mere allusion to Holy Scriptures in a political speech connotes sacred presence, blessing, and reverence.

At this meaningful moment, the U.S. President—who has subordinated the Bible-based religions of Judaism and Christianity to a supervening religious pluralism—steals symbols from that very tradition-specific Bible for his civil rhetoric. The call of God to the prophet has become transmogrified into the call of America to the soldier. Whereas the ancient Hebrew prophet answered God's call to deliver the divine word, America's soldier answers the same divine call to enter into combat. To fight for America is a holy calling, says the president.

This rhetoric is much more than merely permitting religious discourse in the public square. This speech is an eloquent incorporation of the biblical prophet into the national myth. With the symbol of the prophet, Obama is plugging into its electrifying power and turning the secular state into a religion in itself.

During the concluding rhetorical crescendo, the president ritually recalls the sacrifices that founded his nation. Patriotic sacrifice stands on the same level as religious sacrifice. Or, perhaps more precisely, patriotism becomes the spiritual bond.

That's what we memorialize today. That spirit that says, send me, no matter the mission. Send me, no matter the risk. Send me, no matter how great the sacrifice I am called to make. The patriots we memorialize today sacrificed not only all they had but all they would ever know. They gave of themselves until they had nothing more to give. It is natural, when we lose someone we care about, to ask why it had to be them. Why my son, why my sister, why my friend, why not me?...We remember that the blessings we enjoy as Americans came at a dear cost; that our very presence here today, as free people in a free society, bears testimony to their enduring legacy.^{viii}

We have now entered the temple of ultimacy. To offer our young men and women in uniform as a battlefield sacrifice for America's freedom is to offer the ultimate sacrifice. There is none higher. And we today—those of us who are Americans—enjoy the blessings of the salvation

wrought by our soldier's sacrificial blood. Not only is President Obama sanctifying America by the blood of his soldiers, he is proclaiming a new soteriology by which this blood sacrifice delivers the blessings of triumph, security, and prosperity.

Did you see the theft? Did you see the religious pocket get picked? With a slight of the rhetorical hand, suddenly the saving efficacy of the Son of God becomes transferred to the saving efficacy of the American soldier through the soldier's sacrifice. By the soldier's death, Americans live in freedom. Curiously, many Christians go home without even realizing their pockets have been picked. We need a political theology for the church to discover the theft.

Political Symbols of Sacrifice that Scapegoat the American Soldier

As we have noted, the Obama School within White House political theology accepts that religious language may be used in support of a secular state. The theft is not the language per se. Rather, the theft deals with the power of that language, sufficient power to transform the so-called secular state into its own religion.

If we add to our analysis a peek through the lens of scapegoating theory, which we will describe later in this paper, we will perceive in sharper relief just how the Christian symbols of sacrifice function to unite the plurality of Americans into a single community. Our example will be the U.S. president's "State of the Union" address on January 28, 2014. This otherwise lackluster speech was nearing its conclusion when President Obama turned his hand and pointed to someone sitting in the balcony. To the immediate right of the First Lady, Michelle Obama, sat a soldier in uniform, Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg. To Cory's right sat his father, evidently his family support. The television cameras locked onto the threesome, with Cory in the middle. The president's voice began to rise toward a *grand finale*.

With all chamber eyes and television cameras focusing on the humble soldier, this nation's leader took the time to rehearse Cory's biography. On

his tenth deployment to Afghanistan, said the Commander in Chief, this young soldier was nearly killed by a massive roadside bomb. When his comrades found him he was face down, underwater, with shrapnel in his brain. He was rushed to the hospital, where he remained in a coma for weeks. He recovered, though he is still blind in one eye and struggles to coordinate his left side. The president lauded this valiant hero's courage, tenacity, and drive. "My recovery has not been easy," said the president quoting Cory; "Nothing in life that's worth anything is easy." Then the floodtide of the president's passion erupted into an unmatched rhetorical crescendo:

Cory is here tonight. And like the Army he loves, like the America he serves, Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg never gives up, and he does not quit. My fellow Americans, men and women like Cory remind us that America has never come easy. Our freedom, our democracy, has never been easy...The America we want for our kids—a rising America where honest work is plentiful and communities are strong; where prosperity is widely shared and opportunity for all lets us go as far as our dreams and toil will take us—none of it is easy. But if we work together; if we summon what is best in us, with our feet planted firmly in today but our eyes cast towards tomorrow—I know it's within our reach.

Believe it!

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.^{ix}

At this climactic moment, everyone in the House chamber stood to engage in thunderous applause. The standing ovation lasted for more than two minutes, the longest single applause of the evening. Significant was that John Boehner, Republican Speaker of the House, who routinely sat stone-faced on nearly every previous occasion when the Democratic president's remarks elicited applause, stood and clapped vigorously for the entire two minutes. All eyes were directed to the uniformed hero standing next to the First Lady.

Later in this paper, we will incorporate Girard's scapegoat theory into our prescriptive

political theology. Here, briefly, let us ask: just what is going on in this interchange between the president, the congress, and the television audience? Despite the animus and vileness of the rivalry between Republicans and Democrats that virtually and literally shut the federal government down during this president's second term, this moment of applause signalized unity, fraternity, and singleness of heart. No one in that chamber would have even considered not participating in the applause. It was a sacred moment. The invisible scapegoat provided the foundation for this community's binding experience and for the nation's binding experience.

Despite the fact that the audience could see and hear everything, the invisible power of the scapegoat provides the glue that binds together the American nation. What is invisible? Not Cory the soldier. Cory is quite visible as a hero, to be sure; but Cory's role as a scapegoat was drowned out and obscured by the laudatory applause. What is invisible is not the scapegoat per se, but rather the scapegoat mechanism by which America justifies itself, its way of life, its structures of power, and the violence it perpetrates around the world. No doubt that Cory as a soldier is in fact a hero and properly deserves the gratitude of his people; but his invisible role as an accomplice in patriotism, nationalism, and jingoism is unknown to himself, to his Commander and Chief, or to the American people. The invisible scapegoat is blind while binding.

While still watching and listening to the speech on television, I texted a member of the North American Paul Tillich Society. I mentioned that we were looking at the invisible scapegoat mechanism at work before our very eyes: Cory is the president's scapegoat, our nation's scapegoat. My friend zipped back a text, "don't tell Cory!" This is right. As soon as the truth becomes transparent, the invisible scapegoat would lose its unifying power.

One additional implication is worth noting. The soldier who engages in self-sacrifice and wins for America the blessings of freedom, democracy, and prosperity does not achieve a once-and-for-all atonement. Rather, sacrifice must be perpetual.

"Ritual [in civic liturgy] enacts our debt to the past, which we cannot pay via ritual but only via fresh sacrifice," observes political theologian William Cavanaugh.^x In order to reap the blessings wrought by Cory and his comrades in arms, the stream of soldier sacrifices must continue in perpetuity. This form of invisible scapegoat justifies perpetual war.

Prophecy Through Comedy

Only a prophetic judgment could expose the truth of what is taking place here. However, neither Christian nor Jewish prophets could get away with exposing this national hypocrisy, because they would get dismissed as religious fanatics only expressing vested interests and violating their sectarian sequester within secular multiculturalism. However, a public comedian could get away with a critique, because the comedian is not connected to religion-specific values. All the comedian needs to do is point out the irony

During the months following Obama's 2014 State of the Union speech, it became news that forty veterans returning from the war zone died while waiting to get an appointment with a doctor at the Veterans Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. They literally died while waiting to see a doctor. Medical services for this nation's heroes were limited due to budget constraints; yet, this had not been widely known.

In the wake of the Arizona revelation, it also became known that veteran services in eight states were postponing appointments beyond fourteen days and cooking the books to conceal the practice. Television comedian Jon Stewart described General Eric Shinseki and his executive colleagues at the Department of Veteran Affairs as suffering from PBSD, Post-Bureaucratic Stress Syndrome. Then, Stewart launched into a diatribe saying that America was able to pack up and send 300,000 troops half way around the world, conduct two wars at a cost of 2 trillion dollars that was paid for "under the table"; but this nation could not provide health care for those soldiers who came home hurt from these wars. The only way to help America's veterans, concluded Stewart, would be

to “declare war on them.”^{xi} It appears to me that war has already been declared on America’s soldiers, but no one dare admit it.

What is decisive in establishing and maintaining America as a discrete religion is the symbolic or iconic role the sacrificing soldier plays, not the actual flesh and blood soldier. Once the civic liturgy has successfully grounded America in the sacred and proclaimed forthcoming blessings, the surviving and perhaps wounded soldier can be dismissed and sent to fend for himself or herself out of the public lime light. In the end, the soldier is sacrificed twice, once on the battlefield and again back home in the post-battlefield secular *ecclesia*.

Marginalized Religion as the Substance of State Culture

According to Cavanaugh, the so-called secular government of the United States has confiscated the religious sacred. American patriotism amounts to “the transfer of care for the holy from church to state.”^{xii} Speaking as a Roman Catholic, Cavanaugh can render a prophetic judgment: such nationalism is “the age-old sin of idolatry.”^{xiii} This implies, among other things, that, “In important ways, the United States has not really secularized at all. What has happened instead is that in the modern era the holy has migrated from the church to the state.”^{xiv} The so-called secular state does not supersede its Christian tradition; rather, it plugs into Christian electricity and runs off borrowed religious energy.

To get at the religious substance of state culture, however, we must listen to more than merely persuasive political rhetoric. White House rhetoric could construct national community only if American culture was already disposed to it. Political theologian Kelly Denton-Borhaug describes this disposition as *war-culture*. The war-culture is omnipresent. “I define war-culture as the normalized interpenetration of the institutions, ethos and practices of war with ever-increasing facets of daily human life, economy, institutions and imagination in the United States.”^{xv} She requisitions a political theology that provides an honest and pro-

phetic analysis. “In the U.S. context, we must find ways to expose and question this framework of blood sacrifice uniting war-culture, nationalism, and Christianity.”^{xvi}

We dare not underestimate the pervasive presence and influence of the war-culture, what Ronald Stone dubs the culture of death.

We encourage children, neurotic or normal, to play games of violent death, to learn music of death, to read literature of death, and...to project human wars into the stars. Our movie theaters become temples of the gods of death projected in huge images on screens, while we stuff ourselves full of innutritious calories to compensate for the horror filling our minds... This sick culture sustains and defends the arms industry that provides weapons for children here and the armies and paramilitaries of the rest of the world. First, we arm countries and then have to crush them, isolate them, embargo them, or bomb them.^{xvii}

In a culture already predisposed to death and war, symbols of sacrifice are effective at binding the American community. For a political theology to be equally effective in providing an analysis, it will have to be a theology of culture. For this reason, we turn to Paul Tillich and the Tillichian legacy.

What is *Political Theology*?

For more than a decade now, a new postmodern approach to political theology has sought to untwist patriotic rhetoric and demythicize nationalist symbols. Political theology seeks “to illuminate our own political experience,” says Yale Law School professor, Paul Kahn.^{xviii} The untwisting and demythicizing demonstrates that surface secularism hides a subsurface religiosity. “Political theology begins with the observation that many of our important political concepts come to us as secularized versions of theological concepts.”^{xix} Once this hidden fact becomes visible, the religious dimension of secular culture becomes available for analysis. This new school of political theology limits itself to description, not prescription. But, this descriptive work is in itself valuable.

Building on this descriptive analysis, it is my recommendation that the constructive political theologian perform an idol analysis on the social order when raising up for public viewing the religious depth hidden beneath the surface myths of secular culture. By lifting up for public view the religious underpinnings of American patriotism and other patriotisms, the political theologian takes on the prophetic role of criticizing governments for hypocrisy, public-deception, and shedding human blood. This is the kind of political theology I would like to construct.

With the term *constructive political theology*, I refer to the theologian's approach to the dimension of civil order within human community. This is a political theology for the church when contributing to the public square. The task of this constructive political theology is primarily, though not exclusively, prophetic. I begin where Paul Tillich concluded his Systematic Theology, namely, by analyzing the spirit of human community in terms of its discernible dimensions: morality, culture, and religion.^{xx} The particular way in which these three dimensions are ordered in a specific historical context constitutes the political order. "The *political* unities, whether large or small, remain the conditions of all cultural life."^{xxi} The task of the political theologian is to measure each historical social order in relationship to the biblical symbol of the Kingdom of God.

The superficial split between the religious and the secular prompts in Tillich a reminder that the Kingdom of God is transcendent, eschatological. When culture and religion mutually differentiate and open up a gap, it is a sign that the Kingdom of God is still "not yet." Tillich avers that the "the Kingdom of God has not yet come...God is not yet all in all, whatever this 'not yet' may mean. Asked what the proof is for the fall of the world, I like to answer: religion itself, namely a religious culture besides a secular culture, a temple besides a town hall, a Lord's Supper besides a daily supper, prayer besides work, meditation besides research, *caritas* besides *eros*." Tillich anticipates a *kairos* moment, the advent of a theonomous age that will conquer "the destructive gap between religion and secular culture in which we are now

living."^{xxii} This eschatological vision provides the angle of vision by which we see more clearly the substitute ultimates, the misleading myths, and the demagogic destruction.

The Kingdom of God transcends yet judges the kingdoms within history. Raymond Bulman testifies that, "Tillich's eschatology is political as well as transcendent, social as well as individual, and cosmic as well as historical."^{xxiii}

I am proposing a constructive political theology *for* the theologian *in* the church. Such a political theology will be both *descriptive* and *prescriptive*, both analytical and normative. This separates me in part from the Carl Schmitt tradition of political theology as it lives on today in the journal, *Political Theology*. Schmitt's project in pre-Nazi Germany was strictly descriptive, describing the historical "elimination of all theistic and transcendental conceptions and the formation of a new concept of legitimacy" for the state.^{xxiv} One of Schmitt's twenty-first century disciples, Vincent Lloyd, says his political theology is "an analysis of the role of religious concepts in political theory and practice—without Christian presuppositions."^{xxv} Yale's Paul Kahn similarly says, the "Political theology, as I pursue it here, is a project of *descriptive* political analysis."^{xxvi} The Schmitt legacy sees its task as describing the tacit theology hidden beneath the civil order, but the political theologian pursues this task without making a normative faith commitment on behalf of any church.

There is a weakness this brand of political theology. Nothing in this descriptive method stood in the way of Schmitt taking out membership in the Nazi Party. Similarly, neither Lloyd nor Kahn invoke any normative principles that would prevent them from joining forces with the political theologies they study and describe. Relying strictly on a descriptive method would deprive political theology of the resources necessary to critique the *status quo* or denounce injustice.

In contrast to Lloyd and Kahn, I specifically explicate Christian norms because the Christian pre-understanding provides a unique and indispensable illuminative power when examining the human condition. In addition, God's promise in the Easter resurrection is that the eschatological

Kingdom of God is coming with transformative power. I would like to wake up the sleeping prophetic impulse in contemporary Christianity.

Nevertheless, on some occasions I still use the term *political theology* descriptively to explicate the object of theological analysis. The political theologian analyzes somebody else's tacit political theology, so to speak. I may use the phrase, "political theology of the White House," to describe the conceptual set or myth or narrative of a significant cultural player in today's historical drama. Tillich can on occasion employ the term 'theology of culture' in this descriptive fashion. "What I like to call 'theology of culture'...is the attempt to analyze the theology behind all cultural expressions, to discover the ultimate concern in the ground of a philosophy, a political system, an artistic style, a set of ethical or social principles. This task is analytic rather than synthetic, historical rather than systematic."^{xxvii} Armed with this descriptive understanding, the theologian can then interrogate the myth of a specific political ideology and ask: just what theological commitments are hidden here?

In summary, the term *political theology* firstly designates a *descriptive* task of uncovering the hidden theology already at work to justify a given national community and, secondly, it designates the *prescriptive* task of the constructive theologian to judge each political system in light of the symbol of the Kingdom of God and to manifest politically the eschatological justice which God is promising.

What do we mean with the term *Religion*?

The constructive political theologian must employ his or her own vocabulary rather than merely accept what floats equivocally in the media. Definitional precision is prerequisite to incision. Let's continue with the term, *religion*.

I plan to use the term, *religion*, as Tillich does to designate the substantial depth of culture. "Culture is the form of religion and religion is the substance of culture," Tillich says repeatedly.^{xxviii} This understanding of religion liberates it from its isolation from public life and from essentialist

definitions. The modern narrative that cedes public life to politics and ghettoizes religion in the private domain—the sectarian domain—relies on a truncated and self-serving definition of religion. The separation of religious and secular spheres is the imaginary of the modern nation-state, permitting the nation-state to claim hegemony over the public sphere of human community. This split between the secular and the religious has led to essentialist definitions of religion that conveniently support secular hegemony. I counter this marginalization of religion into sectarianism by referring to religion as the substance of any and all culture and, hence, belonging to human community overall. With this definition of religion in hand, the political theologian can provide analysis of private and public life in concert.

Even so, *religion* cannot help but connote multiple meanings. On the one hand, on occasion I will concur that the *secular* has replaced the *religious* on at least a superficial level. The conventional view is the supersession view—called the *secularization hypothesis*--that interprets modern history in terms of a secular supersession beyond the religion it left behind. According to the secularization hypothesis, the victorious secular mind sequesters sectarian religion in the private sphere, while secular powers gain dominance in the public sphere. This separation of a unitary public secularity from a plurality of private religious sentiments is what today's Western society looks like, as everybody can plainly see. Yet, on the other hand, what we see may be deceiving. The line drawn between the secular and the religious is an artificial construction of the modern state in order to serve the purposes of secular hegemony.

The Schmitt school of postmodern political theologians rightly emphasize that what we today deal with is human history in the comprehensive and contextual sense, not segmented into religion, politics, economics, or culture. Talal Asad, for example, says, "My argument is that there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes."^{xxix} Recent definitions compartmental-

ize and marginalize religion and, thereby, separate out the secular. Yet, the religious and the secular are not as separate as commonly thought. According to Cavanaugh, “There is no *essential* difference between the religious and the secular to begin with. They are invented categories, not simply the way things are.”^{xxx} He adds, “There is no once-and-for-all definition of religion or the secular. The religion/secular divide is a modern Western construction that arose as an adjunct to the rise of the modern state and the triumph of civil over ecclesiastical authorities in early modern Europe.”^{xxxi} I cannot, like Asad, throw in the towel and avoid defining *religion* universally, however, because this would render my analysis anemic. Yet, like Cavanaugh, I wish to show how what we ordinarily think of as the religious and the secular both demonstrate the same structure. Tillich’s notion of religion as the depth of culture makes this demonstration possible.

What has happened in recent politics is this: a line has been drawn between the so-called religious perspectives that come in plural form and the secular society that is allegedly non-religious and, therefore, unifying. With Tillich’s understanding of religion as the substance of culture, this artificial line can be ignored for the purpose of political theology.

By erasing the sharp line between the secular state and the plurality of sectarian religions, I do not intend to imply that the generic religious dimension of life lacks any distinctive traits. One key trait stands out, namely, orientation toward ultimacy. “Religion is more than a system of special symbols, rites, and emotions, directed toward a highest being; religion is ultimate concern; it is the state of being grasped by something unconditional, holy, absolute.”^{xxxii} When we have identified a culture’s orientation toward a perceived ultimate value, we have identified the dimension of the religious.

To acknowledge religious depth is in itself neither good nor bad. Religion, like every other dimension of human existence, is ambiguous. “Ambiguity...is creative and destructive at the same time,” says Tillich.^{xxxiii} This means, then, that the political theologian must engage in two tasks:

first, identify the religious depth of culture and then, second, evaluate it against the authentically ultimate standard, the kingdom of God. If we define religion as the depth dimension of culture, then the political theologian can offer a religious analysis of a given body politic and prepare the prophet for a possible critique.

Theology of Culture as the Framework for Political Theology

The framework for this religious analysis is provided by the theology of culture as we find it in Tillich and his disciple, Langdon Gilkey. For Tillich, the task of the theology of culture was primarily to analyze—that is, to expose the existing religious dimensions at work within culture. Theology of Culture (*Kulturtheologie*) recognizes that the religious dimension actualizes itself in every dimension of the Spirit (*Sondern das Religiöse ist aktuell in allen Provinzen des Geistigen*).^{xxxiv}

Is Tillich here presupposing strictly a *descriptive* understanding of existing political theologies? Actually, he wants more. He dreams of a theonomous culture, one that is transparent to its religious ground. The task of “a theonomous analysis of culture [is] to show that in the depth of every autonomous culture an ultimate concern, something unconditional and holy, is implied. It is the task of deciphering the style of an autonomous culture in all its characteristic expressions and of finding their hidden religious significance.”^{xxxv} A theonomous culture, in short, would be the kingdom of God. Because no existing culture or state is theonomous, the political theologian must work with the symbol of the kingdom of God as a transcendent measure to analyze and evaluate historical cultures.

For Gilkey, following Tillich, culture like Holy Scripture requires a close reading, exegesis, and interpretation. Gilkey calls this analytical work the *Hermeneutic of Secular Experience*. This hermeneutic attempts “to see what religious dimensions there may be...in ordinary life...which will uncover what is normally hidden and forgotten.”^{xxxvi} The theologian digs down beneath the surface symbols and myths and narratives through which we un-

derstand ourselves to uncover their depth, perhaps even ultimate meaning. Even if our society appears secular on the surface, we can assume with Gilkey that “society in fact does possess a sacred dimension, a dimension to be analyzed in its own religious terms.”^{xxxvii} Explicitly analyzing and interpreting society’s hidden sacred is one of the tasks of a theology of culture which can contribute to a developing political theology:

The economic, political, social, and individual life of our culture is...permeated by a matrix of crucial symbols drawn from the hopes and aims of science, technology, democracy, and capitalism, which together make up what we call the “American Way of Life” in all its facets. This religious substance is a legitimate and crucial object of the theologian’s concern, of that is, the theologian’s ‘theology of culture’.^{xxxviii}

In short, the framework for the political theology I prescribe is part of a larger dimension of theology, namely, a theology of culture.^{xxxix}

Idol Hunting as Political Theology’s Method

This understanding of religion as the substance of culture plus its accompanying framework, the theology of culture, prepares the constructive political theologian for distinguishing idols from the true God. The inner energy we feel that propels us toward what transcends us could lead us either to the holy or to the demonic. Reformer Martin Luther reminds us of the ambiguity of belief and the difficulty in discerning God from among the God substitutes:

A ‘god’ is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart...it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say,

that is really your God.^{xi}

In light of Luther’s warning, the political theologian will always be on the lookout for substitute gods, for idols. Tillich tells us where to look: look for orientations toward ultimacy. “Everything which is a matter of unconditional concern is made into a god,” he writes. “If the nation is someone’s ultimate concern, the name of the nation becomes a sacred name and the nation receives divine qualities which far surpass the reality of the being and functioning of the nation.”^{xii} In short, when the modern nation-state claims ultimacy—ultimacy at least in the form of the license to determine who lives and who dies—then perhaps an idol might be lurking in the nationalistic spirit.

We see idol hunting combined with prophetic judgment at work in Tillich’s radio broadcasts to the German people during the reign of the Third Reich:

The God who rejects his own people on account of their injustice is the God of all people, the God of humanity. The German rulers have fought against this God. They must dispose of him so that they can destroy justice. They must invent a god who protects the injustices of his people, who is bound to his people: the German god. But this god is an idol, and he will be smashed by the God of righteousness and of justice.^{xiii}

In the theonomous Kingdom of God, citizens enjoy faith in the true God, the one God for all of humanity. Outside the Kingdom of God, nation-states that aspire to usurp the role of the Kingdom of God risk making themselves into idols. The political theologian engages in idol hunting.

On the method of idol hunting, philosopher Eric Voegelin’s *New Science of Politics* complements Tillich’s theology of culture in a significant way. Voegelin began his teaching career in Vienna, where he became investigated and indicted by the Nazi party. He then fled to the United States where he finished his scholarly career at Stanford University. Writing in Vienna in 1938, Voegelin attempted to unmask the disguise of secular politics in order to show that the modern state, especially the totalitarian state, belongs “to the sphere

of the religious.”^{xliii} As a political philosopher, Voegelin distinguished between the transcendent and the immanent spheres—between the spiritual and the political—even though both are religious. “The spiritual religions, which find the *realissimum* in the Ground of the world (*Weltgrund*), should be called trans-worldly religions (*übereweltliche Religionen*); and all others, i.e., those that find the divine in subcontents of the world, should be called inner-worldly religions (*innereweltliche Religionen*).”^{xliiv} In other words, an authentic spiritual insight connects the human soul to ultimate reality, to that which transcends the political and the mundane. Inauthentic religious sensibility, which invests ultimacy in this-worldly politics, leads to a totalitarian and deadly ideology. Only a spiritual relationship to transcendent reality provides the spiritual and moral leverage one needs to avoid idolatrizing the nation-state.

With this distinction in hand, Voegelin proceeded to describe the role of symbol and myth in modern society. A society is more than merely an agglomeration of people. An agglomeration of people becomes a society only through symbolization. “The self-illumination of society through symbols is an integral part, for through such symbolization the members of a society experience it as more than an accident or a convenience; they experience it as of their human essence.”^{xliiv} Symbolic self and world understanding constitute the worldview or myth that gives a given society its identity. For the political theologian the question is this: does the symbolic self-understanding of a nation open the psyche and the society to transcendent judgment, or does it co-opt the symbols into endorsing the government’s this-worldly authority?

Just as ancient societies organized their worldview through complexes of symbols called *myths*, modern political entities similarly rely on myths. Many of these modern myths disguise an idolatrous usurping of transcendental authority. “The ‘myth’ is created purposely to bind the masses emotionally and to arouse in them the politically effective expectation of salvation. Since the myth cannot legitimize itself through transcendent revelation or stand up to scientific criticism, a new

concept of truth is developed...only that is true which promotes the existence of the organically closed, inner-worldly national community.”^{xlivi} The myth—representing the national narrative or ideology or conceptual set or political framing—creates national community, whether the myth is true or not.

Nazi Germany provides Voegelin with the illustration he needs. Alluding to Adolph Hitler, Voegelin compared the German Führer to transcendently grounded religious authorities of antiquity. “The Führer is the point where the spirit of the people breaks into historical reality; the inner-worldly god speaks to the Führer in the same way the transcendent God speaks to Abraham, and the Führer transforms god’s words into commands for his immediate followers and for the people.”^{xliivii} The deception of modern myths is that they claim ultimacy for what is less than ultimate. In the Nazi case, the myths functioned to replace the true God with Adolph Hitler.

Now, Voegelin is not saying that religion is inherently violent. Historians must avoid attributing Nazi violence to its religious underpinnings. Voegelin is not in any way buying into what today’s political theologians call *the myth of religious violence*. Rather, Voegelin attributes Nazi violence to its idolatry. Nazi ideology leads to violence because it substitutes something mundane such as Hitler or *das Vaterland* (the Fatherland) for the Kingdom of the true God who transcends every political entity.

Tillich, like Voegelin, was forced to flee the Third Reich. Writing in Germany in 1934, Tillich said, “The concentration of all spheres of life within the unlimited authority of the national state is possible only when founded upon a world view which has the inherent power of encompassing man’s entire being and driving him on to unconditional self-surrender. Such a worldview is religious in character and finds expression in a myth. The more unconditional and more inclusive the claims of the state are, the more fundamental and powerful must be the myth which is the foundation of such claims.”^{xliiii} In short, the myth constructed by those in political power capitalizes on religious sensibilities, while steering the populace

toward oppression by a this-worldly will to power.

This analysis of political culture turns quickly into prophetic judgment. Tillich combined the “Protestant Principle” with prophetic judgment during his life under the Third Reich.

Protestantism must prove its prophetic-Christian character by setting the Christianity of the cross against the paganism of the swastika. Protestantism must testify that the cross has broken and judged the holiness of nation, race, blood, and power.^{xix}

By analyzing symbols such as the swastika, a political theologian can make visible what is invisible, namely, the attempt at apotheosis of the secular state. It will be the prophetic assignment of the Church—whether Protestant or Roman Catholic or other—to expose the idolatry.

The Analytical Lens Provided by Scapegoat Theory

The idol hunter needs sharp vision. Scapegoat theory can grind a lens to sharpen that vision. As we saw in our earlier exegesis of White House theology, one of the religious practices stolen by the secular nation-state from the now ghettoized Christian tradition is justification through sacrifice. National leaders feel they must justify their actions in general, and taking human lives in particular. They assume power cannot be wielded arbitrarily. Rather, to be persuasive to its own citizenry, governmental power must be exercised in conformity to an ideal principle of justice. The communal spirit must connote the feeling that one’s nation is grounded in eternal justice, not merely the interests of the power elite. When preparing for war, political leaders draw a line between good and evil. Then, they place the nation on the good side of the line.

National self-justification characteristically includes scapegoating. There are two kinds of scapegoats: visible and invisible. The visible scapegoat is the enemy. By drawing the line between good and evil combined with placing the enemy on the evil side, a nation’s leaders justify going to war against that enemy. Whether the enemy constitutes a genuine threat or an imagined threat, the enemy’s role as scapegoat is to estab-

lish or enhance domestic community.

Carl Schmitt, introduced above, observes that distinguishing between friends and enemies is an essential step in what I dub visible scapegoating. To be a nation one must establish who is outside, other, foreign, alien. The nationalistic or patriotic spirit feeds off the threat of an enemy. Here’s how self-justification through scapegoating works: the enemy is declared evil, whereas we and our friends are declared good. “Emotionally the enemy is treated as being evil and ugly,” observes Schmitt.¹ A modern nation’s self-understanding must draw a line between good and evil and place itself on the good side of the line. The enemy on the evil side of the line functions, as scapegoats do, to unify the warring nation’s society.

According to Schmitt, enemy construction is definitional to politics. Without an enemy, the political dimension of human community would wither away. “A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without politics.”ⁱⁱ Or, “a world state which embraces the entire globe and all of humanity cannot exist.”ⁱⁱⁱ For prophets relying on the promise of a Kingdom of God or utopians who dream of a single planetary society, this might come as a nightmare. To achieve a global community beyond war would have to be the accomplishment of political effort. But, unfortunately, political effort by definition is divisive and warlike. Like a leopard, politics cannot change its spots.

Scapegoating in its first form is self-justifying because it judges the nation declaring war to be good while doing battle against an enemy who is evil. To fight for what is good is good, no matter how many foreigners die. War against evil creates community at home.

The second form of scapegoating is invisible. As with the first form, the self-justifying nation draws a line between good and evil and places the visible scapegoat on the evil side of that line. However, the nation also scapegoats some members of home society, its friends. America’s scapegoating of its own soldiers also creates community, only it does this invisibly. The theologian can uncover the scapegoat mechanism by uncov-

ering the religious dimensions buried beneath the secular symbol of sacrifice.

The exposing of this second form of scapegoating has been vividly accomplished by Stanford literary scholar, the late René Girard. “We cry ‘scapegoat,’” he writes, “to stigmatize all the phenomena of discrimination—political, ethnic, religious, social, racial, etc.—that we observe about us. We are right. We easily see now that scapegoats multiply wherever human groups seek to lock themselves into a given identity—communal, local, national, ideological, racial, religious, and so on.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Here is the uncanny observation Girard makes regarding the invisible scapegoat: the scapegoat stands on the good side of the line. On the good side of the line, the nation kills its own. “The origin of any cultural order involves a human death and that the decisive death is that of a member of the community.”^{iv} Because the death of the scapegoat is the death of a friend and not an enemy, this death must be designated a sacrifice. A sacrificial death binds the community together around a sacred scapegoat, an invisible scapegoat who becomes ritually victimized in public ceremony and political rhetoric. The scapegoat mechanism must remain invisible for it to be effective in establishing or maintaining communal unity.

To Tillich’s theology of culture I am adding Voegelin’s new science of politics plus Girard’s scapegoat theory. Still, I need to amend Girard’s theory slightly to make it work in political theology.^{lv} My amendment goes like this: we need to distinguish more sharply between a visible scapegoat and an invisible scapegoat. The goat driven into the wilderness in Scripture (Leviticus 15) during the rite of atonement was a visible scapegoat. So also are a nation’s enemies when cursed in political rhetoric and bombed by drones. More difficult to see yet equally vital to social cohesion is the invisible scapegoat. The invisible scapegoat dies, and his or her death becomes interpreted as a sacrifice that yields blessings to the community. In contemporary politics, the visible scapegoat is America’s enemies—Al Qaeda, Iraq, ISIS—who must die in defeat; whereas the invisible scapegoat

is America’s soldier who must die in sacrifice.

The dead soldier is immortalized in civic ritual and political rhetoric that ascribes to him or her the status of hero. The dead soldier allegedly “sacrificed” his or her life for “freedom,” making the place of the casket “holy ground.” The near apotheosis of the fallen warrior buries the lie of self-ascribed sanctity deeper than the ascription of evil to the nation’s enemies. [Some soldiers die in combat and return home in caskets. Others return wounded, while still others return to normalcy. All count in American civil religion, because it is the image or symbol of the soldier—not the actual individual soldier—that plays the scapegoat role.]

Some political theologians, such as Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle, have begun to demythologize the soldier’s sacrifice. “Americans live in a culture that is as religious as any that exists...nationalism is the most powerful religion in the United States, and perhaps in many other countries...both sectarian and national religions organize killing energy by committing devotees to sacrifice themselves to the group.”^{lvi}

Denton-Borhaug sees through the American myth as well. She lifts up for viewing both the visible and the invisible scapegoat targeted in victimage rhetoric. “First...victimage rhetoric demands the sacrifice of the enemy to restore order. But, this is not the end of the sacrificial action. Second, this same language stresses the necessity of the sacrifice that those fighting will need to make in order to vanquish this same evil.”^{lvii} She goes on. “In this symbolic universe, the state becomes an ultimate value to be defended at any cost, and citizenship is revealed by its totalizing idolatrous character. Through our secular faith as U.S. citizens, our identity is affirmed by way of those who sacrifice themselves for the conception and maintenance of the nation.”^{lviii}

In sum, visible and invisible scapegoats provide the self-justification the modern nation-state uses to cloak going to war and exacting its will on foreign peoples. The political theologian needs to work with a definition of *religion* that illuminates the disguised religious substance coming to cultural expression in the national myth or patriotic

narrative. For this methodological opening, I have relied in part on the work of scholars such as Gilkey, Tillich, Cavanaugh, Denton-Borhaug, Voegelin, and Girard. Now, it is almost time to turn specifically to the job by which the political theologian will earn an honest living, namely, the job of analyzing and prophesying. But, before we do this, we need to pause to ask about Catholic substance or, in other words, the role of liberation in society.

The Liberation Critique of Tillich

Does Paul Tillich's theology of culture provide a solid enough foundation for a constructive political theology? We must raise this question because Tillich has been criticized by liberation theologians who themselves work with a political as well as a cultural agenda.

Today's liberation theologians give Tillich mixed reviews. On the one hand, Tillich failed to perceive the nuances in human inequality; he did not address racial and gender inequality. On the other hand, Tillich's understanding of God in Christ provides an ontological foundation for liberation of the poor.

"Tillich's theology on its own cannot provide the liberating spirituality envisioned by feminist theologians," charges Mary Ann Stenger.^{lx} Even though class warfare as depicted in Marxism remained constantly on Tillich's radar screen, more obvious grappling with the plight of the poor or discrimination in race and gender escaped his attention. Tillich did not seem to have a plan for social equality sufficient to produce practical strategies for change.

Jean Richard similarly wrestles with Tillich here. On the one hand, because of his emphasis on the Protestant Principle and prophetic critique, Tillich may have treated too lightly the Catholic substance (*Inhalt*) for a theonomous culture. On the other hand, Richard finds in the early Tillich, the Tillich of Religious Socialism, enough substance to enlist him in support of Roman Catholic Liberation Theology on three points: "First, both the socialist Tillich and liberation theologians start from below, from the masses of the poor. Se-

cond, the humble are the people of God, the heirs of his kingdom...Third, Christ the Savior has identified himself with the masses, so that the saved and the savior become one. Fourth, the sole aim of liberation theology, as well as religious socialism, is the full actualization among the masses of the idea of salvation, which is already there by the grace of God."^{lx} Because God in Christ identifies with the poor, we can rely ontologically on the power of being for social transformation.

With liberation theology in mind, we may have to fill in some holes in Tillich's political boat if it is to remain afloat.

Progress Short of Utopia

The vision of a just society rightly lifted up by our liberation theologians inspires revolution. But, we must guard against the risk of expecting more than what any revolution can itself accomplish. No single political system within history can match the eschatological kingdom that judges history. Yet, human vigilance on behalf of justice can still manifest eternal justice within time, and this provides the Catholic substance to culture. The power of God's eschatological kingdom is operative, though always ambiguously. We can enjoy political progress short of utopia, according to Tillich.

Progress is a justified hope in all moments in which we work for a task and hope that something better and new will replace old goods and old evils. But whenever one evil is conquered, another appears, using the new that is good to support a new evil. The goal of mankind is not progress toward a final stage of perfection; it is the creation of what is possible for [humanity] in each particular state of history...every victory, every particular progress from injustice to more justice, from suffering to more happiness, from hostility to more peace, from separation to more unity anywhere in mankind, is a manifestation of the eternal in time and space.^{lxi}

The constructive political theologian prophetically judges the shortfalls of any given political state, but he or she also rejoices in those moments when eternal life becomes theonomously manifest

within temporal justice.

Analysis Plus Prophecy in Light of the Cross

Religious analysis and prophetic critique are the first two jobs of the normative political theologian. We must add a third: a gospel narrative that counters while incorporating that of the American myth.

It is the dialectic of cross and resurrection presented by the gospel narrative which provides the Christian political theologian with a confidence in the true ultimate, God; this confidence in God eliminates the risk of idolizing the nation. It was the nation—actually, the Roman Empire in cooperation with the local tribute paying Jewish establishment—that was responsible for Jesus' death. This signals that divine glory no longer belongs to those with earthly glory. Rather, it belongs to the humble, to the victimized. The Easter resurrection, combined with the divine promise of an eschatological righting of all wrongs, provides the Christian believer with the criterion by which to render prophetic judgment against all pretenders to glory. Perhaps political theologian Jürgen Moltmann says it most forcefully.

Those who recognize God in the Crucified One see the glory of God only in the face of Christ crucified and no longer in nature, reason, or political achievements. Glory no longer rests upon the heads of the mighty...The theology of the cross radically carries through the prohibition of images—by fundamentally democratizing government. These things usher in eschatological freedom.^{lxii}

The gospel narrative begins with creation and ends with consummation. In the middle of the story is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Also in the story's middle is the time and place of our temporal political life. What happens in our nation-state today is not final or absolute. Rather, our country's history finds its meaning in a larger context, in the comprehensive narrative of creation and redemption.

Conclusion

We have made the case that tacit White House political theology deserves theological analysis. What such analysis uncovers is irony. On the one hand, the worldview presupposed in White House political theology reserves public discourse for secular or non-religious voices, expelling sectarian religious voices to talk only with one another in private. Publicly, the White House embraces the doctrine of pluralism, according to which religion-specific values become subordinated to a supervening national goal: secular unity and harmony. On the other hand, once the self-subordination of religion-specific values has taken place, then the White House proclaims that America itself is a discrete religion on its own.

The White House is like a bank robber. After tying up all the employees and rendering them helpless, the robber goes to the safe and steals the valuables. By tying up every religious tradition in a sectarian pluralism, and by declaring national unity to be secular, the White House then goes to the abandoned safe and steals the power of religious symbols. The nation itself becomes the new religion, but without the name.

America's nationalist religion is not preached literally, of course. Otherwise it would have to join other sectarian religions at the periphery. The American religion must be disguised if it is to remain public and inclusive. Therefore, the religious dimension of American patriotism is connoted and conveyed through stolen symbols pressed into the service of the American myth. This declaration of America as a public religion can be seen only obliquely in civic liturgies. When viewed through the lens of scapegoat theory combined with idol hunting, America's manifest destiny and America's self-ascription of holiness and redemptive power become visible. America is both sacred and salvific, declares its president at civic liturgies, because the blood shed by America's scapegoated soldier is an efficacious sacrifice for freedom.

Only a prophetic critique of American civil society could open our eyes to perceive the hypocrisy of this pseudo-religion which daily kills foreigners and sacrifices its own citizens. What the political theologian offers the larger society is a prophetic judgment that provides leverage for

distinguishing between the false god, the nation, from the true God who equally transcends this and all other nations.^{lxiii}

ⁱ Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006) 218.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 214.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gastón Enrique Espinoza, "Barack Obama's Political Theology: Pluralism, Deliberative Democracy, and the Christian Faith," *Political Theology*, 13:5: 610-633 (2012) 626.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, 628-629.

^v Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008) 21. René Girard, like Žižek, recognizes the culture-specificity of this purported universalism. "Multiculturalism or pluralism, though it does not wish to acknowledge its Western heritage, can be understood only on the basis of... Western thinking about culture in general." *The One by Whom Scandal Comes*, tr., M.B. DeBevoise (East Lansing MI: Michigan State University Press, 2014) 26-27.

^{vi} Paul Tillich, "Dynamics of Faith" (1957) in *Main Works/Hauptwerke*, Carl Heinz Ratschow, editor in chief (6 Volumes: Berlin and New York: De Gruyter—Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1989) 231-290 (251).

^{vii} Tillich, "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God" (1955), *Main Works*, 4:395-405 (397). For the later Tillich, religious idolatry and political ideology overlap. "In religious language this is called idolatry. In political language, it would be called ideology. Thus, as well as ideology suspicion, *idolatry* suspicion is an important critical function of the religious thinker." This according to Brian Donnelly who contends that the later Tillich is as much influenced by Karl Marx as the earlier more socialist Tillich. *The Socialist Emigre: Marxism and the Later Tillich* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 2003) 50.

^{viii} <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/30/remarks-president-memorial-day-service> .

^{ix} President Barack Obama, "State of the Union 2014." <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/president-obamas-2014-state-of-the-union-address-full-transcript/> .

^x William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011) 121.

^{xi} The Daily Show, May 19, 2014; <http://thedailyshow.cc.com/full->

[episodes/r79kxv/may-19--2014---james-mcavoy](http://www.thedailyshow.com/episodes/r79kxv/may-19--2014---james-mcavoy), accessed 5/20/2014.

^{xii} Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy*, 3.

^{xiii} *Ibid.*, 2.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 112.

^{xv} Kelly Denton-Borhaug, *U.S. War Culture, Sacrifice and Salvation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011) 8.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 176.

^{xvii} Ronald Stone, "The Religious Situation and Resistance in 2001," *Religion in the New Millennium: Theology in the Spirit of Paul Tillich*, eds., Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 2001) 55-62 (59).

^{xviii} Paul Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) 8.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, 106.

^{xx} Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (3 volumes: Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963) 3:92.

^{xxi} *Ibid.*, 311, Tillich's italics.

^{xxii} Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture" (1946), *Main Works*, 2:197-208 (201).

^{xxiii} Raymond F. Bulman, "History, Symbolism, and Eternal Life: Tillich's Contribution to Catholic Eschatology," *Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment*, eds., Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1994) 112-130 (116).

^{xxiv} Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, tr., George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922, 1985) 51.

^{xxv} Vincent W. Lloyd, *The Problem with Grace: Reconfiguring Political Theology* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2011) 12.

^{xxvi} Kahn, *Political Theology*, 25, my emphasis.

^{xxvii} Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:39.

^{xxviii} *Ibid.*, 158.

^{xxix} Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993) 29.

^{xxx} William T. Cavanaugh, "Religious Violence as Modern Myth," *Political Theology* 15:6 (November 2014) 486-502 (487) Cavanaugh's italics.

^{xxxi} *Ibid.*, 489.

^{xxxii} Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture" (1946), *Main Works*, 2:197-208 (201).

^{xxxiii} Tillich, "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God" (1955), *Main Works*, 4:395-405 (399).

^{xxxiv} Tillich, "Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur" (1919), *Main Works*, 2:69-86 (73).

^{xxxv} Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture" (1946), *Main Works*, 2:197-208 (200).

^{xxxvi} Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969) 234.

^{xxxvii} Langdon Gilkey, *Society and the Sacred* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) x-xi.

^{xxxviii} Langdon Gilkey, *Through the Tempest: Theological Voyages in a Pluralistic Culture*, ed., Jeff B. Pool (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 47.

^{xxxix} The hermeneutic of secular experience need not be limited to the tacit religious dimension of the nation-state. It can apply to international cultural expressions as well. This includes capitalism. Using Tillich to analyze capitalism in a manner parallel to my use of Tillich to analyze civil religion, Francis Ching-Wah Yip observes, "capitalism as a quasi-religion--indeed a global civil religion--is the religious substance of modernity." *Capitalism as Religion: A Study of Paul Tillich's Interpretation of Modernity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) 165.

^{xl} Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," in *The Book of Concord*, eds., Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 386.

^{xli} Tillich, "Dynamics of Faith," *Main Works*, 5:251.

^{xlii} Paul Tillich, "Justice and Humanity" (May 11, 1942), *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany*, eds., Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998) 25-28 (28).

^{xliii} Eric Voegelin, "Modernity Without Restraint: The Political Religions," *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, 34 Volumes (Baton Rouge LA and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990-1995) 5:28.

^{xliv} *Ibid.*, 32-33.

^{xlv} Eric Voegelin, "The New Science of Politics" (1952), *Ibid.*, 5:75-241(109). Voegelin was his own sharpest critic, frequently changing his mind over his long career. The "new science of politics...was in turn rejected. Voegelin discovered that his own conception of the process of history was vitiated by the very flaw that characterized the ideological philosophies of history he had sought to surpass." Michael Franz, *Eric Voegelin and the Politics of Spiritual Revolt: The Roots of Modern Ideology* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992) 64. Nevertheless, I still find good reason to rely on both the early and later thought of Voegelin insofar as he insightfully analyzes in both the

ancient and modern world the deformation of the spirit at work in political immanentization of the power of transcendental awareness.

^{xlvi} Voegelin, "Political Religions," *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, 5:62.

^{xlvii} *Ibid.*, 65. What Voegelin contributes is a political theology tied to a historical account of human nature. Where he is weak is in practical advice. "Voegelin has left comparatively undeveloped the area of practical political implications. Eugene Webb, *Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History* (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press, 1981) 274.

^{xlviii} Tillich, "The Totalitarian State and the Claims of the Church," *Main Works*, 3:430. On occasion Tillich referred to the prophetic critique as the *Protestant Principle* based on justification by grace through faith. Carl Braaten rightly insists on its essential place in any political theology. "The Protestant principle functions to warn us against expecting to see the Kingdom of God in its fullness in history. It tells us that the human situation is profoundly distorted, rooted in original sin. Original sin is a cleavage in human nature which cannot be overcome by any kind of human liberation praxis." "Paul Tillich's Message for Our Time," *Anglican Theological Review* 72:1 (Winter 1990) 16-25 (20). Whenever a purported theonomous society is prematurely announced and forbids criticism, it leads quickly to self-destruction. Prophetic judgment according to the transcendent Kingdom of God helps prevent this.

^{xlix} Tillich, "Zehn Thesen" (1932), *Main Works*, 3:269-271 (270); cited by Ronald Stone, "The Religious Situation and Resistance in 2001," *Religion in the New Millennium*, 55-62 (56).

^l Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, tr., George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 27.

^{li} *Ibid.*, 35.

^{lii} *Ibid.*, 53.

^{liii} René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, tr. James G. Williams (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2001) 160. Girard does not distinguish as sharply as I do between the visible and the invisible form the scapegoat takes.

^{liv} René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, tr. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972, 1977) 256.

^{lv} Much of this analysis is drawn from Ted Peters, *Sin Boldly! Justifying Faith for Fragile and Broken Souls* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

^{lvi} Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle, "Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Revisiting Civil Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXIV:4 (January 1996) 767-780 (767).

^{lvii} Denton-Borhaug, *U.S. War Culture*, 62.

^{lviii} *Ibid.*, 238.

^{lix} Mary Ann Stenger, "Paul Tillich and the Feminist Critique of Roman Catholic Theology," *Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment*, 174-188 (183).

^{lx} Jean Richard, "The Socialist Tillich and Liberation Theology," *Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment*, 148-173 (167).

LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION IN TILlich'S UNDERSTANDING

DEREK R. NELSON

There are three things I do not like in AAR talks: lists, irony, and lengthy introductions. So, I want to get right to the point. In the mercurial world of academic theology, some dismiss Tillich as being far too predictable, almost passé. What sizzled with novelty in the Christendom of 1950 no longer excites. His success in becoming part of the canon was the cause of his demise. On the other hand, a recent book now under discussion takes up *Retrieving the Radical Tillich*^{lxiv}—not the safe Tillich of the *Dynamics of Faith* but the religious socialism and the Void and the Frankfurt School and all that. I hope that a closer reckoning of the relationship of Tillich to Lutheranism can be an aid in locating his significance in the history of 20th century theology. But I do not want to find Tillich in 1963 and *leave him there*. So, I will end with a quick glimpse at what my findings may have to offer future Lutheran theologians. In fact, both extremes (Tillich the radical and Tillich the WASP) are defensible and true. In most ways, Tillich understood himself to be bringing Luther's program of reform forward and built on key insights the Reformer had or noticed in others. And in other ways, Tillich not only sharply diverges from Luther, but also in fact derives completely different positions on key loci from completely different premises and methods.

I proceed by trying to answer three questions. What did Martin Luther mean to Paul Tillich?

^{lxi} Paul Tillich, "The Right to Hope," in Paul Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, ed., Ronald H. Stone (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990) 182-190 (188).

^{lxii} Jürgen Moltmann, "The Cross and Civil Religion," *Religion and Political Theology*, tr. and ed., Institute of Christian Thought (New York: Harper, 1974) 9-48 (39-40).

What influence did Luther have on Tillich? Finally, in what sense can Paul Tillich be called a Lutheran theologian?

I. What did Martin Luther mean to Paul Tillich?

A number of titles have been ascribed to Martin Luther. But a number of them do not really apply to Tillich's conception of the man and his work. Among his detractors he was regarded as a flunky of the princes, a schismatic with mental illness, and a ham-fisted blusterer whose invective eroded any credibility his theology might have had. Tillich did not see him in any of these ways, even though he basically rejected the so-called "two-kingdoms doctrine" (flunky of the princes), wondered about Luther's psyche in his own constructive writings on psychology, and rejected Luther's rabid late anti-Jewish writings.

Luther was the German Hercules, the Reformer of the University, the father of public education, a biblical scholar, and perhaps above all, a pastor. My recent biography, co-written with the late Timothy Lull, emphasizes especially Luther's own self-understanding as pastor and preacher. Tillich did not see him this way. Tillich's extensive writings on education do not make use of Luther, the reformer of education. He certainly had no time for the Luther of German nationalism.

Though he was deeply historically informed, Tillich did not usually write with the interests or discipline of a historian. So, when he approaches Luther he does so in the service of his own constructive work. He is less interested in Luther as a

figure of the sixteenth century, seeing him instead as a goldmine for the twentieth. And it must be said that, strictly speaking, Tillich was not a scholar of Luther. He did not publish even a single essay about Luther. His reading of the original texts of Luther was not expansive, and focused mostly on the “usual suspects” of the Reformer’s better-known works rather than on the writings of Luther that would have, in fact, been more directly related to Tillich’s own constructive interests.

The availability of texts is another consideration. The Luther Renaissance made available in far higher quality and greater quantity the whole corpus of Luther’s writings. But progress was slow on that project, begun in 1883, in Luther’s 400th birthday year. The first volume came out in 1886, the year Tillich was born. By the time his formative student years were over, just a handful of the volumes were complete, and the project was not finished until 2009. The Luther Renaissance, and those like Tillich that it affected, therefore pays overwhelming attention to the earlier texts of Luther, because the *Weimar Ausgabe* is ordered chronologically. The earlier writings of Luther were studied far more. Tillich’s theology, therefore, owes very little to Luther’s late Christological disputations (I detect virtually no influence of Luther on Tillich’s Christology) or on his subtle Trinitarian theology in the later biblical commentaries, such as on John’s Gospel. I am not aware that Tillich has a doctrine of the Trinity. Does he? Oh, those are probably fighting words, and I do not want to go there.

Tillich wrote a review of Karl Holl’s *Luther Studies*. He describes it as an “event in Luther research, and indeed even beyond that an event in Lutheran Protestantism’s understanding of itself and its original breakthrough. Every word issues from the imposing greatness of Luther, yet not a word is written down without the most solid basis in the sources.”^{lxv} Yet, the review is weirdly lacking in any discussion of particular texts of Luther’s nor even of particular claims Holl says that Luther makes. One of the reasons for this, beyond the fact that Tillich had not read very many of Luther’s texts, is that Tillich was in fact mostly interested in Luther to get ammunition for a critique of the blasé Lutheranism in which he had been reared.^{lxvi} Praising Holl was difficult for Til-

lich, for he also regarded the Luther Renaissance as an epoch in Ritschl’s theological school. And this extends beyond the usual claim that the Luther Renaissance was neo-Kantian in its epistemology that obscured its approach to things like “presence” and “faith” in Luther. It was also associated with the moralizing and subjectivizing moves made in people like Herrmann and Harnack.

Luther’s work is a thus point of departure rather than a destination for Tillich. In his self-reflective work *On the Boundary*, Tillich writes, “The substance of my religion is and remains Lutheran.” He suggests what this means when he writes, that it entails “consciousness of the ‘corruption’ of existence, the repudiation of every social Utopia including, the metaphysics of progress, the knowledge of the irrational demonic character of life, an appreciation of the mythical elements of religion, and a repudiation of Puritan legality in individual and social life.” So to sum up that list, “Lutheran” means sin, evil, demonic, myth, and anarchy. How uplifting.

This (sin evil demon, et. al.) cannot be the whole story because in fact Tillich was deeply indebted in positive, not merely negative ways, to Luther. But when Tillich presented Luther, for instance, in lectures in the United States, he frequently pointed out that his hearers were coming from a Calvinist background, and that he felt they needed to hear Luther’s scathing critique of legalism and faux-progress. And Luther’s sacramental views, which Tillich worried were underdeveloped, helped Tillich think about symbol. Luther’s view of faith surely underlies “ultimate concern.” But you will hear about those issues from others.

II. How Luther Influenced Tillich

Of the many insights of Luther that were certainly crucial for understanding what he meant to Tillich, I will consider three. The first is understanding Luther as a mystic, the second is *Anfechtungen*, or affliction, and the third is the doctrine of God.

Tillich thought of Luther as a kind of mystic. Immediate, inexpressible experience of God colored Luther’s religious life. Mystics as Pseudo-

Bonaventure, Pseudo-Dionysius and Bernard (the one from Clairvaux, not a pseudo!) gave Luther a way to understand living out the ideal of poverty even after he renounced his vow, married, and became a homeowner. And a red-thread of Lutheranism runs through Tillich's philosophical thinking, as well. Not just the well-known influences of Schelling and Kierkegaard, each in his own way a kind of Lutheran thinker, but also Jacob Böhme, whom Tillich called the *philosophus teutonicus*, must be there.^{lxvii} Volker Leppin, Berndt Hamm, and others keep making discoveries about how indebted to mystical tradition Luther was, despite all the lousy things Luther said about Franciscan mystics. They think Luther is himself a major figure in the history of mysticism. It must be said that Tillich was ahead of his time in focusing on that Luther-Böhme-Schelling track.

While he is right to see a continuation of the mystical tradition in Luther, Tillich misses the mystical overtones in concepts like exchange, Christ present in faith, and the daily condemnation of and death to sin that is Christian life. And unfortunately Tillich sees much of Luther's mysticism in terms of our second area, the latter's *Anfechtungen*, or deep afflictions. Here unfortunately, from my point of view, Tillich the existentialist perhaps commits the presentist fallacy, and sees in Luther's *Anfechtungen* a subjectivizing experience of uncertainty and existential Angst, which they were not. Luther's *Anfechtungen* are probably more aptly described in Elaine Scarry's modern classic *The Body in Pain* than in Sartre, Heidegger, or another existentialist. One of the salient features of pain Scarry holds up is how the body's experiencing torment is imprisoned in a kind of never-ending present (I am tempted to call it an "Eternal Now"!) wherein there is no sense of past or future. The torture victim cannot imagine where he was yesterday, cannot think about what he might do tomorrow. That gets closer to Luther than does Tillich's folding in of periodic experiences of doubt into the life of faith.

Tillich, drawing from the Luther Renaissance, saw this as rich subjectivity. Tillich called *Anfechtungen* "an existential" word. Tillich's essay, "The Transmoral Conscience," refers to *Anfechtungen* as "tempting attacks" that express the "state of absolute despair" of "the bad con-

science."^{lxviii} Tillich says that Luther's notion of *Anfechtungen* anticipates "all existentialist philosophy from Pascal and Kierkegaard forward."^{lxix} Tillich says that the presence of God creates the same feeling in Luther that it did in Nietzsche, and that he wants to escape it either through self-mortification or through decide.^{lxx} I think the scholarly consensus is that while interpretations of Luther's *Anfechtung* may in fact have inspired existentialism, that inspiration is based on a misreading of Luther.

The third area I want to briefly explore is the doctrine of God. Tillich's preface to his student John Dillenberger's doctoral dissertation-turned-book, *God Hidden and Revealed*, shows his appreciation for the primary sources Dillenberger investigated. He writes there that he sees no necessary contradiction between God hidden in revelation with God hidden behind or beyond revelation. But it is noteworthy how muted his praise is, and also how little Luther's works on the *deus theologicus*, show up in Tillich's own writings. One scholar who has tried to show a lineage of the doctrine of God from Tillich backward to Schelling, back to Böhme, and back to Luther is Eric Trozzo. He links Tillich's language of God as a dialectical unity of Ground of Being and Abyss of Being—Abyss, with the alpha privative, meaning without bottom.^{lxxi} In Tillich's own words:

We cannot apply the great and powerful words of Luther and Calvin directly to our situation; but we can interpret them—what it really was that drove these men. And I think that what should drive us today, too, is the search for the God who is beyond what we usually call "God" the God who is a ground below all the special beings, including a God who is a special being.^{lxxii}

While I appreciate that there is some overlap between this ontology of God and some of Luther's language, I find this interpretation of Tillich to overlook an important, and indeed *overriding* consideration. He thought of Luther as a voluntarist, as a continuation of Ockham and Scotus in a trajectory that led not to Schelling and Hegel but to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The fact that enough of what Luther wrote about God sounds like "ground of being" is mostly just evidence that Luther wrote enough about God to furnish "evi-

dence” for a variety of projects. Tillich’s notion of God might be Lutheran, but he did not think it came from Luther.

III. Is Tillich Lutheran?

Deciding whether and how Tillich is a Lutheran theologian ends up being a harder task than I thought it would be. Every dictionary article about him or biographical essay starts with, “Tillich, Paul. 1886-1965. Lutheran theologian.” But bare appeals to authority are never good enough. He was ordained into the ministry in the Lutheran church of Brandenburg. But so was the Nazi Bishop Ludwig Muller and no one claims him as a Lutheran theologian!

Wondering about this even caused a little existential panic in my own life. Tillich was not officially affiliated with any particular Lutheran congregation while teaching theology in the US. Neither am I. The names of great confessional Lutherans like Calov and Quenstedt, and even Melancthon, do not pepper the indices of Tillich’s books. Mine either. In a sense, he grew up and came of age in a Lutheran-infused cultural milieu wherein generic Protestant sensibilities were assumed, but very rarely well articulated. So did I. So there was some panic! But I am feeling better now.

Tillich’s non-association with churchly institutions was common among the upper echelon thinkers among his peers. For instance, his colleague and biographer Wilhelm Pauck joined the Congregational Church and was part of the discussions to join the Congregationalist Church to the E and R to form the UCC. He made the rather curious statement that he was confident that had von Harnack and Troeltsch made a move to the United States as Pauck had, then they would have made the same decision Pauck did. He thought that it afforded greater “freedom” than did any of the Lutheran churches that were available to be joined. He had been a member of the Evangelische Kirche in Germany (not the Reformed branch), but was ordained a Congregationalist in 1928. I do not know the reasons for Tillich’s relative disinterest in the institutions of the Lutheran church during his time in America. Many causes are possible. Maybe he did not want

the moral scrutiny that goes with church leadership. Maybe he did not see an advantage to it. Maybe being part of one would be seen as a slight to another. On this, we have to remain in mystery.

So, was Tillich a Lutheran? In answering this, I will take recourse to that paragon of American theological reflection, *The Simpsons*. One day Ned Flanders walks into the pastor’s office and asks, “Reverend Lovejoy, is God punishing me for something I have done?” Lovejoy thinks for a bit and replies, “Short answer: no, with an ‘if.’ Long answer, Yes, with a ‘but.’” So is Tillich really Lutheran? Short answer is no, if the hallmark of Lutheranism is the strength of its institutions and local congregations. He was not really a part of this, and in fact viewed it with some suspicion. The feeling was mutual. His great sermons were preached mostly in university chapels. He stayed mostly out of church politics. While he was a frequent visitor and lecturer at Lutheran colleges and seminaries, he intentionally remained peripheral to this world.

The longer, better answer is “yes with a ‘but.’” And the “but” is that Tillich was beginning to see a Lutheranism that was more of a movement, and less of a church. As so many Protestant institutions struggle and even fail, they show themselves to be etch-a-sketch institutions in an I-Pad world, as my bishop likes to say. We may need to learn from Tillich here. Can confessional subscription, for instance, be reconceived so that is not like a ticket to a Lutheran event. Instead, it might be a kind of basic orientation one maintains while serving in non-Lutheran organizations, such as I do.

Paul Tillich is a Lutheran theologian, but his mid-20th century Lutheranism will be more like mid-21st century realities. In this way as in so many others, he was ahead of his time.

^{lxiv} Russell Re Manning, ed., *Retrieving the Radical Tillich: His Legacy and Contemporary Importance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

^{lxv} *Vossische Zeitung* 381 (1922), 2.

^{lxvi} See the article on Luther Renaissance by Heinrich Assel in Derek R. Nelson and Paul Hinlicky, eds., *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Martin Luther* (New York: Oxford U. P., forthcoming in 2017).

^{lxvii} *On the Boundary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 74-5.

^{lxviii} *Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 145-6.

^{lxix} "Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition in the Reformation," *Theologische Schriften* (Berlin: De Gruyter Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1992), 6:340.

^{lxx} "The Escape from God," in *Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribners, 1955), 44.

^{lxxi} Eric Trozzo, *Rupturing Eschatology: Divine Glory and the Silence of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

^{lxxii} "Der Protestantismus als Kritik und Gestaltung," in *Theologische Schriften*, Berlin: De Gruyter Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1993), 7.185.

**FAITHFUL EXPECTATION:
HOMMAGE À PAUL TILlich**

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Half a century ago, Paul Tillich passed away in 1965. At that time, he was by all counts the leading and most highly esteemed Protestant theologian in America. In the meantime, many things have happened—among them the Cold War, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, and finally the rise of ISIS. In the course of these events, Tillich's legacy increasingly faded from view. It is true that today there are efforts to revitalize that legacy and to bring to the foreground the "radical" and forward-pointing elements of his work. However, with some notable exceptions, the effort is undertaken mainly by professional theologians with the aim of "radicalizing" his *theological* teachings.^{lxxiii} What tends to be forgotten is that, for Tillich, religious faith was always closely entwined with culture and social conditions, which means that, apart from being a theologian, he was also a public intellectual trying to take the "pulse of his age." It is this linkage of faith and social reality that, in my view, is at the heart of Tillich's work. If this is

correct (as I believe), then revitalizing his work cannot be left solely to theologians and experts in religious studies, but must be shouldered also by humanists and social scientists, including political philosophers. In fact, I want to claim that his continued relevance depends on that collaboration.

Viewed from this perspective, Tillich's work in large measure emerges as "untimely" or "out of season"; it is situated at a steep angle to modern society and modern Western culture (what Heidegger called modern "metaphysics"). This does not mean that he was an "outsider" or that his thought arose out of "nowhere" (he was clearly rooted in the Christian tradition). Rather, his entire work can be seen as the result of an intense critical struggle with some dominant thought patterns or worldviews of modernity. Without such engagement and struggle, all high-sounding words like "God" or "perennial ideas" were for him *flatus vocis* or empty sounds, devoid of grounding in human experience. At the same time, while always exploring experiential warrants, Tillich was unwilling to surrender himself to "worldliness" or the changing fashions of the day. In this respect, his outlook resonated in many ways with the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* penned by Horkheimer and Adorno, his one-time colleagues in Frankfurt. In the following, I want to examine some of the "untimely," and, to this extent, "radical" features of Tillich's work, considered as the product of a public intellectual-cum-theologian. Three aspects will be highlighted: his defense of "religious socialism"; his "dialectical" political theology; and his portrayal of both the promises and the dangers of the emerging global culture.

"Religious Socialism"

One of the more astonishing aspects of his revitalization today is the relatively scant attention being paid to his "socialist" roots and commit-

ments. No doubt, this fact has something to do with the taboo character of the term “socialism” in America. Still, one may wonder about the extent of the theologians’ accommodation on this issue. It is true that, during his time in America (especially the postwar “red scare” period), Tillich himself considerably toned down and even avoided direct references to socialism or socialist agendas. However, he never directly recanted or repudiated his socialist texts that were written mostly before his emigration. In fact, one can say that, until the very end of his life, there was a strong current or under-current of socialist sensibilities—and this quite in keeping with his view of the healing and bonding character of religion. To be sure, one has to note the distinctive meaning of “socialism” for Tillich. It surely had nothing in common with the materialistic collectivism that, under the label of “communism,” had emerged in the Soviet Union. To mark the difference, Tillich preferred the phrase “religious socialism.” But, even here, caution is required. The phrase did not imply a social system guided by or operating under the tutelage of an established Church—an arrangement which would violate a basic cornerstone of modern democracy: the separation—or better, differentiation—of church and state.^{lxiv}

Tillich’s socialist leanings emerged first in the heady months after World War I when Germany was in the throes of radical change. The German Emperor abdicated in December 1918 and the Protestant (Evangelical) Church—a main pillar of the Empire—was in disarray. A dissident church movement (calling itself the “New Church Alliance”) arose at that time, and Tillich was immediately attracted to it. The movement issued a programmatic statement, signed by Tillich, which charted a clear pathway to the future. Among the main points of the statement were these: support for the emerging “republican” or democratic regime infused by a “farsighted socialism” where the “personal worth” of each member would be upheld over against the “capitalist egotism” of the Bismarck period; alignment with the international peace movement in opposition to nationalism and militarism; and finally, construction of an international league to replace the old system of brute power politics. Tillich did not remain for long in that movement, but continued to present lectures

in the same dissident spirit—much to the dismay of old-style Protestants desiring to regain their “established” status. Distilling the gist of these speeches, Tillich, joined by a friend, in mid-1919 issued a report under title “Socialism as a Question of the Church.” The report (I rely on Ronald Stone’s summary) insisted that Christian faith is not purely transcendental or otherworldly; nor does it counsel a purely personal or inward retreat. Rather, in accord with gospel teachings, it necessarily has a social impact and relevance: its spirit favors some social arrangements over others. Specifically, Christianity bears a closer affinity with socialism than with capitalism (at least in its monopolistic form). This affinity is demonstrated by the tendency of industrial capitalism to support militarism and war, in opposition to Christian teachings and practices.^{lxv}

A year later, in 1920, Tillich joined a new group in Berlin that proved to be even more congenial to his religious commitment: the “*Kairos* Circle” where he served as a leader for four years. Bringing together a number of socially engaged intellectuals from several academic disciplines, the Circle was mainly concerned with such issues as: the relation of faith and society; the connection between the eternal and the temporal or historical; and the nature and goal of socialist society. The crucial topic, of course, was pinpointed by the term “*kairos*,” meaning “right time” or fulfilled time: How can the eternal or divine penetrate into the temporal? How can the sacred manifest itself in the secular or social? As Tillich stated in a lead essay in 1922, the term implies a call or a demand issued to temporality or history from the “depth of the Unconditional”—where the latter reflects an absolute or “ultimate concern.” Issuing from a level transcending all particular time, such a call is contained in the biblical *Shemah Israel*: “Thou shalt love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, *all* your mind, and *all* your being”—to which is added the co-equal demand to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Only where these two demands, which are one, are fully heard and followed can one speak of the possibility of a “*kairos*.” For Tillich, the period after World War I bore the mark of a possible “*kairos*”: in the form of “religious socialism” that brings together the love of God and the love of fellow-beings in the world. To be sure, in

kairological terms, the absolute or “Unconditional” can never be fully temporalized or fulfilled *in* history, but remains a prophetic demand. To this extent, the ultimate “Kingdom of God” is not simply a historical event.^{lxxvi}

This kairological theme was further explored by Tillich a year later in a major essay titled “Basic Principles of Religious Socialism.” The essay delves immediately into the difficult relation of the two poles: the sacred (vertical) and the temporal (horizontal). In the analysis of a given social situation, Tillich remarks, two basic perspectives can be distinguished: the “sacramental attitude” that shuns history; and the “rationalist” or “historically critical attitude.” The first outlook clings resolutely to “the presence of the divine”; the second seeks to analyze what is happening from a purely human and “critical rational” vantage. In contrast to both of these outlooks, religious socialism in Tillich’s account adopts a “prophetic attitude” which finds the unity of the sacred and the temporal in their tensional relation: “Propheticism grasp the coming of what *should be* from its living connection with the present that is given” (that is, the potential in its connection with the actual). For religious socialism, he adds, the prophetic outlook is “essential.” For, it must recognize that “the presence of the Unconditional is the *prius* of all conditioned social action”; or that “unconditioned meaning is the *prius* to *all* forms of meaning.” Here the kairological aspect emerges. “We have used the word *Kairos*,” Tillich states, “for the content of the prophetic view of history. It signifies a moment of time filled with unconditioned meaning and demand.” As he explains: *Kairos* does not contain a “prediction” of the future; nor does it signify a merely abstract demand or postulated “ideal.” Rather, it denotes “the fulfilled moment of time in which the present and the future, the holy that is given and the holy that is demanded meet, and from whose concrete tension the new creation proceeds.”^{lxxvii}

In the remainder of the essay, the goal or *telos* of religious socialism is more fully elaborated. In this context, Tillich introduces a terminology which has become a trademark of this thought: the triadic distinction between “autonomy,” “heteronomy,” and “theonomy.” Like most modern thinkers, the theologian appreciates human “au-

tonomy” when seen as a bulwark against all forms of political, cultural, and clerical domination, that is, against oppressive “heteronomy.” Taken in this sense, autonomy refers to the creative, liberating élan captured in Kant’s “*sapere aude!*” However, when self-centered and pursued without limits, this élan can also take on destructive features—which Tillich describes as “demonic.” Unleashed in the political domain, the demonic potential takes the form of a “this-worldly utopianism” exemplified by chauvinistic nationalism or fascism and Stalinist communism. In opposition to these derailments, some people glorify submission to heteronomy, sometimes backed up divine authority. This glorification can also foster “demonic” aberrations, especially an “otherworldly utopianism” exemplified by “theocratic movements” where the “absolute rule of God” or the “sovereignty of the Unconditional” is directly imposed on society. By contrast, to these dystopias, “theonomy” for Tillich seeks to correlate the sacred and the temporal and, to this extent, preserves the “prophetic” outlook on history. Wedded to this correlation, religious socialism necessarily maintains an ambivalent, “dialectical” relation to society: it contains within itself a prophetic “No” to the actual situation, but also “Yes” to the potential. It takes its stand against both otherworldly and this-worldly “demonies.”^{lxxviii}

To be sure, religious socialism for Tillich was not a fixed doctrine or party platform, but a tentative formula open to revisions and corrections. As it happened, the growing fragility of the Weimar Republic prompted him to accept the need for a more robust political engagement. In 1929, he joined the Social Democratic Party and endorsed some of its “realistic” policies.^{lxxix} To some extent, one can surmise, his outlook was also influenced by his move to Frankfurt in 1929 where, as professor at the university (succeeding Max Scheler), he came in close contact with the Institute for Social Research most of whose members shared left-Hegelian or “humanist Marxist” leanings. According to Ronald Stone, Tillich at that time became even “more directly involved in active socialist politics than most Frankfurt theorists.”^{lxxx} The intellectual high point of his engagement, however, came in early 1933 with the publication of *The Socialist Decision*—shortly before the Nazi

take-over that triggered his dismissal and emigration.

By all accounts, *The Socialist Decision* is one of Tillich's major mature works—a chef-d'oeuvre of both political theology and political philosophy. As he makes it clear in his "Foreword," the book seeks to profile and concretize further the meaning of "religious socialism" used in his earlier writings. This effort was needed in view of the perilous condition of Europe and Germany at the time: the rise of extremist political movements on the Right and Left, accompanied by violent clashes. In the face of these perils, Tillich stated, it was only "by a common socialist decision that the fate of death now hanging over the peoples of Europe can be averted." Hence, a strong commitment to socialism of some kind was imperative. The issue, of course, was the character of this commitment. For Tillich, socialism could not be identified with "scientism" or the belief in necessary social progress; nor could Marxism be equated with Stalinist communism. *The Socialist Decision* aimed to correct prevalent misconstruals: "It holds fast to Marxism and defends it against the pure activism of a younger generation; but it also rejects the scientism and dogmatic materialism of an older generation." More precisely, this means that the text harkens back to the "real Marx," that is, the "humanist" Marx, and a concept of dialectic where "necessity and freedom are conjoined." Regarding the "religious" element, Tillich's stance coincides with a "moderately prophetic" outlook (shunning all dogmatism or orthodoxy). "Socialism," the Foreword concludes, "has to be sober in its analysis, and sober in the attitude of 'expectation' it assumes...[It] requires the clearest, most sober realism—though it must be a 'faithful realism' (*gläubiger Realismus*), a realism of expectation."^{lxxxii}

In its opening section, the text lays the groundwork of the study by sketching the outlines of a philosophical anthropology largely derived from existentialist teachings. As Tillich states firmly: "The roots of political thought must be sought in human being itself—but this human being is internally split or in tension, namely, between its past (*whence*) and its future (*whither*). Tillich calls the former "origin" or "natural being" and the second "freedom" and "consciousness." Genuine political thinking, he elaborates, must

proceed on this tensional basis and find its roots "simultaneously in 'being' and consciousness"—a dual anchorage captured in Heidegger's depiction of human *Dasein* as "thrown project." Differently put, one must recognize that human life "proceeds in a tension between [thrown] dependence on the origin and [projected] independence." From a political angle, it is important to note that the natural roots of existence (*whence*) have itself a dual status: it can be salutary and enabling or else confining and repressing. In the latter case, natural being gives rise to the "myth of origin," which, according to Tillich, is "the root of all conservative and Romantic thought in politics." In opposition to a nostalgic "return to the womb," consciousness confronts human existence with an "unconditional demand": the demand to shape its own future (*whither*) freely and without dependence. This rupture with the past is "the root of liberal, democratic, and socialist thought in politics," that is, the root of Western modernity. However, cut loose from all dependence, liberal modernity also shatters the mutual dependence between human beings as well as the interdependence of humanity and nature, leading to intense strife on all levels. Hence, a new stage has to be found—the stage of "socialism"—where the enabling potency of the origin can be enlisted for a renewed "just" interdependence: "Justice is the 'true' power of being; in it the (enabling) intention of the origin is fulfilled."^{lxxxii}

As indicated in its opening pages, the aim of the study is to develop a political philosophy of history coupled with hints of soteriology. In the present context, only the main lines of the argument can briefly be traced. As mentioned before, "political Romanticism" for Tillich signals a return to the past through the erection of a static "myth of origin" where the repressive aspect of the origin comes to cancel its enabling side. The first break with the myth occurred in Judaism, especially in the prophetic tradition where "time was elevated above space" through the forecast of a "new heaven and new earth." As Tillich notes, however, the break was not complete because the prophetic message and historical Judaism cannot be equated. In fact, there has always been a struggle between Old Testament prophetism and the persistent lure of the "origin" in the form of Jew-

ish nationalism.^{lxxxiii} The second break with myth occurred in the European Enlightenment that liberated “autonomous consciousness” by suppressing the dimension of the origin and even the “depth dimension of existence” altogether. At this point, particular things or objects in their finitude became the chief targets of scientific “knowledge and manipulation.” Before proceeding, Tillich distinguishes between two types of political Romanticism: a “reactionary” or conservative and a “revolutionary” or populist type. The first type appeals mainly to older elites, like nobles, landowners, and high clergy while the second caters to people alienated from bourgeois modernity and seeking relief in myths and rituals. The second type—against which the book is directed—is “revolutionary” only in the sense of fashioning a new mythology, like the Nazi myth of the “Third Reich,” while canceling or suppressing all elements of modern autonomy or emancipation.^{lxxxiv}

The ensuing chapters deal respectively with Western modernity, the rise of bourgeois society with its intrinsic antinomies, and the prospect of a socialist overcoming or “sublation” of antinomies. As Tillich observes, in Western modernity, the myth of origin was shattered by the two prongs of Protestantism and Enlightenment: the former discarding medieval religious bonds, the second removing political and intellectual forms of heteronomy. Launched by these two prongs, modern bourgeois society ushered in the sway of “autonomous this-worldliness.” Emerging from the “dissolution” of all prior conditions, bourgeois society involves the triumph of a human-centered project that “subjugates an objectified world to its own purposes.” In its optimistic self-understanding, modern “liberal” society claims to guarantee social equilibrium and harmony—a claim that is spurious. For, by subjugating the “objectified world,” this society creates an antinomy between humanity and nature and, in its linkage with capitalism, a class division between rich and poor. Moreover, antagonisms of this kind spill over from domestic society into the international arena, leading to colonial struggles between the West and non-West, between center and periphery. All these diremptions cry out for resolution—which cannot be found in the confines of bourgeois modernity. What socialism brings is a radical

change of paradigm, a leap from the actual condition to the reign of potentiality. In doing so, socialism recaptures the “enabling” spirit of the “origin” with its promise of just relationships. To this extent, its aim is not merely to overcome class division and exploitation, but rather to end dehumanization and the reification of the world in all its dimensions.^{lxxxv}

What even this brief summary should convey is the bold analytical grasp and the continued relevance of Tillich’s study. Although penned during the Weimar Republic’s plunge into collapse, its analytical categories have lost little of their cogency and disturbing quality. To some extent—one might say—the cultural and political afflictions of Weimar are haunting the contemporary world on a global scale. There is still the lure of “political Romanticism” both in the form of old-style cultural and religious elitism and in the more radical guise of nationalistic and quasi-fascist populism. And there is the massive presence of globalized financial capitalism with its offshoots of domestic division between rich and poor (1% and 99%) and the worldwide contrast between North and South, between center and periphery. Finally, there are rumblings, here and there, of a paradigm shift heralding transformation and a better future. On all these levels, Tillich’s text was uncannily farsighted. It also was pioneering on a strictly philosophical level: in many ways, his book anticipated by a decade Max Horkheimer’s and Theodor Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (composed in 1943). Like that work, *The Socialist Decision* was “dialectical” in character—not in the sense of a logically grounded Hegelian teleology but of Adorno’s “negative dialectics” where the future is a sheltered expectation.^{lxxxvi} There was one further sign of far-sightedness in *The Socialist Decision*. Toward the end, Tillich writes this lapidary sentence: “The salvation of European society from a return to barbarism lies in the hands of socialism.”^{lxxxvii} As it happened, this return to barbarism was just around the corner.

Dialectical Theology

Despite initial hesitations, in 1933 Tillich emigrated from Germany to New York where he joined the Union Theological Seminary. With this

move, Tillich entered the “New World”—but also in many ways a world that was new and alien to him. Clearly, despite some cultural overlaps, U.S. America at the time was not Weimar Germany where his formative experiences were rooted. For one thing, the political and ideological spectrum in America was more uniform or narrow than in Weimar. Basically, the American regime was shaped by British-style “liberalism” which had initially emerged in opposition to old-style Tory conservatism. In the course of America’s development, the older Tory elements—to the extent they existed—blended steadily into the dominant liberal-bourgeois structure (adding only occasional cultural reservations). Thus, America left little or no room for the “reactionary Romanticism” Tillich had described. On the other hand, Tillich’s “populist Romanticism” was at best an undercurrent and held in abeyance for the time being. What occupied center-stage in America was the “bourgeois-liberal” principle in its alliance with industrial and financial capitalism. From the vantage of this dominant ideology, the chief political and economic enemy was—more than fascism—the current of socialism and communism, often with little effort to distinguish the various branches. Given this ideological situation, Tillich, as a prominent “socialist émigré,” was in some quandary or dilemma. The quandary was intensified by the fact that Tillich himself regarded socialism not as an abstract ideal but as a concrete movement growing out of real-life experiences and needs. However, in the absence of a viable workers’ movement, how was it possible to make a “socialist decision”?^{lxxxviii}

Viewed from this angle, Tillich’s so-called “retreat” from politics into theology in America—an aspect sometimes praised, sometimes bemoaned—gains at least some plausibility and intelligibility. Clearly, his initial condition in the country was delicate as a resident alien; he did not become a citizen until 1940. Moreover, as he frequently stated, he came to America not only to preach but also to learn and absorb what is valuable. Most importantly, the period after 1933 proved to be very challenging for him precisely as theologian. The situation of Christian churches in Germany at that time was extremely precarious—a condition he observed attentively and anxiously.

There was a concerted effort on the part of the Nazi regime to co-opt Christian, especially Protestant, churches—an effort that was to some extent deplorably successful, especially among so-called “German Christians.” As a theologian who had always stressed the linkage of religion and social life, Tillich was compelled to profile his position more clearly. The Swiss theologian Karl Barth had made a sharp cut between religion and the “world,” between the sacred and the profane—a cut which tended to exile churches to a “holy mountain” while leaving the secular realm stranded. Given his long-standing “kairological” leanings, Tillich could not accept this dichotomy that, in effect, weakened or undercut the “prophetic” quality of faith. As he came to see, the German situation exemplified the need for a more adequate “dialectical” theology, that is, a theology which resists both the “politicization” or political cooptation of religion and its “privatization” in the inner lives of believers.^{lxxxix}

As one should note, the term “dialectical” here has a special meaning. Basically, the term is not a purely logical formula, but rather the emblem of a concrete struggle and experiential engagement. For Tillich, the Barthian dichotomy of sacred and profane could not be resolved through a simple fusion or amalgamation. Rather, the two categories or dimensions had to be recognized as distinct—but distinct precisely in their correlation and mutual contestation. In this view, the sacred or divine confronts everything profane or secular with a prophetic judgment; in turn, the secular prevents the divine from evaporating into abstract idealism or wishful thinking. As previously indicated, Tillich’s “dialectics” stands on the shoulders of Hegel’s philosophy—but minus the latter’s idealist teleology or eschatology. The same relation obtains to Marx’s work—where “orthodox” historical determinism gives way to “humanist” praxis. As also indicated, Tillich’s argument resembles in some ways Adorno’s “negative dialectics”—not consciously but by way of serendipity. One major influence that needs to be mentioned—and which he always acknowledged—is the work of Friedrich Schelling who, in a way, had concretized Hegel by elaborating a dialectic between “existence” and “essence,” actuality and potentiality, or between life and spirit. Significant

impulses also derive from Schelling's theory of the "world ages," from his distinction between enabling and repressive "origin" or nature, and his notion of sequentially correlated "potencies." As Tillich observes at one point: "Only Schelling ...recognized that reality is not only the manifestation of pure essence (spirit) but also of its contradiction and, above all, that human existence itself is an expression of the contradiction of essence."^{xc}

Of course, dialectics in Tillich's sense was not always easy to maintain in the American context because of the close interpenetration of culture and religion. Despite the official separation of church and state, religion over the years had been tightly co-opted by popular culture and the "American way of life"—so tightly as to render a prophetic judgment of culture nearly impossible. Christianity in particular has been the target of massive co-optation, to the point that some writers have been able to portray Jesus as a "national icon" and American Christian faith as part of the "marketplace of culture."^{xcii} Religion, however, pervades not only the domestic market in America, but spills over into foreign policy and global agendas. Social theorist Tzvetan Todorov speaks correctly in this context about the proclivity of American culture to promote global "millenarianism" or "messianism"—a proclivity that, in some quarters, boils over into a hankering for Armageddon or the "end time" of history. When this happens, religion turns into a weapon of violence and global domination; in Tillich's vocabulary, faith decays from an enabling and salvific potency into a "demonic" force of destruction. In the words of H. Richard Niebuhr, another leading theologian: "When closely allied with emperors and governors, merchants and entrepreneurs," and living "at peace in culture," faith "loses its force, corruption enters with idolatry, and the church...suffers corruption in turn."^{xciii}

Throughout his three decades in America, Tillich remained close to the sentiments expressed by Niebuhr and, to this extent, remained faithful to theological "dialectics." During the 1930s, he repeatedly visited Europe, trying to alert people in numerous talks to the terrible dangers of "populist Romanticism," that is, fascism, while also holding up the vision of a better future. A notice-

able undercurrent in his speeches was the idea of "religious socialism," though often couched in new vocabulary. In 1937, he presented a lecture at an ecumenical conference in Oxford on the theme: "The Kingdom of God and History." In this lecture, the notion of the "Kingdom" was clearly a prophetic symbol and an antidote to the derailments of the time. For Tillich, the notion is lodged at the cusp of immanence and transcendence, of history and trans-history—which is the proper locus of a dialectical theology. Seen from this angle, history as such is not meaningful, but receives its meaning from a deeper potentiality. Differently and more theologically put: world history is not itself salvific, but salvation is the meaning and promise of world history. In Tillich's words: "The Kingdom of God is a symbolic expression of the ultimate meaning of existence. The social and political character of this symbol indicates a special relation between the ultimate meaning of existence and the ultimate meaning of human history." Apart from disclosing an ultimate horizon, the Kingdom also embodies a prophetic judgment of the derailments or "demonic" forces operating in history, in particular the forces of fascist nationalism, monopolistic capitalism, and collectivist Bolshevism. In trying to find a concrete historical agency carrying forward the trans-historical *telos*, Tillich invoked again the idea of "religious socialism" seen now as an immanent warrant of a divinely transcendent purpose.^{xciii}

Some of the strategic implications of religiously socialist leanings were spelled out by Tillich roughly at the same time in any essay dealing with Christian churches and Marxism. As he pointed out, churches were on the completely quite ignorant of Marxist teachings; a first step hence should be an effort to acquaint oneself and "acquire an exact knowledge" of these teachings. Once this is done, it becomes possible to discern the ambivalent character of Marxism, that is, to distinguish the "enabling" and forward-looking aspects from the more sinister and "demonic" features. The latter features were obvious in Stalinist Bolshevism—and were almost exclusively stressed in public discussion. On the enabling side, however, a different picture emerges: for Tillich, Christians actually could find allies in Marxists critical of fascist nationalism and exploi-

tative capitalism. Viewed from this perspective, Marxism emerges as a “secularized and politicized form of Christian propheticism.” To be sure, a caveat needs to be observed: Christian propheticism can never be simply collapsed into an immanent movement, whether Marxist or communist or Christian socialist: “The practical strategy of the Church as a whole is a continuous attempt to make herself a representation and *anticipation* of the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.” Yet, churches cannot simply abscond: they have to testify and give witness to the *promise* of the Kingdom here and now. To this extent, their task is to find the right dialectical balance between “religious reservation from history and religious obligation toward history.”^{xciiv}

Such a balanced posture became particularly urgent with the onset of World War II in 1939. Throughout the war years, Tillich engaged himself actively on the side of the allied powers, given that its struggle was chiefly aimed at the defeat of fascism. As is well known, the theologian beamed a large number of radio messages across the ocean to Germany, in the hope of weakening the Nazi regime.^{xciv} However, one should also note certain distinctive accents in his perception of “war aims.” Above all, in Tillich’s view, the war was strictly a struggle against fascism, and not a prelude for a global campaign against communism, represented at the time by the Soviet Union. Faithful to his Christian-socialist commitments, he hoped that the outcome of the war would lead to a cleansing of dominant ideologies in both the West and the East, in the sense that capitalism would be cured of its monopolistic tendencies and Russian communism of its collectivist and anti-humanist traits.^{xcvi} In the midst of his concrete engagements, to be sure, Tillich never forgot about necessary prophetic correctives in political life. A major articulation of propheticism can be found in his formulation of a set of “Protestant Principles” in 1942—a formulation that is dialectical through and through. Its starting point is that Protestantism affirms “the absolute majesty of God alone” and rejects any co-optation of the divine by worldly powers. At the same time, the statement opposes the expulsion of the divine from the world and hence the rigid “sepa-

ration of a sacred from a secular realm.” Overall, while not endorsing any simple fusion or blending, Protestantism maintains the dialectical linkage of religion and culture, and thus calls into question the dichotomy of “religious transcendence and cultural immanence.”^{xcvii}

The end of World War II brought the defeat of Nazi Germany, which Tillich had actively promoted. But the aftermath also brought a stalemate between the superpowers, and thus ushered in the prolongation of the conflict between liberal capitalism and communism that Tillich had feared. This prolongation was disappointing for him on many levels, especially with regard to his hopes for European and German reconstruction. As chairman of a “Council for a Democratic Germany,” established in 1944, Tillich argued for global détente, more specifically for cooperation between the West and Russia as a necessary precondition for European revival and the rebuilding of Germany as a whole. The harsh realities of the ensuing Cold War put an end to these hopes.^{xcviii} In the midst of the immense tribulations of the period, Tillich found the time to write a thoughtful general assessment of the prevailing historical constellation, under the title “The World Situation.” In its social and political analysis, the text in many ways was an updated version of *The Socialist Decision*. Despite the resounding defeat of German fascism, the world for Tillich was still in the throes of the familiar constellation of social forces and ideological doctrines, especially the clash between bourgeois-capitalist structures and various socialist or communist counter-forces. As he wrote: The present world situation is “the outcome of the rise, the triumph, and the crisis of what we may term ‘bourgeois society.’” The development of that society occurred over several centuries and through a number of revolutions. Yet, precisely in its triumph or victory, bourgeois society has revealed its dialectical “underside,” that is, the “disintegration” of social life exemplified by class struggle, ethnic struggles and other conflicts all over the world.^{xcix}

Although living at the time in the heartland of “bourgeois society,” Tillich was not reticent in his critique. In his view, the foundation of that socie-

ty had broken down, namely, “the conviction of automatic harmony between individual interest and the general interest.” What had become obvious was that the principle of harmony was true only to a limited degree and under especially favorable circumstances. These circumstances were not present in the context of monopoly capitalism.

Various strategies have been attempted to remedy the problem; but most have ended in totalitarianism fascist or communist. For Tillich, the imperative need of the “world situation” was to shun these false remedies without accepting the illness itself: that is, to avoid “both totalitarian absolutism and extreme liberal individualism.” In terms of economic organization, the basic question for him was: “Shall humankind return to the monopolistic structure from which our present economic, political and psychological disintegration has resulted?” Or else: “Shall humankind go forward to an integrated economy which is neither totalitarian nor in the service of war?” Here, the idea of religious socialism resolutely makes its comeback. “Christianity,” Tillich writes, “must support plans for economic reorganization which promise to overcome the antithesis of [totalitarian] absolutism and selfish individualism”; it must insist “that the virtually infinite productive capacities of humankind shall be used for the advantage of everyone, instead of being restricted and wasted for the profit interests of a controlling minority.” Moving beyond the domestic economic context, Tillich’s text stressed the relevance of religious socialism also in the broad global arena by pointing a way beyond clashing national sovereignties. Just as domestically a reflectively shared “way of life” was needed, the cultivation of a “common spirit” also was required to sustain the world beyond exploitation and domination.^c

Religious Socialism or Barbarism

In its appeal to humankind, Tillich’s text of 1945 was stirring and fully in accord with the demands of propheticism. Here is a sentence which deserves to be lifted up—and to be repeated and reaffirmed seventy years later: “Christianity must

declare that, in the next period of history, those political forms are right which are able to produce and maintain a community in which chronic fear of a miserable and meaningless life for the masses is abolished, and in which everyone participates creatively in the self-realization of the community, whether local, national, regional, or international.” What needs to be added is that, already in the cited text, Tillich did not entrust the fostering of a future community solely to Christian churches; in a genuinely “ecumenical” and even cosmopolitan spirit, he was ready to enlist other world religions and indeed all ethical orientations in the common global endeavor. As the conclusion of the text stated: “The Christian church can speak authoritatively and effectively in our world today only if it is truly ‘ecumenical,’ that is, universal.”^{ci} One of the prominent features of the remaining decades of Tillich’s life was precisely this ecumenical or cosmopolitan outreach, manifest in his growing preoccupation with the teachings of non-Western religious and philosophical traditions. A particularly noteworthy episode—somewhat unsettling for the Christian theologian—was his sustained encounter with Zen Buddhism. But this encounter was only one illustration of his broader engagement with the prospect of a future world community.^{ci}

During much of the postwar period, Tillich refrained again from actively participating in public life in his new homeland.^{ciii} In fact, he committed himself strongly, and almost exclusively, to his theological work, especially the elaboration of his *magnum opus*, *Systematic Theology* (whose first volume was published in 1951, its second in 1957, and its third and final volume in 1963). To be sure, devoting himself to theological work did not mean in Tillich’s case a complete retreat from the world—something which would have gone against the very grain of his theology: his dialectical linkage of faith and culture. What his “systematic” work entailed was not a shunning of worldly ties, but a strengthening of the prophetic dimension of genuine faith. Thus, the hope for a future world community was increasingly and emphatically couched in the language of prophetic expectation: the promise of the “Kingdom of God”—a

promise which had been eloquently invoked in his essay of 1938 in these words: "The Kingdom of God is the dynamic fulfillment of the ultimate meaning of existence against the contradictions [and demonic derailments] of existence." The same promise had remained a recessed *leitmotiv* during all his later writings. It surged forth powerfully in the final part of the last volume of *Systematic Theology* that carries the title "History and the Kingdom of God."^{civ}

As is clear from preceding discussions; the Kingdom of God and history in Tillich's thought are linked in a tensional relation. Simply put: the Kingdom is not simply an event in worldly history, nor is it purely otherworldly. If it were part of history, if it would lose its character as prophetic judgment; if it were otherworldly, it would lose its quality as a promise for humanity. Stressing his dialectical approach, Tillich writes: the Kingdom "has an inner-historical and a trans-historical side. As inner-historical, it participates in the dynamics of history; as trans-historical, it addresses the ambiguities of this dynamics." Differently stated: the Kingdom holds immanence and transcendence in delicate balance. The same delicate balance is also captured in the expression "history of salvation," an expression which points to "a sequence of events in which saving power breaks into historical processes—prepared for by these processes to that it can be received—changing them to enable the saving power to be effective in history." In salvation history, sacred and secular dimensions converge in the sense that history shows its "self-transcending character," its striving toward "ultimate fulfillment." As Tillich concedes, the meeting of sacred and secular elements is not always salvific, but can also lead to derailments, especially the absorption of the sacred by the "world." Throughout the centuries, this has often happened in Christian churches. These churches, he states, "which represent the Kingdom of God in its fight against the forces of profanation and demonization are themselves subject to the ambiguities of history and thus open to profanation and demonization." Here resolute liberating struggles are needed, and have been fought on many occasions: "Such fights can lead to reformation

movements, and it is the fact of such movements which gives the churches some right to consider themselves vehicles of the Kingdom of God, struggling in history."^{civ}

As should be clear, salvation history is not just the history of Christianity or Christian churches, but also the ultimate meaning of the history of humanity as a whole. Here Tillich returns to his deeper dialectical reflections, partly inspired by Schelling: the distinction between essence and existence, between original "ground" and ultimate end. Seen in these terms, human history means the movement from the pure potency of "being" to steadily intensified existential actualization. This move to actuality, however, brings with it the counter-move of ambiguity: the danger of "demonic" diremptions and derailments. This danger engenders the desire for a "return to origins"—but this return is blocked by the upsurge of the repressive (or "negative") side of the origin. Hence, the salvific road is one of transformation through and beyond actuality, thus moving from original potency to a higher potency, from original enabling "being" to a purified or "New Being," from "temporal" to "eternal life." Once the Kingdom of God is viewed as the "end of history," Tillich writes, one perceives that "the ever present 'end of history' elevates the positive [enabling] content of history into eternity at the same time that it excludes the negative [demonic] from participating in it...Eternal life, then, includes the positive content of history, liberated from its negative distortions and fulfilled in its potentialities." History here is general or universal "*human* history," though with a prophetic proviso: "The transition from the temporal to the eternal, the 'end' of the temporal, is not a temporal event—just as creation is not a temporal event. Time is the form of the created finite, and eternity is the inner aim, the *telos* of creation, permanently elevating the finite into itself."^{cvi}

The image of the Kingdom of God, as invoked by Tillich, is profoundly gripping and elevating. So is his portrayal of eternal or divine life—which he says, is marked by "eternal blessedness," though it is achieved through "fight and victory." Before being carried away by this por-

trayal, however, one should remember that Tillich was never an airy utopian neglectful of real-life calamities and experiences. The entire course of his life was overshadowed by dramatic calamities and “demonic” or near-demonic historical derailments. Thus, the blessed life in the Kingdom is silhouetted in his work against the backdrop of immensely destructive, life-denying forces, especially the apocalyptic danger of nuclear destruction of the world. Already at the end of World War II, Tillich joined a “Commission on Christian Conscience and Weapons of Mass Destruction,” a group which denounced as unacceptable and “demonic” the idea of launching “preventive war” in the absence of aggression. The Commission also pleaded strongly against any “first use” of nuclear weapons and any military action that, in the unfolding Cold War, would drive the superpowers into nuclear confrontation.^{cvi} In some of his own speeches and writings during the postwar period, Tillich rejected the idea of a “just” nuclear war, arguing that starting a war with the intent of using nuclear weapons was both illegitimate and foolish (since there is no “winnable nuclear war”). In 1954, partly on the urging of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, he wrote a forceful indictment of the “Hydrogen Bomb” which included these statements: “The increasing and apparently unlimited power of the means of self-destruction in human hands puts before us the question of the ultimate meaning of this development...Everyone who is aware of the possibility of humankind’s self-destruction must resist this possibility to the utmost: For life and history have an eternal dimension.”^{cviii}

What emerges here, now on a global level, is the stark opposition evoked at the end of *The Socialist Decision*: the opposition between “socialism (religiously conceived) and barbarism.” The most stirring condemnation of the demonic conflict unleashed in our time was written by Tillich soon after the war, when the world was still under the immediate impact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; it is called “The Shaking of the Foundations.” The text is preceded by citations from Jeremiah and Isaiah, especially this citation (Isaiah 24:18-19): “The foundations of the earth do shake. Earth

breaks to pieces, is split into pieces, shakes to pieces. Earth reels like a drunken man, rocks like a hammock.” As Tillich comments: the prophets described with visionary power what a great number of human beings have experienced in our time, and “what, perhaps in the not too distant future, all humankind will experience abundantly.” Thus, the visions of the prophets have become “an actual, physical possibility,” the phrase “Earth is split into pieces” is not a poetic metaphor but “a hard reality” today: “This is the religious meaning of the age into which we have entered.” To be sure, there have always been destructive forces in the world; but, in the past, they were constrained and more than counter-balanced by enabling potencies. Thus, the “unruly power” of the world was bound up by “cohesive structures”; the “fiery chaos of the beginning” was transformed into “the fertile soil of the earth.” But in modernity something happened: humankind has discovered the key to “unlock the forces of the ground,” that is, incredibly destructive forces. Human beings have subjected ‘the basis of life and thought to *their* will”—and they “willed destruction.” This is “why the foundations of the earth rock and shake in our time.”^{cix}

To some extent, modern science enabled humanity to unlock the “forces of the ground.” But, Tillich adds, it was not science as enabling knowledge, as self-critical inquiry. Rather, it was science wedded to a “hidden idolatry,” to the belief in the earth as “the place for the establishment of the Kingdom of God,” and in ourselves as “the agents through whom this was to be achieved.” It was this idolatrous science, preaching the bliss of humanly fabricated “progress,” which has given to humanity “the power to annihilate itself and the world.” Unfortunately, preachers of earthly bliss usually find open or receptive ears, while prophetic voices pointing to dangers ahead tend to be shunned. Often prophetic voices are denounced as heralds of doom and sometimes even called disloyal or unpatriotic. However, Tillich asks, “is it a sign of patriotism or of confidence in one’s people, its institutions and ways of life, to be silent when the foundations are shaking? Is the expression of optimism, whether justified or not,

really more valuable than the expression of truth, even if the truth is deep and dark?" At this point, Tillich addresses himself directly to his readers and hearers, issuing an urgent wake-up call: "In which of these groups do you belong—among those who respond to the prophetic spirit, or among those who close their ears and hearts to it?" His text leaves no doubt about his own position and commitments. "In these days," he concludes, when "the foundations of the earth *do* shake," let us "*not* turn our eyes away; let us *not* close our ears and our mouths! But may we rather see, through the crumbling of a world, the rock of eternity and the salvation which has no end."^{cx}

Tillich's plea, I believe, still addresses us today. The dangers or calamities of which he warned have not ceased or disappeared; on the contrary, our world today is inundated by a massive avalanche of calamities and disasters. Wherever one looks, one finds turbulence, mayhem, orgies of bloodshed, an array of wars, proxy wars, hybrid wars. In the midst of all this, there is the emergence of something like a new Cold War, pitting against each other superpowers armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons—a confrontation where the smallest miscalculation can produce apocalypse.^{cxii} And behind this, there is the division or "splitting" of the world into hostile classes, races, tribes, and religions. Do we not already hear the rumbling of the "shaking of the foundations"? In this situation, what will be our position: will we close or open our hearts and minds? Are we still willing to listen to Tillich's summons? As we should note, Tillich's is a prophetic, but also a gentle voice; it is not a shrill voice hankering for Armageddon. As Ronald Stone says correctly: Tillich maintained trust in the Kingdom of God that comes "through acts of truth, love, and caring commitment." His hope was not for the privileged and "exceptional" few, but for a "reunion with God and *all* of creation." As far as worldly life in history is concerned, Stone adds, he continued to believe in "his vision of a moderate, democratic religious socialism." It was to him the best antidote to the mounting dangers of a new barbarism, and the most promising avenue toward justice and global peace if pursued with faithful

expectation.^{cxiii}

^{lxxxiii}. A prominent example of this revitalizing effort to Russell Re Manning, ed., *Retrieving the Radical Tillich* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2015). However, almost all the chapters in that volume are written by theologians or professors of religious studies. As Manning points out in his "Introduction," the effort is mainly to show Tillich's relevance to contemporary "radical theology" (from "death of God" theology to postmodernism and beyond). But despite the "multi-systematic" character (p. 7) of Tillich's thought, he admits (p. 15), "there is too little work in radical theology that actually does engage with practical matters such as the realities of economic injustice, sexism, and racism." Hence there is a "disjunction between theory and practice in the majority of radical theology."

^{lxxxiv}. As Ronald H. Stone notes: In 1918, in the immediate aftermath of World War I, Tillich "signed a statement by one of the minor groups supporting the separation of church and state. See his *Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), p. 40. Regarding the "healing" quality of the gospels compare Tillich's statement: "Because the Christian message is the message of salvation and because salvation means healing, the message of healing in every sense of the word is appropriate to our situation." See "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," in F. Forrester Church, ed., *The Essential Tillich* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 109.

^{lxxxv}. Stone, *Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought*, 42-43.

^{lxxxvi}. In Stone's perceptive interpretation: "The age of spirit (Joachim) and the classless society (Marx) are not to be thought of as final stages; they too are subject to criticism and transformation . . . Fulfillment is found in the vertical dimension of history; on the horizontal level, fulfillment is always fragmentary." See *Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought*, pp. 50-51.

^{lxxxvii}. Tillich, "Basic Principles of Religious Socialism," in James Luther Adams, ed., *Paul Tillich: Political Expectation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 58-61.

^{lxxxviii}. "Basic Principles of Religious Socialism," pp. 62-64, 66-68. As Tillich adds (p. 72): "The theonomous goal is an attitude in which 'autonomous' forms, freed from sacramental [sacriligious?] distortion, are in turn freed from those naturalistically demonic distor-

tions that enter in to empty them, and are filled with the import of the Unconditional.”

^{lxxxix}. As Stone remarks: “The idea of *Kairos* would remain central to his philosophy of society, but later reflection on the class struggle and continuing discussion with social philosophers in Dresden and Frankfurt would produce a more *immanent* religious socialism and a more realistic political outlook.” See *Paul Tillich’s Radical Social Thought*, p. 53 (Note: Tillich moved from Berlin to Marburg in 1924, to Dresden and Leipzig in 1925, and to Frankfurt in 1929). Stone refers to some important writings of the mid-1920’s which reflect the more “realist” trend: “The Religious Situation of the Present Time” (1926; very critical of the anti-religious “spirit of capitalist society”), and “Faithful Realism” (1927/28). Compare also Tillich, “Religious Socialism” (dating from 1930), where we read: “Religious socialism adopts the decisive intention of Marxist anthropology and radicalizes it by shedding those elements of Marxism that are derived from bourgeois materialism and idealism... [It] stands fundamentally on the ground of Marx’s analysis of capitalist society.” See Adams, *Paul Tillich: Political Expectation*, 46, 48.

^{lxxx}. Stone, *Paul Tillich’s Radical Social Thought*, p. 64.

^{lxxxii}. Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman (Eugene, OK: Wipf and Stock, 2012), pp. xxxi-xxxiv, xxxvi-xxxvii.

^{lxxxiii}. The *Socialist Decision*, pp. 1-6.

^{lxxxiii}. As Tillich writes, somewhat provocatively (p. 22): “The actual life of the Jewish nation, like the actual life of every nation, is by nature pagan... In fact, the Old Testament writings are a continuous testimony to the struggle of prophetic Judaism against pagan, national Judaism... The ‘Jewish problem’ can only be solved by a decisive affirmation of the prophetic attack on the dominion of the myth of origin and all thinking bound to space.”

^{lxxxiv}. *The Socialist Decision*, pp. 23-24, 27, 42-44. Curiously, in discussing “political Romanticism,” Tillich does not mention Carl Schmitt’s book *Political Romanticism*, first published in 1919, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), where the phrase basically designates a sentimental-aesthetic outlook. Curiously, Schmitt himself defended a “political conservatism” which in many ways corresponds to Tillich’s “conservative Romanticism.”

^{lxxxv}. *The Socialist Decision*, pp. 47-49, 51-52, 69. As Tillich writes (pp. 99-100): The socialist movement is “the reaction of the element of the ‘human’ in the proletariat against the threat of total human subjugation

because of economic objectification... The proletariat and the bond of origin, therefore, are not in contradiction.” As he emphasizes, seen as a potential, socialism is not just a party program or fixed panacea, but rather a prophetic “expectation” (p. 132): “Socialism, at least in principle, must look beyond itself and its own achievement of a new social order. Socialism is not the end (*telos*) of socialism’s striving... Expectation is always bound to the concrete, and at the same time transcends every instance of the concrete.”

^{lxxxvi}. In Tillich’s words (p. 108): “Hegel’s philosophy of history... is a faith in providence expressed in rational form. He vehemently opposed a demand that is alien to being, a morality that violates life... Hegel spoiled his own concept by identifying a particular form of being as the tangible fulfillment of Being.” As he adds (p. 109), Marx preserved Hegel’s opposition to alienation: “The promise of socialism grows out of the analysis of being itself.” However, Marx often limited himself to the level of a “purely economic analysis.” Still, some of his writings anticipate the idea of re-humanization or a “real humanism.” See in this context also Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1972); also Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).

^{lxxxvii}. Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, p. 161. The motto of “Socialism or Barbarism” had been used by Rosa Luxemburg during World War I in her so-called “Junius Pamphlet” of 1916. The motto was later used by a group of French intellectuals under the leadership of Cornelius Castoriadis. Compare also Istvan Meszáros, *Socialism or Barbarism: From the “American Century” to the Crossroads* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001).

^{lxxxviii}. Compare in this context Brian Donnelly, *The Socialist Emigré: Marxism and the Later Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003). Tillich was quite aware of his emigré status that he considered as a religious experience. As he writes in his autobiography: “The command to go from one’s country is more often a call to break with ruling authorities and prevailing social and political patterns, and to resist them passively or actively. It is a demand for ‘spiritual emigration’, the Christian community’s attitude toward the Roman Empire... I began to be an ‘emigrant’ personally and spiritually long before I actually left my homeland.” [See *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1966), 92-93.]

^{lxxxix}. For a critique of Barthian “dialectical theory” see especially Tillich, “What is Wrong with the Dialectic

tic Theology” (1935), in Mark K. Taylor, ed., *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries* (London: Collins Publ., 1987), pp. 104-116. On the derailments of faith through either politicization or privatization see my “Religion and the World: The Quest for Justice and Peace,” in my *Integral Pluralism: Beyond Culture Wars* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), pp. 85-104.

^{xc.} Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 83. Regarding Marxism he writes (pp. 85, 89): “I owe to Marx an insight into the ideological character not only of idealism but also of all systems of thought, religious and secular, which serve power structures and thus prevent, even unconsciously, a more just organization of reality... But Marxism has not only an ‘unmasking’ effect, it involves also a demand and expectation and, as such, it has had and continues to have a tremendous impact on history.” Regarding Schelling compare Max Werner, *The Philosophy of F.W.J. Schelling: History, System, and Freedom*, trans. Thomas Nenon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); also my “Nature and Spirit: Schelling,” in my *Return to Nature: An Ecological Counter History* (Lexington, KY: University Press 2011), pp. 33-52.

^{xc.} See Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003); Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Market-place of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); also William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

^{xcii.} See H. Richard Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and Francis Miller, *The Church against the World* (New York: Willet, Clark, 1935), 128. Compare also Tzvetan Todorov, *The Inner Enemies of Democracy*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014), pp. 29-77, especially p. 77: “Morality and justice placed at the service of state policy actually harm morality and justice, turning them into mere tools in the hands of the powerful... Messianism, this policy carried out on behalf of the good and the just, does both a disservice.”

^{xciii.} See Tillich, “The Kingdom of God and History,” in H. G. Wood et al., eds., *The Kingdom of God and History* (Chicago, IL: Willett, Clark, 1938), 116-117. As he states on the latter point (p. 109): Religious socialism “starts with the insight that the bourgeois-capitalist epoch of Western development has reached the stage of a most radical transformation which may mean the end of that epoch altogether... The religious interpretation of history has two roots—a religious-transcendent root, the Christian message of the King-

dom of God, and a political-immanent root, the socialist interpretation of the present. The former supplies the principles and criteria, the latter the material and concrete application. This bi-polar [dialectical] method is essential for any religious interpretation of history.”

^{xciv.} Tillich, “The Church and Communism,” in *Religion in Life*, vol. 6, No. 3 (1937), pp. 347, 350, 357.

^{xcv.} See Tillich, *An meine deutschen Freunde* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1973); also Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver, eds., *Against the Third Reich* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998).

^{xcvi.} See Tillich, *War Aims* (New York: Protestant Digest, 1941). In the words of Ronald Stone: “Tillich revealed his fears that, after the war, the Leviathan of an uncaring, monopolistic capitalism would be enforced on Europe. Capitalism in control of technology would foster the dehumanization process that nurtured Nazism... (In his view) a new order would require transforming the present technical-rationalistic manipulation of the human world into a new political-spiritual reality... He expressed his fears that Europe would be reduced to a colonial hinterland of the emerging superpowers.” See *Paul Tillich’s Radical Social Thought*, p. 106.

^{xcvii.} Tillich, “Protestant Principles,” in *The Protestant*, vol. 4, No. 5 (April-May 1942), 17-18. As Stone remarks perceptively: For Tillich “the essence of Protestantism, or prophetic religion, is the dual recognition of the transcendence and immanence of God. All of life has a religious base, but life itself is not divine. Religion has two senses: its special proclamation of its vision of God, and the denial that its special proclamation is absolute.” See *Paul Tillich’s Radical Social Thought*, p. 100.

^{xcviii.} As Tillich stated in his “A Program for a Democratic Germany”: “Only through the cooperation between the Western powers and Russia will it be possible to achieve the reconstruction of Europe which must follow the necessary and certain defeat of Hitler Germany.” See Ronald Stone, ed., *Theology of Peace: Paul Tillich* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 105. As Stone comments at another point regarding the Council: “What policy it had depended on a united Germany and some cooperation between the U.S. and the USSR. With division and antagonism, it had no program. With the imposition of military rule and the return of monopoly capitalism [in West Germany] after the war, Tillich’s dream of a liberating religious socialism had almost no chance for realization.” He also mentions that Tillich was “black-

listed by the U.S. Army” for a while. See *Paul Tillich: Radical Social Thought*, 108.

^{xcix}. Tillich, “The World Situation” (1945), in *Theology of Peace: Paul Tillich*, 112.

^c. “The World Situation,” 116, 118, 132-133, 138.

^{ci}. “The World Situation,” 136, 156.

^{cii}. See in the context Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); also Jeffrey Small, *God as the Ground of Being: Tillich and Buddhism in Dialogue* (Cologne, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2009).

^{ciii}. As Stone writes: “During the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-60), Tillich was less politically active than before as he pushed to finish his *Systematic Theology*... Nonetheless, he endorsed the candidacy of John F. Kennedy and was present at his inauguration... The news of Kennedy’s assassination in November 1963 reached him while he was in Europe and saddened him deeply.” (See his “On the Boundary of Utopia and Politics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, 216.)

^{civ}. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3: *Life and the Spirit; History and Kingdom of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

^{cv}. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3: 357, 361, 363, 377.

^{cvi}. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3: 97, 399.

^{cvii}. See *The Christian Conscience and Weapons of Mass Destruction* (New York: Federal Council of Churches in America, 1950).

^{cviii}. See “The Hydrogen Bomb,” in Stone, ed., *Theology of a Peace*, pp. 158-159. In his *Paul Tillich’s Radical Thought*, Stone provides some historical background to this statement (125-126), indicating that it was published in the *New York Times* on November 15, 1957 and again used by SANE in 1961. Stone also mentions some of Tillich’s other public activities in the last years of his life (p. 127): “He threw his efforts behind a group working to repeal the McCarran (Immigration and Nationality) Act. He signed statements calling for the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee. He lent the use of his name to groups promoting civil rights for blacks. He joined Donald M. Fraser’s committee working for open housing in 1965 ... [He] joined other religious leaders in urging caution during the Cuban missile crisis.”

^{cix}. Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), 2-3.

^{cx}. *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 6-7, 9-11.

^{cxii}. Compare in this context my *Against Apocalypse: Recovering Humanity’s Wholeness* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016).

^{cxiii}. Stone, “On the Boundary of Utopia and Politics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, p. 219. As Stone adds (pp. 219-220): “His is a testimony of personal religious solace grounded in love, action and moments of religious experience. His political outlook was critical and restless: his critique of the pretensions of National Socialism drove him out of Germany, and his critique of American oligarchic rule, nuclear defense policies, foreign policy towards Germany and militarism gained him the enmity of the FBI and regressive forces in the United States.” Compare also Francis Ching-Wah Yip, *Capitalism as Religion? A Study of Paul Tillich’s Interpretation of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Theological Studies, 2010) which discusses Tillich’s “critique of capitalist modernity,” pointing to affinities of this critique with the early Frankfurt School. The book also seeks to “update” Tillich’s work from the angle of the ongoing process of globalization.

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