



BULLETIN

The North American Paul Tillich Society

Volume XLIII, Number 3

Summer 2017

Editor: Frederick J. Parrella, Secretary-Treasurer

Religious Studies Department, Santa Clara University

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

Associate Editor: Jonathan Rothchild, Loyola Marymount University

Assistant to the Editor: Vicky Gonzalez, Santa Clara University

Telephone: 408.554.4714 or 408.554.4547

FAX: 408.554.2387

Email: fparrella@scu.edu

Web: www.NAPTS.org/Webmeister: Michael Burch, San Rafael, California

In this issue:

- Words from the Editor
- New Publications
- The German and French Societies' Meeting at Jena in September
- In Memoriam: A. Durwood Foster
- "Political Theology as Healing: A Response to Ted Peters" by Adam Pryor
- "The God Above The God of Theory of Mind: A Tillichian Approach to Autism and the Personal God" by Nathaniel Holmes, Jr.
- "Paul Tillich's Theological Legacy: Critical Insights for Actualization" by Guido Olliana

If you have presented a paper at the 2016 meeting of the NAPTS or the AAR Tillich Group in San Antonio, Texas, please send the paper to the editor for publication in the Bulletin. Since this is a privately circulated Bulletin, publication elsewhere is permissible.

WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

FREDERICK J. PARRELLA

Here we are in the lazy, hazy days of summer, with the dog days of August soon approaching. For some of you, it is time to enjoy the last of the August weekends in the Hamptons or in one of the 10,000 lakes in Minnesota, or that

beach house somewhere between Malibu and Santa Barbara on the Pacific.

Wherever you are now, be sure you have a good mystery novel or some fiction or poetry you have been longing to read among the academic books you have with you. Many of you will be writing papers for the meeting of the German and French Tillich Societies in early September in Jena. Others will be preparing a paper for a Tillich

conference in Seoul in mid-October.

Wherever members of the North American Paul Tillich Society are this summer, they share something in common: **it is time to pay dues for the calendar year of 2017.** Please remit your check as soon as possible to:

Prof. Frederick J Parrella
Secretary Treasurer/ NAPTS
Religious Studies Department
Santa Clara University
500 E. El Camino Real

Santa Clara, CA 95053

The amount is \$60 for full-time membership, \$20 for full-time graduate students. *Those members of the society who are retired may pay according to their means.*

If you have questions, please contact me by email, text, or phone.

Many thanks as always.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Paul Tillich, *Dresdner Vorlesungen (1925-1927). Ergänzungs und Nachlassbaende zu den Gesammelten Werken XX.* Herausgegeben und mit einer Historischen Einleitung versehen von Erdmann Sturm. Verlag Walter de Gruyter GmbH Berlin/Boston 2017. LXX + 455 pages.

THE EUROPEAN SOCIETIES' MEETING AT JENA, GERMANY IN SEPTEMBER

Editors' Note: I am happy to include information about the meeting in Jena in September sponsored by the French-speaking Tillich Society (APTEF) and the German-speaking Tillich Society (DPTG)



Nouvelles
Juin 2017

Chères et chers membres de l'APTEF
Notre missive d'octobre dernier faisait écho à notre prochain colloque qui se tiendra à Jena en septembre prochain. Vous trouverez dans ce bulletin le programme à ce jour ainsi que quelques informations pratiques. La vie associative des membres est dynamique

et ce bulletin y fait aussi écho: nouvelles publications, soutenances de thèse, etc. Voici donc les informations sur la vie de notre association et sur la recherche tillichienne. Profitez-en et diffusez-là à travers vos réseaux !

Le prochain colloque de l'APTEF arrive à grands pas!

Sur le thème « Réformation et Révolution », notre colloque international réunira des membres de plusieurs associations sœurs de l'APTEF, dont la DPTG et la NAPTS, qui sont aussi coorganisatrices de l'événement. Des membres des associations brésiliennes et néerlandaises furent aussi invités à célébrer le 500^e anniversaire de la Réformation. Notre colloque aura lieu du **3 au 6 septembre 2017** à la **Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Jéna**. Les membres du comité scientifique sont Christian Danz, Martin Leiner, Marc Boss. Déjà un grand merci de cette collaboration internationale ! Nous vous attendons tous en grand nombre !

Voici le programme à ce jour :

Dimanche, le 3 Septembre

18.30	Salutations et introduction	
19.00	Conférence d'ouverture avec Hans Joas, suivie d'une discussion	
	Réception	

Lundi, 4 septembre

9.00 - 10.00	Marc Dumas, <i>Théologie systématique</i> et Révolution?		
10.00 - 11.00	Martin Leiner, Reformation und Revolution im Rahmen von Entfremdung und Versöhnung		
	Pause café		
11.30 - 12.30	Mary Ann Stenger, The Protestant Principle as Ongoing Reformation		
	Lunch		
14.00 - 14.45	Lon Weaver, The Faithful Practice of Reformation	Raymond Asmar, La croix et le « principe protestant »	Stefan Dienstbeck, Ecclesia semper reformanda. Tillich's Geistge-

	mation: Resistance and Utopia in Tillich's Thought	entre Luther et Tillich	meinschaft zwischen kerygmatischem Anspruch und prophetischem Durchbruch
15.00-15.45	Sorin-Avram Virdop, Beyond Ultimate Concern	Miguel Ángel Ramírez Cordón, La Conception du Mysticisme comme Dispositif interne du Mouvement Protestant: Le cas de la Lecture de la Philosophie de Schelling par Tillich	Axel Siegemund, Paul Tillichs Fundamentalismuskritik als Beitrag zur Selbstvergewisserung der Religion angesichts ihrer Politisierung in der Moderne
Paus e café			
16.15-17.00	Jari Ristiniemi, Life, Being, and Spirit in Tillich's Differential Monism; Presuppositions and Consequences	Jean-Paul Niyigena, Rapports à la Tradition en Afrique et enjeux théologiques	Michael Windisch, Die Geschichtswirksamkeit des Religiösen Sozialismus: Zwei Konzepte schöpferischer Prophetie bei Paul Tillich und Oskar Ewald
17.15-18.00	Christian Roy, The German Reformation as European Revolution for Tillich and Rosenstock-Huessy	Gabriella Laione, Relire Paul Tillich dans la crise de l'Europe contemporaine. Pertinence politique, anthropologique et sotériologique	Benedikt Brunner, Reformation und Reform in „revolutionärer“ Zeit. Paul Tillichs historischer Ort in den Reformdebatten der „langen 1960er Jahre“
Paus e			
19.00	Podium		

0	Erbe und Zukunft des religiösen Sozialismus Ramelow, Joas, Leiner (Moderation), Ruddies
---	--

Mardi, 5 Septembre

9.00-10.00	Anne Marie Reijnen, Nolens Volens: How much did Luther want the Reformation?		
10.05 - 11.00	Christian Danz, Reformation und Revolution. Paul Tillichs Deutung des Protestantismus		
Paus e café			
11.30 - 12.30	Pierre Gisel, NN		
Lunc h			
14.00 - 14.45	Sektionsvortrag 5 (e)	Theo Junker, Trois avant-coureurs de la Renaissance européenne du 16e siècle : Erasme, Luther, Rabelais. Eloge de la folie; De la liberté chrétienne ; Gargantua et Pantagruel.	Katharina Wörns, Das Verhältnis von Zweideutigkeit und Revolution
15.00 - 15.45	Sektionsvortrag 6 (e)	Etienne Higuette, Le protestantisme au Brésil entre le conservatisme et la transformation sociale	Martin Fritz, Kritik und Gestalt. Tillichs Ringen um eine protestantische Form religiöser Positivität
Paus e café			
16.15 - 17.00	Sektionsvortrag 7 (e)	Geoffrey Legrand, Réformation pour penser à neuf la pastorale scolaire en Belgique francophone	Gregor Schäfer, Ursprung und Sprung: Zu Tillichs politischer Theologie der Revolution im Ausgang

		grâce à l'œuvre de Paul Tillich	Fichtes
17.15 - 18.00	Sektionsvortrag 8 (e)	Benoit Mathot, Le kitsch kundérien : clé de lecture pour la compréhension des notions de « révolution » et de « réformation » chez Paul Tillich	Henning Theißen, Symbole des virtuellen Abendlandes. Reformatorische Theologie vor dem Problem einer postfaktischen Medienrevolution
Paus e			
19.00	Visite de la ville en trois groupes selon la langue (français, anglais et allemand) Bracht, #		

Mercredi, 6 septembre

9.00-10.00	M. Rose, NN		
10.05 - 11.00	Erdmann Sturm, Der Durchbruch des Unbedingten und das Problem seiner Aufnahme und Verwirklichung		
Paus e café			
11.30 - 12.30	Franz. Vortrag		
Lunc h			
14.00 - 14.45	Lars Heine- mann, Radikale politische Op- tion und radikale Denkfiguren beim frühen Tillich (1917- 1923)	Sek- tionsvortrag 9 (fr)	Naomi Miya- zaki, Refor- mation und Revolution in der Wahr- nehmung Paul Tillichs
15.00 - 15.45	Harald Ma- tern, Theolo- gie der Reformation als politische Theologie.	Sek- tionsvortrag 10 (fr)	Marcus Held, Das Imaginäre. Eine erkundende Re-Lektüre

	Zur religiösen und ethischen Dimension der „Reformation“ bei Karl Barth und Paul Tillich		der Möglich- keit von Revolution und Refor- mation bei Paul Tillich durch die Theorie- Brille von Cornelius Castoriadis
Paus e café			
16.15 - 17.00	Peter Haigis, Geistesges- chichte und/oder/ver- sus Heilsges- chichte – Zur Dynamik der Geschichte und ihrer the- ologischen Interpretation bei Paul Til- lich	Sek- tionsvortrag 11 (fr)	Burkard Nonnen- macher, Til- lichs „gläubiger Realismus“ im Span- nungsfeld von Refor- mation und Revolution
17.15 - 18.00	Conférence conclusive		
Paus e			
19.00	Assemblée générale de l'APTEF		

Informations pratiques. Le comité organisateur recommande les hôtels suivants :

1. Gasthaus Schwarzer Bär: hotel@schwarzer-baer-jena.de oder Tel. 03641/40600 (65 € avec petit déj.)
 2. Gasthaus „Zur Noll“: Zur.noll@t-online.de oder Tel: 03641/59779 (60 € + 7 € petit déj.)
 3. Hotel am Paradies: hotelamparadies@mail.de oder Tel. 03641/6395627 (50 € + 3 € petit déj.)
- D'autres informations pratiques suivront.

Soutenances

Félicitations au nouveau docteur! Voir :

www.aptef.org/nouvelles-tillichiennes

Raymond Asmar, du Liban, a soutenu publiquement sa thèse pour l'obtention du grade de docteur en philosophie, à l'Université Friedrich-Schiller Iéna (Allemagne). Elle est intuitu-

lée « Positivité d'être et négativité de non-être dans l'oeuvre de Paul Tillich ».

Publications de nos travaux!

Marc Dumas, Jean Richard, Bryan Wagoner (dir.), *Les ambiguïtés de la vie selon Paul Tillich. Travaux issus du XXI^e colloque international de l'Association Paul Tillich d'expression française*, (Tillich Research, 9), Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2017, 399p.

Notez que les membres en règles de l'APTEF qui voudront se procurer le volume auront droit à une réduction de 50%. Nous avertir de votre intérêt en écrivant à Benoît Mathot, afin que nous puissions faire un achat de groupe.

Étienne Higuët a publié un numéro de revue sous format électronique, dans lequel plusieurs contributions de nos membres s'y trouvent : Jean Richard, Mary-Ann Stenger, Michel Dion, Claude Perrottet, Etienne Higuët, Elisabeth de Bourqueney, Marcela Lobo et Benoît Mathot. Voici le lien vers les publications dans *Estudos de Religiao* : [v. 30, n. 3 \(2016\)](#)

Décès

Le père Claude Geffré est décédé le 9 février dernier. Il était un ami de plusieurs d'entre nous et avait participé à plusieurs de nos colloques Tillich. Voir le lien de la nouvelle sur le Figaro :

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2017/02/09/97001-20170209FILWW00354-mort-du-grand-theologien-claude-geffre.php>

Site web/onction depuis une bonne année. N'hésitez pas à l'alimenter en nous faisant parvenir du matériel pertinent. L'objectif est de promouvoir la recherche sur Tillich, d'y diffuser études et documents, et d'informer de la vie de l'association. Jetez-y un coup d'œil et vous constaterez comment il peut contenir une mine d'informations et devenir une ressource documentaire de plus en plus détaillée! Le site web (www.aptef.org) et Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/association.paul.tillich>) sont deux moyens importants pour diffuser l'information sur les activités à venir de l'APTEF et de ses membres. Photos, textes de nos anciens colloques, annonces de nos publications sont aussi colligés, ce qui nous permet d'imaginer que le site web deviendra une ressource électronique importante pour orienter dans l'espace francophone les curieux et passionnés de la vie et de l'oeuvre de

Paul Tillich.

Cotisation

Enfin, nous vous invitons à **renouveler votre cotisation à l'association**. Pour rappel, le montant de cette cotisation s'élève à 26 euros pour un an, et à 52 euros pour deux ans. Votre participation financière nous est utile pour animer notre association, ainsi que pour financer ses activités, principalement de publication et d'organisation de colloque. Un grand merci de vous acquitter de votre cotisation !

N'hésitez pas à nous faire parvenir des informations que nous pourrions transmettre dans notre prochain bulletin.

Un bel été et au plaisir de vous revoir à Jena!

Marc Dumas

APTEF

**Internationaler Tillich-Kongress
Jena, 3.-6. September 2017
Tagungsprogramm**

Sonntag, 3. September

18.30	Begrüßung und Einführung	
18.45	Grußworte	
19.00	Eröffnungsvortrag Hans Joas	
anschließend	Empfang	

Montag, 4. September

9.00-10.00	Marc Dumas, <i>La Théologie systématique de Tillich: une révolution?</i>		
10.05-11.00	Bodo Ramelow		
Kaffeepause			
11.30-12.30	Mary Ann Stenger, <i>The Protestant Principle as Ongoing Reformation</i>		
Mittagspause			
14.00-	Lon	Raymond	Stefan

14.45	Weaver, The Faithful Practice of Reformation: Resistance and Utopia in Tillich's Thought	Asmar, La croix et le « principe protestant » entre Luther et Tillich	Dienstbeck, Ecclesia semper reformanda. Tillichs Geistgemeinschaft zwischen kerygmatischem Anspruch und prophetischem Durchbruch
15.00-15.45	Sorin-Avram Virtop, Beyond Ultimate Concern	Miguel Ángel Ramírez Cordón, La Conception du Mysticisme comme Dispositif interne du Mouvement Protestant: Le cas de la Lecture de la Philosophie de Schelling par Tillich	Axel Siegemund, Paul Tillichs Fundamentalismuskritik als Beitrag zur Selbstvergewisserung der Religion angesichts ihrer Politisierung in der Moderne
Kaffeepause			
16.15-17.00	Jari Ristiemi, Life, Being, and Spirit in Tillich's Differential Monism; Presupposi-	Jean-Paul Niyigena, Rapports à la Tradition en Afrique et enjeux théologiques	Peter Haigis, Geistesgeschichte und/oder/versus Heilsgeschichte – Zur Dynamik der Geschichte und ihrer theologischen Inter-

	tions and Consequences		pretation bei Paul Tillich
17.15-18.00	Russell Manning, "Do not be Conformed": Paul Tillich's Revolutionary Theology of Culture'	Gabriella laione, Relire Paul Tillich dans la crise de l'Europe contemporaine. Pertinence politique, anthropologique et sotériologique	Harald Matern, Theologie der Reformation als politische Theologie. Zur religiösen und ethischen Dimension der „Reformation“ bei Karl Barth und Paul Tillich
Abend-pause			
19.00	Podium Erbe und Zukunft des religiösen Sozialismus Joas Leiner (Moderation)		

Dienstag, 5. September

9.00-10.00	Anne Marie Reijnen, Nolens Volens: How much did Luther want the Reformation?		
10.05-11.00	Christian Danz, Reformation und Revolution. Paul Tillichs Deutung des Protestantismus		
Kaffeepause			
11.30-12.30	Martin Leiner, Reformation und Revolution im Rahmen von Entfremdung und Versöhnung		
Mittagspause			
14.00-14.45	Gregor Schäfer, Ursprung	Theo Juncker, Trois avant-	Katharina Wörns, Das Verhältnis

	und Sprung: Zu Tillich's politischer Theologie der Revolution im Ausgang Fichtes	coureurs de la Renaissance européenne du 16e siècle : Erasme, Luther, Rabelais. Eloge de la folie; De la liberté chrétienne ; Gargantua et Pantagruel.	von Zweideutigkeit und Revolution
15.00-15.45	Young-Ho Chun, Martin Luther's Legacy: Consequence of Revolt, not Reform	Etienne Higuët, Le protestantisme au Brésil entre le conservatisme et la transformation sociale	Martin Fritz, Selbstkritische Affirmation. Das "protestantische Prinzip" als Moment pluralismusfähiger Religion
Kaffeepause			
16.15-17.00	Rob James, Tillich as Situational Exclusionist, and Some Other Results of the Interplay between "the Center of History" and "Final Revela-	Geoffrey Legrand, Réformation pour penser à neuf la pastorale scolaire en Belgique francophone grâce à l'œuvre de Paul Tillich	Naomi Miyazaki, Reformation und Revolution in der Wahrnehmung Paul Tillich's

	tion"		
17.15-18.00		Benoit Mathot, Le kitsch kurdérien: clé de lecture pour la compréhension des notions de « révolution » et de « réformation » chez Paul Tillich	Henning Theißen, Symbole des virtuellen Abendlandes. Reformatorische Theologie vor dem Problem einer postfaktischen Medienrevolution
Abendpause			
19.00	Stadtführung in drei sprachlich differenzierten Gruppen Bracht, #		

Mittwoch, 6. September

9.00-10.00	Miriam Rose, NN		
10.05-11.00	Erdmann Sturm, Der Durchbruch des Unbedingten und das Problem seiner Aufnahme und Verwirklichung		
Kaffeepause			
11.30-12.30	Franz. Vortrag		
Mittagspause			
14.00-14.45			Lars Heinemann, Radikale politische Option und radikale Denkfiguren beim frühen Tillich (1917-1923)
15.00-15.45			Marcus Held, Das Imaginäre. Eine erkundende Relektüre der Möglichkeit von Revolution und Reformation bei

			Paul Tillich durch die Theorie-Brille von Cornelius Castoriadis
Kaffeepause			
16.15-17.00			Burkard Nonnenmacher, Tillichs „gläubiger Realismus“ im Spannungsfeld von Reformation und Revolution
17.15-18.00	Konferenzabschluss		
Abendpause			
19.00	Mitgliederversammlungen		

Received from Christian Danz, 3 August 2017.

**IN MEMORIAM:
DR. A. DURWOOD FOSTER**

Dear Pacific School of Religion Alumni/ae,

We are saddened to share that Dr. A. (Andrew) Durwood Foster, Pacific School of Religion Emeritus Professor, passed away on May 20 in Ashland, Oregon, surrounded by his family.

Dr. Foster came to PSR as Associate Professor of Christian Theology in 1959, and was named Professor of Systematic Theology in 1964. He served as Dean from 1974 until 1979. His areas of interest included liberation theology, interfaith dialogue, theology and the natural sciences, and theology and art. Dr. Foster's courses covered Tillich, Wesley, and Christian-Buddhist dialogue. He retired from PSR in 1992.

Dr. Foster described his vocation as, "bearing witness, through all my limitations, to the wholeness of the Gospel vision in realistic relation to the problems of contemporary life." An ordained minister in the United Methodist Church, Dr. Foster was a graduate of Emory University and Union Theological Seminary. He also served as a Fulbright Scholar at Heidelberg, and was a visiting scholar at Gottingen, Columbia, Basel, Berlin, and Oxford. His teaching career sent him around the world, from Durham, North Carolina to Banga-

lore, India to New York City. Dr. Foster authored *The God Who Loves*, co-edited *Hermeneutics and Unification Theology* and *Original Sin and Society*, and contributed to numerous journals and books.

Kay Schellhase, PSR's Archivist, fondly remembers Durwood's expansive and precise vocabulary—"you often had to get a dictionary after having a conversation with him."

Rev. Dr. Mary Donovan Turner reflects: "My first year of teaching at PSR was Durwood Foster's last. He was everything you hope a senior colleague will be—gracious, hospitable, and affirming. Because we both had ties to the south and to Emory University in particular, he seemed to take a special interest in my well being, always the consummate mentor and friend."

Dr. Foster is survived by his children, Kathy (Berkeley, CA) and Robin (Kansas City, MO). The family hopes to hold a memorial service at PSR in June. We will share details as they are confirmed.

Our prayers are with Dr. Foster's family, friends, and the many students whose lives he shaped during his three-decade tenure at Pacific School of Religion.

In peace,
David Vásquez-Levy
President, Pacific School of Religion

A TRIBUTE TO DURWOOD FOSTER

**FREDERICK J. PARRELLA
MARY ANN STENGER**

It is an honor for me to speak at this occasion when we celebrate the life and the death of our friend and colleague, Durwood Foster. I am here representing the North American Paul Tillich Society of which Durwood, like Bob Russell and Ted Peters who have already spoken, was a prominent member. Durwood devoted his life to Tillich scholarship, and we are all much the better for it. Durwood was a scholar to the very end of his life. In the very last bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society, Spring 2017, he published a long, substantive, and insightful article, comparing Tillich's thought to that of the philosopher Michael Polanyi. As Durwood says, "Polanyi and Tillich are congruent *and* divergent he-

roes in modernity's ongoing struggle for meaning, especially with a Christian twist. They are indeed a dynamic duo but never gelled as they might, which challenges their Societies with unfinished business. Born six years apart, Tillich first in 1886, they share bourgeois middle Europe in harrowing transition from 19th Century progressivism through scientific upheaval, social convulsion, and Nazi barbarism, under threat of which the targeted Jew and the distrusted academic—first to meet decades later—emigrate to England and America.”

Foster's prose has all of the style of another Tillich student, Langdon Guilty. More than this, his lengthy sentences, subtle and paradoxical logic, and magnificent turns of phrase remind me of the great sociologist of Freud, Philip Rieff. In a private conversation with Rieff at a conference on Psychoanalysis and Freud in 1974, he told me that no one outside of the great psychologists and sociologists influenced thought more than Paul Tillich. When I read Durwood's writings, I see the shadow of both Rieff and Tillich behind him. And now, all three of them are in intense dialogue at the eternal table where the best theologians and philosophers continue to debate the meaning of life's ultimate questions. Durwood is in very special but much-deserved company. I suspect that Polanyi is a fourth for their ontological and psychological game of Bridge.

Along with my own reflections this afternoon, I want to add some remarks from my dear colleague in the Tillich society, Mary Ann Stenger, Professor Emerita, the University of Louisville, who knew Durwood much longer than I did. Mary Ann regrets not being able to be with us this afternoon. Let me quote her tribute to him to be published in its entirety in the summer issue of the *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*

“I feel privileged to have known Durwood Foster for many years through the North American Paul Tillich Society. From my early years in the Society, beginning in the mid-1970s, Durwood supported and encouraged my scholarship. The profession then was quite male-dominated, but Durwood and a few others welcomed me as a full participant. And I was not alone in receiving that support, as I observed him over several dec-

ades continuing to encourage other young scholars. He always found a way to praise presenters and yet to offer penetrating questions that would strengthen their arguments. Even when others were unsure how to respond to a presentation, Durwood found a way to open up the discussion to a deeper level.

For me personally, Durwood provided opportunities to participate in international conferences, especially those that engaged Christians with people of other faiths. Those opportunities increased my interest in writing about religious pluralism as well as sometimes stimulating feminist critique. I was able to engage with many well-known theological scholars from the United States and abroad in settings that allowed more extensive discussions than available at our usual academic meetings.

I am happy that there will be a celebration of Durwood's life with presentations from some of the scholarly communities with which he engaged. I am sorry that I am unable to join in that celebration but I do send my deep condolences to his family and friends. And I say a deep thanks for Durwood's friendship and his many contributions to my own academic life and to the Tillich Society. May he rest in peace.”

Finally, allow me to add a few words from Tillich's biographer, Marion Pauck via email:

I join friends, family, and fellow Tillich scholars in mourning Durwood Foster's death. We first met in the early 1950s when we were students at Union Theological Seminary together for an overlapping time. After Wilhelm's and my biography of Paul Tillich was published, Durwood was the first to telephone in order to congratulate us. At that time he also invited me to be the next President of the NAPTS. We were in agreement about the larger picture of Paul Tillich. We co-chaired a salon in the 1990s that met at my large apartment in Palo Alto for several years. I shall remember him as one of the most interesting interpreters of Tillich's thought and as a long time colleague. Requiescat in pace.

Thank you, Mary Ann and Marion. I would like to conclude with a brief passage of Karl Rah-

ner. Here are his words of hope about those, like Durwood, who have left us:

“The great and sad mistake of many people...is to imagine that those whom death has taken, leave us. They do not leave us. They remain. Where are they? In darkness? Oh, no! It is we who are in darkness. We do not see them, but they see us. Their eyes, radiant with glory, are fixed on our eyes... Oh, invisible consolation! Though invisible to us, our dead are not absent. They are living near us, transfigured—into light, into power, into love.”

POLITICAL THEOLOGY AS HEALING: A RESPONSE TO TED PETERS

ADAM PRYOR¹

This response has three aims. First, I want to lift up the most salient features of Peters’ approach to a constructive political theology.² In particular, I want to highlight his analytical distinction between descriptive and prescriptive approaches as helpful in doing constructive political theology. In doing this, I want to suggest a friendly amendment to his account of White House theology as a form of descriptive political theology: suggesting his examples could instead be framed in terms of the Puritan Jeremiad as a form of political rhetoric for competing Political Party theologies.

Second, in identifying these salient features I want to highlight what aspects relate directly to Tillich’s own work and where Peters may be making some critical departures. In particular, Peters’ concept of “symbol stealing” poses an interesting problem-space for thinking about how to more widely interpret Tillich’s understanding of symbols—which is a crucial point for Tillich’s theological work.

Finally, I want to (all too briefly) add another wrinkle to Peters’ prescriptive analysis given the importance of responsibility, particularly as described in Robin Lovin’s *Christian Realism and the New Realities*. My hope is that injecting this language does not so much muddy the water, as begin to question how a constructive political theology needs to move us beyond prophetic cri-

tique.

(1) Descriptive or Jeremiad?

Peters begins with an analysis of the religious machinations of the secular political order. By his account, America’s secular culture thrives parasitically on Christian symbolism without owning up to this religious heritage, thereby incorporating these symbols into a national mythos stripped of its grounding that can prop up the state as the object of our ultimate concern (18).

In analyzing this process of symbol stealing, Peters engages in what he terms a “descriptive” political theology, which he contrasts to a “prescriptive” political theology. The difference is that a descriptive political theology examines the surreptitious use of religious elements by an existing political schema and a prescriptive political theology is one that develops a normative theological position. For the Tillich scholar, reading this opening salvo in Peters’ paper alone should make it quite clear that his turn to a theology of culture is imminent insofar as his dividing of political theology holds a certain similarity to the method of correlation: descriptive political theology provides the grist of an estranged existence to which prescriptive political theology can respond.

In the American context, Peters examines descriptive political theology as White House theology at work since World War II. The task is to devise “a political narrative or myth within which all American citizens can feel a communal bond.” (19). This communal bond is formed through the invisible scapegoating mechanism that Peters associates with American soldiers sacrificing themselves for the ideals of the nation (22). These ideals form a set of public values that draw on religion-specific values, but they are now situated in the context of an intentional pluralist democracy (18). For Peters, the effect of this is not only the unification of a divided country through appeal to these public values, but also the establishment of the state as a discrete religion through this transmutation of religion-specific values.

At the outset, I think it would be fair to say that “White House” theology describes the phenomenon in question a little too narrowly.³ My own inclination, if I were to slightly amend Peters’ language, would be to say that White House the-

ology as a descriptive political theology is really a more particular form of an old American political rhetoric: the Puritan jeremiad.

Cathleen Kaveny provides the crucial analysis for the shift I would propose. The Puritan jeremiad was a form of theo-political rhetoric based in covenant theology. Early Puritans viewed their American social experiment in terms of a typological reading of New England as the extension and fulfillment of Israel in its covenant relationship with God. Drawing on the traditions of English federal theologians, the early Puritans imagined they extended the relationships that God long established between God and God's people through covenantal structures that outlined clear terms of relationship. This theological covenant was invoked as the motive power for *political* covenant between people living together in just society. The very opportunity for the American political experiment of the Puritans was seen in itself to be a reward for best actualizing the moral and social norms of the theological covenant.⁴

The form of the jeremiad was invoked to explain God's action through secondary causes providing for blessings (leading to a day of thanksgiving) or setbacks (leading to a day of humiliation) to the community—most often setbacks.⁵ While administered by the church, the proclamation for such a day was *issued by the legislature*. The jeremiad itself was a four-part sermon—including Scripture as a means of providing a text for the occasion, doctrine as an account of what aspect of the covenant was in question, reasons as an explication of the violation in terms of the breach of duties by the people, and uses of the assessment that proposed reformation or increasing torment if reformation remained unrealized. In short, the breach of the covenant by specific actions of the people was connected to a present crisis and a scheme of reformation could be proposed in order that the citizens would better live into the obligation of the covenant.⁶ What Kaveny finds in this form of rhetoric is that the jeremiad models a criminal indictment.

Modeled as an indictment for wrongful behavior, the jeremiad could call to account only actions whose criminality had been determined and promulgated by lawful authority. There jeremiad created no more room for discussion and debate about the underlying judgment that the

condemned behavior is wrongful than a criminal indictment does about the impermissibility of the actions with which it charges the defendant.⁷

The key here is that the jeremiad indicts, in the sense that it appeals to a closed set of normative judgments about what actions are or are not acceptable. These moral and social norms are simply given as a part of the covenant and not up for discussion; the indictment of the jeremiad makes clear how this underlying normative judgment has been violated and what recompense to the political order and its stability might follow.

In short, the early jeremiad made appeal to a clear and normative covenant between God and God's people; it was because of the actualization of the social and moral values of the covenant that the wellspring of political and economic well-being, characterized by the theocracy of the colony, could emerge. The jeremiad made clear in its form of indictment when and how the *social and moral obligations* were breached to the detriment of *political and economic blessing*. What Kaveny cleverly identifies through her analysis of jeremiad-like rhetoric in the contemporary culture wars is that in our current era this relationship of obligations and blessings are reversed.

The overriding obligation of the contemporary national covenant generally seems to involve securing America's military and economic interests. Such security triggers a duty in itself; it is *not* a divinely given national reward for having successfully performed other duties defined by a clear (and divinely mandated) set of moral norms....

The reward for political parties and party leaders who successfully promote the country's economic and military well-being is the opportunity to advance their own understanding of the nation's binding moral and social norms. In our increasingly pluralistic and fractious society, the nature of one party's controversial moral vision as a true "blessing" is demonstrated in part by its association and correlation with a clear and effective program of national material prosperity.⁸

With this in mind, an amended reading of Peters could be offered. *Perhaps White House political theology, as a form of descriptive political theology, actually represents a jeremiad-like appeal to a national covenant deemed incontrovertible in its significance.* Read this way, Peters' invocation of Obama's 2014 State of the Union address might work differently. By sum-

moning the symbol of Cory Remsburg's valor and dedication as a sign of military well-being, Obama makes a claim that Democratic Political Party theology best fulfills the national covenant such that its moral and social norms be enacted; John Boehner's vigorous support of Cory Remsburg as a symbol contests this claim, suggesting instead that Republican Political Party theology should enact moral and social norms.

The speech's invocation of a common symbol for the fulfilling of the national covenant performs, before our eyes, competing political party theologies. In this way, White House political theology is not so much a clever "hoodwinking" (19) that co-opts those with opposing ideologies, but an expression of a classic form of political rhetoric giving voice to a covenant obligation. In the case of Obama's State of the Union Address, the Democratic Political Party theology is appealing to the fulfillment of the covenant obligation to military well-being, invoking the case for the continued enactment of its moral vision as a blessing; by contrast, the Republican Political Party theology is appealing to the breach of the covenant obligation on the part of Democratic Political Party theology (signaled by Boehner's applause as a sort of high-jacking of this obligation—i.e. "You can't fulfill this Democrats, we Republicans do!") and calling for reformation that would be signaled by adopting the Republican moral vision as a reform. I think the advantage of this type of analysis is that it better preserves the anxiety and polarized tension that are at work in American political discourse today: the White House theology is not unifying, it is naming the contested space of an unquestionable national covenant that alternative Political Party theologies believe they fulfill.

(2) A Brief Excursus on Symbol Stealing

Continuing to read along with Peters, now in light of what I hope is a charitable amendment of his account concerning the jeremiad, his use of Obama's invocation of "Here I am. Send me." This text from Isaiah is a call to patriotism in a secular Memorial Day liturgy remains a salient example. Now, though, the example is not co-opting others, but a means of appealing to a broad, underlying obligation of competing Political

Party theologies. Read this way, the effect of the appeal is slightly different; not only does the speech help "turn the secular state into a religion in itself" (20), but it is also making a claim by turning to a symbol that evokes a quality of ultimacy that the unquestionable obligations of the national covenant are being met beyond any shadow of a doubt. The invoking of a religious symbol becomes a kind of ultimate trump card to justify the meeting of national covenant obligations.

What remains interesting, and I believe helpful, about Peters' example, is that he offers a slightly different analysis of symbol origination from what Tillich proposes. For Tillich, Obama's rhetoric would represent the invocation of a symbol of patriotism claiming that security of the nation-state is the object of ultimate concern. Its incorporation of biblical rhetoric would certainly be demonic, but the source of the symbolic power for the patriotism *remains separate* as a distinct cultural symbol is directed toward a poorly established ultimate concern on the part of a faithful individual. In Tillich's work there is something of a classic disorientation of the passions that occurs in the lifting up of a proximate concern as ultimate—a mistaking of the courage and meaning provided by the given concern. This mistaking the proximate for the ultimate leads to the misappropriation of symbols.⁹ Read this way, Obama's use of military superiority, symbolized by patriotic sacrifice as a disordered ultimate concern exists distinctively for an individual in faith, but one can then pull the symbol from Isaiah into the gravitational orbit of the "patriotic sacrifice symbol" in order to achieve its false ultimacy through this biblical reference.

For Peters, the power of Obama's claim comes directly from the legitimate power of the symbol in Isaiah, and it is this siphoning of the legitimate power of the Isaiah symbol that is demonic. The symbol is "disestablished" (20) and the power it once communicated by participating in that to which it points becomes redirected. It is made to be askew, in appropriately pointing to the nation-state, but continuing—because of its wider history—to participate in what it *originally* pointed toward. In this way the symbol becomes stolen or corrupted.

I think this distinction between Peters and

Tillich is actually in keeping with Peters' own appeal to Cavanaugh (23) and Voegelin (27-28) by which a secular state does not supersede the religious tradition and symbols it draws from, but instead there is a migration of the effective power of symbols constituting idolatry. I admit the difference I am identifying is subtle, but I think it is quite important.

For Tillich, the fault in this given example would lie with the interpreter who mistakenly makes a proximate into an ultimate concern and thereby misappropriates proper symbols of ultimate concern. This is a subjective problem for the interpreter; not so much an objective problem for the symbol. In Peters' approach, a symbol is disestablished in a far more public way. What is at stake is an objective problem of the symbol, to which the subjective interpreter is more limited in forming a response. The interpreter is not autonomous in her reception of the symbol as Tillich might suppose; but, what is crucial about this is that the semi-autonomous power of symbols that Peters is developing comes *directly out of Tillich's own account* in emphasizing that symbols live and die, they are not intentionally created.

Perhaps one of the interesting, if implicit, aspects of Peters' paper for Tillich scholars is this notion of "symbol stealing." It almost sounds like a phrase we would expect to find in the litany of the qualities of a symbol that we find in various pieces of Tillich's writing, though most famously in *Dynamics of Faith*—something like 'Symbols cannot be created intentionally but they *can* be stolen.' What is important about Peters' idea here is two-fold.

First, we need to seriously consider whether under Tillich's framework a symbol can be stolen. In short, how does the misappropriation of a symbol effect the legitimate appropriation of the same symbol? I would imagine that there is not a single simple answer to this conundrum. Perhaps there is now a multiplicity of overlapping symbols; or one symbol dies; or the siphoning of power invoked by stealing is actually a death knell for a symbol because it ceases to point to what it participates in and this cannot go on indefinitely... The possibilities to imagine here and the number of cases that could be used as studies are truly interesting.

Second, and perhaps leading from this first

point, "symbol stealing" offers us a different way of thinking about Tillich's understanding of a theology of culture. If, in his account of symbols, Tillich is offering a phenomenological account that yields rules for how symbols operate (in order to identify when a symbol occurs), then his theology of culture uses existential analysis to examine how symbols are employed in context and in contact with one another. Could these existential analyses be phenomenologically reread to provide rules of symbol use? I think this would be an explicit extension of Tillich's account of symbols—so the analysis would include not only their operative and productive power, but an account of their reproduction and cultural use—that makes manifest an implicit logic already at work in the way he uses symbols theologically.

(3) Prescriptive beyond the Prophetic

Moving from the descriptive order toward the prescriptive, Peters proposes the need for a "constructive political theology" that makes explicit "the theologian's approach to the dimension of civil order within human community....The task of this constructive political theology is primarily, though not exclusively, prophetic" (23-24). Before moving directly to this invocation of the prophetic role, it seems important to emphasize that Peters' approach is also highly eschatological. The eschatological realization of God's reign provides a normative measuring stick against which political actualities ought to be judged. Moreover—and here Peters is following directly on Tillich—this eschatological measuring stick is neither an imposed and heteronomous set of dictates nor mere personal moral injunctions made inappropriately political insofar as religion is understood to be the depth of culture and culture the form of religion (25-26).

I am imagining that the function of God's reign as an eschatological measuring stick is analogous to how Tillich more generally finds the essential comes to judge the existential given its estrangement.¹⁰ God's reign is the context by which political existence comes to arise and against which estranged political existence must judge itself.

If we look to Peters' other works at this point, however, I think it would be fair to claim that he

is invoking a specifically proleptic eschatology. It would be fruitful to consider if at this point Pannenberg is more operative in Peters' paper than Tillich, or (more interestingly) if Pannenberg's proleptic approach bears some striking similarities to Tillich's eschatology when that idea is read in terms of Tillich's frequent use of the depth dimension as connected to the unconditional *prius* that is the power of being animating any ontological awareness of the unconditional.¹¹ To do this in a thorough way would be another paper unto itself.

In any case, while Peters is using the eschatological and the political for his analysis, Tillich, in *Theology of Culture*, makes clear how important linking religion to the depth dimensions of culture is through his analysis of the role of the moral imperative in theonomous ethics. Tillich writes,

The reason for the unconditional character of the moral imperative is that it puts our essential being as a demand against us. The moral imperative is not a strange law, imposed on us, but it is the law of our own being. In the moral imperative we ourselves, in our essential being, are put against ourselves, in our actual being. No outside command can be unconditional, whether it comes from a state, or a person, or God—if God is thought of as an outside power, establishing a law for our behavior. A stranger, even if his name were God, who imposes commands upon us must be resisted or, as Nietzsche has expressed it in his symbol of the 'ugliest man,' he must be killed because nobody can stand him.¹²

Peters' account seems directly parallel to me: for Tillich the moral imperative is the essential quality animating and serving as the criterion for judging the existence of concrete moralisms; for Peters God's reign is the essential quality animating and serving as the criterion for judging political existences. Read this way, I am convinced that Peters is correct in suggesting a constructive political theology is a sort of species within the wider genus of a theology of culture (see also 27): looking for the hidden sacred in the everyday experience of a given body politic that calls out to be analyzed in its religious terms both as animating force *and* the 'not-strange' law of political self-judgment.

In this act of judgment, the prophetic element

is made clear. The prophetic element of Peters' constructive political theology is an adaptation of Tillich's Protestant principle. A constructive political theology will re-inject doubt as a critical element of faith constituting itself out of, in this case, concrete political symbols; the doubt prevents the reification or idolization of the symbol and ensures it points beyond itself to that which is in fact of ultimate concern (28). We might say that a constructive political theology has a sort of policing role—it ensures the concerns embodied by political symbols remain conditional and only symbolically translucent to ultimacy. In our own cultural context, Peters' case is that this prophetic critique must be directed towards those invisible scapegoats, as with René Girard, that prop up a narrative making the aim of the nation-state into an ultimate concern (29-30).

In his work *Christian Realism and the New Realities*, Robin Lovin sets up a four-fold typology to characterize ways of (broadly speaking) interpreting—primarily—the legacy of Reinhold Niebuhr's and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's work in light of the intersection of religion and politics today: Witness, Anti-utopian, Counter-apocalyptic, and Pluralist. It is not Lovin's typology itself that I am concerned with. Instead, what is relevant for Peters' work is the tension Lovin elucidates between the drives of prophetic and realist inclinations in religion and politics, which informs his typologically schema. He observes: "Prophetic faith is thus alert to idolatrous claims wherever they occur, and it is suspicious of any power—kingly, priestly, or prophetic—that thinks itself above this temptation."

The most relevant point for twentieth-century Christian realism, however, is that the answer to idolatry is not to emulate it. Faced with totalitarian opponents who are absolutely certain about their cause, Christian realists must be disciplined enough not to claim the same for themselves....

The penultimate is the world of ordinary life seen in anticipation of the ultimate, but not directly participating in it. Concentration on the penultimate requires, according to Bonhoeffer, a rejection both of the radical politics that is willing to destroy anything and everything for the sake of ultimate truth and of the compromises that, by suspending judgment until ultimate truth is fully present, slip by degrees into relativism. The Chris-

tian realist shares the radical's dissatisfaction with injustice, but focuses on responsible choices among the concrete possibilities now available. (Lovin, 4-5).

Invoking Bonhoeffer's notion of the penultimate and the responsibility to work from the concrete possibilities available, Lovin places a strong limit on the role of the prophetic in a constructive political theology. I do not intend to suggest that Peters' argument is violating the spirit of Lovin's limitation; Peter's invocation of the protestant principle indicates his healthy respect for a rejection of a liberal theology by which political powers might imagine actualizing God's reign in the world.

However, two points are worth noting. First, it seems that in as much as a prescriptive constructive political theology must engage in prophetic critique, it must also focus on developing its responsibility to foster justice amidst the imperfect conditions in which it finds itself; and, I would hazard to say that developing this sense of responsibility requires much more than prophetically proposing a model of God's reign as the asymptotic ideal that can never be reached. No matter how we might put that ideal forward (even given the celebration of theonomous manifestations within temporal justice as on Peters, 31), without developing alternative political strategies for fostering just responsibility, God's reign becomes increasingly hegemonic.¹³

Second, the descriptive political theology we offer matters dearly for the prescriptive constructive political theology we develop, if my parallel to the method of correlation made in the opening of this paper holds. If the only function of a prescriptive constructive political theology were prophetic, then this correlation would be superficial to say the least (*i.e.* one would need to do the descriptive work of the existential estrangement in political theologies only to best prophetically expose their failure in light of God's reign—a concept that, at least theoretically, could be static). However, if a prescriptive political theology does more than just primarily prophetic critique (as I think it is actually doing in Peters' work—see pg. 31) then the descriptive political theology is significant because the meaningful formulation of justice and our responsibility towards it (prescriptive political theology) in imperfect conditions (the

work of descriptive political theology) relies on a fruitful analysis of those imperfect conditions.

So, then what might be the other roles of a prescriptive constructive political theology besides prophetic critique; or, what is entailed in a prescriptive constructive political theology generating a framework for responsible choices in the midst of an imperfect world? Again, that's a paper unto itself. However, we might turn to two ideas from Tillich to think about this. First, if religion serves as the depth of culture, at its best a robust prescriptive political theology could promise a kind of healing for the anxiety and despair of existence reflected in the symbol stealing of secularized political theologies (whether Peters' White House theology or my Political Party theologies).¹⁴ Second, the healing promised cannot just be idealized; it needs to provide a means of 'faithful realism,' to borrow an early term from Tillich's corpus. This faithful realism allows us to be ecstatically gripped in faith by ultimate concern such that we reorient our reality towards the actualizing of God's reign in the wake of this ecstatic experience.¹⁵

Politics, Healing, and Creative Power

To close, I want to return one more time to Peters' use of Obama's 2014 State of the Union Address to play out these final implications: (1) illustrating where the descriptive analysis makes a difference to the prescriptive political theology one constructs and (2) suggesting that the prominence given to prophetic critique also matters in this prescriptive endeavor. In Peters' account, Remsburg's valor is a symbol operating as an invisible scapegoat to bind together community in deference to an American religion that steals its sacred power from correlating God's blessing to American values of a freedom to do honest work and generate prosperity that become the object of our ultimate concern. A prescriptive political theology emphasizing the prophetic would reveal this scapegoating and note that the American values do not in fact provide ultimate fulfillment; ultimate concern should instead be directed towards the ideal revealed by God's reign. This would be idol-hunting (if I am reading Peters correctly). In a prescriptive political theology that emphasizes the need to generate a constructive account of

healing, not primarily prophetic critique, one would need to also make clear how the misappropriated American values *are not ultimate but still can be used effectively if specifically reoriented toward the ideal of God's reign*. In this case what is at stake is conceptualizing how the freedom to do honest work and generate prosperity provide conditions that allow us to, however imperfectly but nonetheless, act towards resurrection hope.

In the first section, I suggested a different descriptive political theology that might yield an alternative prescriptive constructive political theology. We could read Remsburg's valor as a contested symbol which competing Political Party theologies are claiming to have realized in order to demonstrate their fulfillment of the national covenant obligation and in turn enact a system of social and moral blessings. In this case the prophetic element of a prescriptive political theology would be to assert that military and economic well-being do not provide ultimate fulfillment and that their false invocation as objects of ultimate concern generates a sinful social compact in light of the ideal identified with God's reign. The healing element of a constructive political theology would need to seriously address *the anxiety about socio-political meaninglessness* that leads to forms of national self-justification manifest as the indictment to pursue military and economic well-being as the content of our national covenant and social compact (regardless of whether one correlates this pursuit to either Political Party theologies' expressions of social and moral reform). The test of sufficiently addressing this anxiety through a political theology could be construed in terms of how well the alternative political theology scaffolds practices of justice that are oriented toward the directing power of God's creativity.¹⁶

I hope these closing remarks help illustrate that the descriptive political theology is particularly relevant to offering a prescriptive political theology. Where one starts matters in where one will end up. In Peters' White House theology scenario, various value idols are hunted out and undisestablished: reinstated in a relationship to God's reign as the religious depth of culture. In the Political Party theologies scenario I suggested as an amendment, the indictable terms of our national covenant are put into question and an analysis of the anxiety that leads to the indictment of

these particular terms is required in order to propose an alternative ground for our social compact that is oriented toward the directing power of God's creativity. I want to stress that I think both of these scenarios enact a political theology as a form of a wider theology of culture that Peters has outlined, but they differ in how they view the descriptive political theology should be constructed and how it makes use of symbols.

² Ted Peters, "Constructing a Political Theology on Tillich's Theology of Culture," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* 42, no. 4 (2016): 18–35. All parenthetical in line references in the text refer to this article.

³ Peters admits clearly that this term forms an example, so I freely admit I may be making too much of this point.

⁴ Cathleen Kaveny, *Prophecy without Contempt: Religious Discourse in the Public Square* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 134–47.

⁵ I am significantly narrowing Kaveny's account, which considers the jeremiad in terms of not only fast day sermons (as I am following above) but also election day sermons and sermons for covenant renewal. For my purpose here, the overall structure of these sermons is similar enough to be elided.

⁶ Kaveny, *Prophecy without Contempt*, 150–56.

⁷ Kaveny, *Prophecy without Contempt*, 180.

⁸ Kaveny, *Prophecy without Contempt*, 233.

⁹ See for instance Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, Perennial Classics (New York: Harper-Collins, 2001 [1957]), chap. 3

¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–63), 1:202.

¹¹ Consider for instance Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 25.

¹² Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 136.

¹³ Additionally, to develop these aspects of a political theology would provide greater parallel to Peters' development of the notion of justification, found in his book *Sin Boldly!* For those familiar with that text, what I would call for is the social equivalent to the 'empowering possibility of justification' that Peters identifies regarding individuals (i.e. justification as balm for the anxious or broken soul; not just the law by which to judge the failed processes of self-justification producing anxious or broken souls). See Ted Peters, *Sin Boldly!: Justifying Faith for Fragile and Broken Souls* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

¹⁴ See Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 49-50.

¹⁵ See also Ronald H. Stone, *Politics and Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich at Union Seminary in New*

York (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2012), 27.

¹⁶ See Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:263ff.

**THE GOD ABOVE THE GOD OF THEORY
OF MIND: A TILLICHIAN APPROACH TO
AUTISM AND THE PERSONAL GOD**

NATHANIEL HOLMES, JR.

Cognitive scientists argue that human beings possess a cognitive function that allows us to ascribe an ‘inner self’ to other persons referred to as *theory of mind*.¹ Theory of mind denotes the cognitive capacity to attribute mental states to self and others. Mental attribution is especially pertinent to our perception of other persons, i.e., entities that possess the same/similar cognitive functions, thoughts, desires, actions, and behavior. We cannot experience the inner workings of other people. There is no way for us to know how someone feels or view things from her/his perspective in the sense that we cannot experience the world from inside of their minds and bodies. Rather than adopt a complete skepticism about the existence of other persons with similar minds to our own, we postulate the existence of other minds by attributing our emotions and cognitive functions to other entities that look like us- vis-à-vis other human beings.

The theory of mind thesis has commanded a profound influence on many cognitive scientists of religion, and the understanding of religious belief and practice in general. Scholars such as Justin Barret posit that human beings are more likely to believe in God because we have been created with the kinds of minds necessary to embrace such belief.² Kelly James Clark says theory of mind does not only affect our beliefs and interactions with other humans, but it has a significant impact on our beliefs about non-humans as well, i.e., God.³ Theory of mind attributes intentions and desires to God in the same way other human beings are viewed as having minds like our own.

So, we relate to God because belief in God is natural, and God is like us (at least) in some sense of agency. The implications of these claims pro-

vide useful ammunition against those who claim religious belief in irrational, infectious to the mind, and detrimental to human progress.⁴ On the other hand, it raises questions about the necessity of theory of mind for religious beliefs and practices. One socio-psychological study, for instance, has suggested that autistic persons are more inclined towards atheism than are “neuro-typical” persons.⁵ The argument hinges on the notion that since generally autistic persons cannot mentalize, i.e., do not possess the ability to think about other minds and recognize agency (specifically divine agency) in everyday life, they are not capable of believing in God. In essence, no theory of mind (no ability to attribute mental states) equates to a greater probability of no belief in God.

For me, this begs the question: Is theory of mind a necessary component for belief in God? To sufficiently explore this question I think an underlying assumption needs to be brought to the fore- the assumption that God is essentially personal. Ascribing mental states to God, saying God has a mind like our minds, is a way of classifying God as a ‘person.’ But is this the most accurate way to describe God? Is there a way to relate to God without ascribing purpose, desires, or other typical mental attributions? For many, the answer to this question is an emphatic NO! The Judeo-Christian tradition has always portrayed God as personal, and there is simply no other way to understand God except by this classification. Christian theological language about God has consistently been personal. However, our language about God should not be viewed as absolute categories for divine reality. Expressions of God as possessing desires, plans, and other personal traits are not exhaustive descriptions of divine reality.

If Barrett’s thesis is correct, that God created our minds with the capacity of belief (and I think so), then this must in some way include minds that do not possess an operational theory of mind. The question now is how is this possible? The answer lies in the supposition that God can

be expressed in both personal and non-personal terms whilst transcending both of these categorizations. My purpose is not to diminish the theory of mind thesis per se. Belief in God is supported and bolstered by attributing personality to God. We are able to relate to God in everyday life because we view God as involved in history and in our individual lives, working to attain divine purposes. I am taking issue here with the idea that theory of mind is essential to believe in and relate to God because God is essentially a person or personal in the same way that human beings are persons. To this end, I will employ the theology of Paul Tillich whose thought continues to be a resource and beacon for contemporary theological issues. This statement is no less true when it comes to the correlation of theory of mind and religious beliefs and practices.

Christianity and the Personal God

The defining character of the Christian doctrine of God is the notion of God as *trinity*. Many theologians have conventionally interpreted this doctrine as substantiation of a personal God.⁶ As soon as one accepts the doctrine of the trinity, you have implicitly or explicitly affirmed that God's life is one that is eternally a personal life that is essentially relational.⁷ This conceptualization of God is exacerbated by the core Christian doctrine of the *imago dei*—that human beings have been created in the image of God. Since human beings are social creatures than it stands to reason that God is also fundamentally social. After all, this is the best explanation of what it means for humans to be created in the image of God. The doctrine of the *imago dei* expresses the idea that human beings were created for relationships with God and each other. Human relationality reflects the inner life of the triune God, who resides in eternal communion.⁸ Community and interrelatedness are ingrained in the Christian understanding of God. Therefore, the doctrine trinity conveys God as personal.

Any statements that deny a personal God are typically labeled as heresy. There is no place for any other kind of God, save a personal God, i.e., God as a person. Biblical depictions of God show God talking (Deuteronomy 4:36, Mark 1:11),

making plans (Jeremiah 29:11), displaying emotions (Exodus 20:5, Jeremiah 31:3), and answering prayers (1 Samuel 1:27). It is this God, the personal God, who saves and guarantee future transformation in the world to come. Christianity would not persist as it does without such an understanding of God.

Yet, the idea of a personal God has been unsettling for many thinkers, especially those who embrace naturalism or are committed to the effectiveness of scientific discovery and prediction. Albert Einstein was a prominent proponent of abandoning the idea of a personal God because such a God interferes with and violates the natural laws of the universe.⁹ Still, a personal God seems to be core to Christian belief and witness. Beyond necessity for Christian beliefs, some cognitive scientists of religion posit there are biological reasons human believe God, particularly a personal God.

God, Religious Beliefs & Practices, and Theory of Mind

Justin Barrett argues that human beings believe in God because our minds are designed to believe in God.¹⁰ As a matter of fact, belief in a divine being is just about inevitable given the kinds of brains/minds humans possess. Belief in gods fit our biological and mental assumptions and mechanism. Belief in a personal God who is omnipotent and omniscient, Barrett suggests, is more in keeping with our natural make-up than any other conception of divine reality, and especially more so than atheism.¹¹ His argument is grounded in a theory of mind— that human beings conceive of God in a similar way we do other human beings. Also, our ability to think about our thoughts and the thoughts of others also lends towards religious belief and practices.

Barrett's theory of mind argument touches on three areas.¹² The first has to do with the ability to participate in group religious practices. Shared religious practices and rituals require shared thoughts about god/gods. Communal rituals necessitate individuals sharing the same thoughts about the ritual requirements. Each person has to at least agree on which requirements a deity may demand in order to perform the ritual properly

and in community. There is “joint attention on the god.”¹³

Barrett expands his theory of mind to include interaction and cooperation between human beings and divine beings. The focus shifts from “joint attention” between adherents to cooperative engagement between an individual and a deity. According to Barrett, devotional traditions seem to comprise persons considering what a god thinks of his/her actions, and ways in which persons can work with a deity in order to affect particular events or occasions.¹⁴ This differs from a more “instrumental” view of divine-human interaction. An instrumental view of divine-human relations simply suggests individuals or groups appeal to a deity to perform certain tasks in response to prayer, sacrifice, etc. No deeper engagement or relationship exists. Devotional relations go beyond persons appealing to a divinity, spirit, or ancestor for protection, provision, and healing. There is collaboration towards a “mutually desired state of affairs.”¹⁵

Finally, Barrett suggests thoughts concerning collaborative interaction with a deity require an advanced theory of mind, far more advanced than we see in animals or toddlers. Animals that lack the capacity for emotional depth, possessing only biological drives, are incapable of relational interaction. At best, they can only be objects of a deity’s focus. They can never enter into relationship. The ability for “meta-representation,” i.e., the capacity to have thoughts about thoughts, allows persons to acknowledge others as having relations with the same deity, and thus view the deity as a collaborator with human beings to produce a certain state of affairs.¹⁶ If we adopt this view wholeheartedly a theory of mind will be a necessary component of any meaningful understanding of God. However, a closer inspection reveals the assumption of a personal God— an assumption that needs to be surmounted.

Tillich on the “Personal God”

Tillich did not deny the necessity of the divine-human relationality character of religious experience. In order for God to be ultimate for us, God must be expressed in personal terms. “For only that which concerns us in the center of our per-

sona existence concerns us unconditionally.”¹⁷ At the same time, we cannot equate God to the personal. When we speak of God as personal, this should only be done symbolically or analogically.¹⁸ Nevertheless, personal predicates (symbols) are necessary for genuine, transformative religious experience. God cannot be less than personal. Tillich holds that a “sub-personal” God cannot be of ultimate concern.¹⁹ We seek to attain communion with the ground of our being, particularly via religious and spiritual practice. Relating to God, though, is possible only through symbols.

Tillich maintains only symbols can express the ultimate. Without symbols we could not relate to and express ultimacy because that which is truly ultimate transcends the realm of the finite. Symbols have several characteristics.²⁰ Like a sign, a symbol points beyond itself to another reality. The crucial difference between a sign and a symbol is that a symbol participates in the power and meaning of that to which it points. A religious symbol “can be a true symbol only if it participates in the power of the divine to which it points.”²¹ It is crucial for our purposes here to note that symbols participate (and allow us to participate) in the ultimate, but they are not ultimate. They are mediums to the divine, not static descriptions of the divine. Symbols also open up levels of reality that are otherwise closed to us and unlock dimensions of our souls that correspond to those levels of reality.

The symbol of the ‘personal’ is required because God, as the depth and power of being, cannot be symbolized by anything less than personal. Our religious/spiritual lives need such symbols to surmount despair, anxiety, loneliness, and estrangement.²² Personal God is a symbol with particular functions for religious experience.

Personal God does not mean that God is *a* person. It means that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality. He is not a person, but he is not less than personal. It should not be forgotten that classical theology employed the term *persona* for the Trinitarian hypostases but not for God himself. God became ‘a person’ only in the nineteenth century, in connection with the Kantian separation of nature ruled by physical law

from personality ruled by moral law. Ordinary theism has made God a heavenly, completely perfect person who resides above the world and mankind. The protest of atheism against such a highest person is correct. There is no evidence for his existence, nor is he a matter of ultimate concern.²³

God is referred to as a person, but this must be understood in symbolic terms. God is not a person like human beings are persons.²⁴ “If the idea of God (and the symbols applied to [God]) that expresses [humanity's] ultimate concern is transferred to the horizontal plane, God becomes a being among others whose existence or nonexistence is a matter of inquiry.”²⁵

Tillich’s doctrine of God has and continues to receive criticism for being too far removed from the traditional Judeo-Christian conception of God as personal. Tillich’s understanding of God is in direct contrast to what he saw as the typical definition of “gods” throughout human history. Gods, in this sense, are “beings who transcend the realm of ordinary experience in power and meaning, with whom [human beings] have relations which surpass ordinary relations in intensity and significance.”²⁶ Framed in this way, gods are beings who are mere superhuman entities, limited by the same categories of finitude as human beings. They may be higher powers, but they are limited in significance and power because they are projections of human fear, anxiety, love, hate, and even natural phenomena. For Tillich, such entities cannot be of *ultimate concern*.

God is being-itself, the ground of being, and the power of being.²⁷ Throughout his works, we discover Tillich repeatedly insisted that God is not a being alongside other beings or even above other beings.²⁸ God is the source and power of all that exists. As the ground and source of all there is, God is not bound by the finite categories of existence like humans and other beings. The symbol “personal God” allows people to interact with the ground of being in a concrete way. It is a fundamental symbol because “an existential relation is a person-to-person relation.”²⁹ So this symbol is crucial for divine-human relations, and for humans to relate to God in everyday life. But it is a symbol nonetheless. And it is one possible symbol among others available to relate and respond to

God.

Is God a Person?

We are often forced to choose between conventional Judeo-Christian thought of a personal God or an impersonal God that is consistent with modern science. Tillich explodes such dichotomies by maintaining that God is both personal and transpersonal. God as ultimate concern (the Unconditional) *has to be* more than personal.

Tillich provides some helpful insights into the use of personal terms to describe and interact with God. He says, “[a person] symbolizes that which is his [or her] ultimate concern in terms taken from his [or her] own being.”³⁰ We express our theological beliefs in terms that relate to our existential condition. This is the only way we can express our ultimate concern.³¹ At the same time, we must be cognizant that our terminology is symbolic. All of our expressions of God should be understood as symbols. We can ascribe personality, freedom, and even personhood to God, but always with the caveat that these categories do not apply to God in the same way they apply to human beings. Again, as Tillich often reminded his audience, “God is not *a* being alongside other beings or even above other beings.”³² God is not another entity like us, simply with magnified human characteristics. Even to say that God is personal does not make God a person in the sense that we are persons. When we begin to deconstruct the privileged presupposition of God as “personal” we open up pathways for beliefs in God that do not fit the mold of personal theism easily if at all. If you ask a person (autistic or neurotypical) if she/he believes in a personal God, for which a personal God who has hidden plans or interferes with the laws of nature is implausible or unappealing, the only possible response is to reject such an idea. Rejection of a personal God, though, does not necessarily equate to a rejection of God completely.

Typically impersonal conceptions of God are pitted against personal conceptions, with the latter identified as constitutive for Christianity. The guiding theological assumption in these assertions is that we can only encounter God as person/personal. The personal God is the Christian

God. Tillich, however, challenges this fundamental presupposition. Any description of God is symbolic. God is not a person, but human beings must experience God as personal in order for God to be ultimate concern. I want to extend Tillich's thought to say God reveals God's self in both personal and non-personal ways (as God is transpersonal). Since we experience God via terms and experiences from our existential condition, persons without an operational theory of mind can experience God through non-personal mediums and symbols. As Tillich saw the significance of the personal symbol for religious experience, we must also embrace the significance of non-personal symbols for religious experience. While biblical images of a personal God are touted, for example, the images of a non-personal God are frequently disregarded. But, the same God who answers prayers and establishes covenants also prevents people from viewing divine manifestations (Exodus 19:10-25) and remains indescribable and hidden (Colossians 1:15). In both cases, God (personal and non-personal), is the ground and power of being who is ultimate concern.

Tillich's doctrine of God demonstrates that a theory of mind is not decisive for theistic beliefs. Persons without theory of mind can use different symbols to think about and engage God. John Gillibrand suggests that an apophatic theological approach, for instance, best suits any theological interpretation of autism.³³ Autistic persons may not be able to name God or describe God, however, this is really no different than anyone else. None of us have the ability to provide a positive, exact description of the divine. Divine reality is elusive to us all. Gillibrand sees this approach as providing some theologically conceptual equality. Depictions of a "perfect God" who needs nothing and can do anything does not lend itself to persons with disability being created in the image of such a being. A God with limitations, or even the fact that human minds are limited in describing God, Gillibrand feels, is more relatable to persons with cognitive deficit (and other disabilities).

Many high-functioning autistic persons view God as a principle as opposed to a person.³⁴ In this case, God does not operate within the world in the ways described in personal theism. Belief

in God, then, is not tethered to the idea of God as personal. Some autistic persons may view God as a distant being who may have created the world but does not engage in everyday activities. Temple Grandin (a prominent autistic author, public speaker, and activist) says her belief in the existence of God is derived from the laws of nature and physics.³⁵ Given our knowledge of the universe and the discernable laws we see operating in nature, God makes logical sense. She sees God as an "ordering force" as opposed to a supernatural agent who interferes in the world.³⁶ God provides the laws while nature runs its course. The God Grandin is speaking about is not the personal God, but it is the ground of being who can become ultimate concern for us.

The theory of mind thesis in relation to belief in God is not completely off base. As I said earlier, I agree with the basic premise that our minds/brains are designed to believe in and interact with God. A theory of mind is suitable for personal symbolic engagement with God. The problem is that this excludes persons on the autism spectrum who do not possess theory of mind. Using a Tillichian approach, we discovered that since God is the ground and power of being, the assumption of God as a person is a categorical mistake that should be jettisoned. Tillich's doctrine of God makes way for alternative symbolic approaches to God that are more relevant for those on the autism spectrum.

¹ Kelly James Clark, *Religion and the Sciences of Origins: Historical and Contemporary Discussions* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 124.

² See Justin L. Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God* (Lanham MD: AltaMira Press, 2004).

³ Clark, *Religion and the Sciences of Origins*, 127.

⁴ See Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007) and Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006).

⁵ Ara Norenzayan, Will M. Gervais, Kali H. Trzesniewski, "Mentalizing Deficits Constrain Belief in a Personal God," *PLoS ONE* 7(5), May 30, 2012.

⁶ See Leonardo Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community*, (MaryKnoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000) and John Swinton, *Raging With Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), p. 204Cf.

⁷ Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An*

Introduction to Christian Theology 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2004), 76.

⁸ Ibid., 141.

⁹ Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: Bonanza Book, 1954), 11.

¹⁰ Justin L. Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God* (Lanham MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), 21-30.

¹¹ Ibid., 107-110.

¹² Justin L. Barrett, *Cognitive Science, Religion and Theology: From Human Minds to Divine Minds* (Templeton Press, 2011) 79-80.

¹³ Ibid., 79.

¹⁴ Justin Barrett, *Cognitive Science, Religion and Theology*, 79.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 80.

¹⁷ Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 27.

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1959), 131.

¹⁹ Ibid., 132.

²⁰ Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith (Perennial Classics)* (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers Inc., 1957), 47-50.

²¹ ST, vol. 1, 239.

²² Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 132.

²³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology vol. 1*, 245.

²⁴ ST, vol. 1, 243-244

²⁵ Paul Tillich, *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society* (Macon, GA: Mercy University Press, 2002), 44-45.

²⁶ ST, vol. 1, 212.

²⁷ Tillich uses these phrases interchangeably.

²⁸ ST, vol. 1, 235-236.

²⁹ ST, vol. 1, 244.

³⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology vol. 1*, 243.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 235.

³³ John Gillibrand, *Disabled Church, Disabled Society: The Implication of Autism for Philosophy, Theology and Politics* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2009), 70-73.

³⁴ Jessie Bering, "The Existential Theory of Mind" in *Review of General Psychology, Vol. 6 (1), March 2002*, 2-24.

³⁵ Temple Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 222.

³⁶ Ibid., 224.

**PAUL TILlich'S THEOLOGICAL LEGACY:
CRITICAL INSIGHTS FOR ACTUALIZATION**

GUIDO OLIANA

Abstract

The article offers a few considerations on the theological legacy of Paul Tillich, followed by a description of the transcendental dynamics of his method of correlation between "existential questions" and "theological answers". This correlation is an expression of a "theandric structure" of reality that finds its supreme hermeneutical key in the Christological paradox, which is manifested in the historical event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the New Being. The article presents a few critical insights for an actualization of the method of correlation by applying it to the following areas of concern: scientific research, the process of Lectio divina, spiritual discernment, spiritual direction, psychological accompaniment, preaching, theology, inculturation, politics, and economics. In this effort of actualization, some inspiring thoughts of Pope Francis are providentially in line with some of the aspects discussed.

Introduction

I got in contact with the thought of Paul Tillich during my stay in Chicago (1986-1993), where I worked for seven years in the International Theologate of the Comboni Missionaries. Our students were attending classes at the nearby prestigious Catholic Theological Union. I had just come from Rome after completing doctoral liturgical studies. I was rather content with my previous theological-liturgical formation. The thought of Paul Tillich, however, challenged my presumed theological self-confidence. His view about the relationship between "existential questions" and "theological answers" created in me a curious interest in his reflection that motivated my desire for a further exploration into his philosophical and theological perspectives.

I could dedicate myself fully to this project only a few years, when I started a doctoral program in Systematic Theology in the Theological Faculty of Milan (2005). My doctoral dissertation

carries the captivating title (here rendered in English): *Jesus, the Question, and Christ, the Answer. The Method of Correlation in the Christomorphic Theology of Paul Tillich*.¹

In this article, I would like to share some of the insights I have gathered from my study of Paul Tillich in terms of a possible actualization of his thought. My presentation is divided in three parts. I will, first, consider the life and the theological legacy of Paul Tillich in order to contextualize my reflection. I will, then, describe the transcendental dynamics of the method of correlation between “existential questions” and “theological answers”. I will, finally, attempt to formulate a few examples of application of this method to the following areas: scientific research, the process of *Lectio divina*, spiritual discernment, spiritual direction, psychological accompaniment, preaching, theological work, inculturation, politics, and economics,² supported by some insights of the poignant magisterium of Pope Francis.

1. Paul Tillich and his theological legacy

Paul Tillich, son of Lutheran pastor, was born on 20th August 1886 at Starzeddel in East Germany, now Poland. He had a classical humanistic, philosophical, and theological formation, concluded with a doctorate in philosophy (Breslau 1910) and a licentiate in theology, the highest degree granted at that time (Halle 1912). Both dissertations studied the philosophy of religion of Friedrich Schelling. They determined the future thought of Tillich. He was chaplain during the First World War (1914-1918). This marked him deeply both emotionally and intellectually. The dramatic experience of the war moved him to abandon his former optimistic liberalism in philosophy and theology and to adhere to the “dialectical theology” or “theology of crisis” with a particular personal perspective: the method of correlation. After a brief pastoral experience, he taught at the Universities of Berlin (1919-1924), Marburg (1924-1925), Dresden and Leipzig (1925-1926) and Frankfurt (1929-1933).

Because of his critique to Nazism, in 1933 he had to migrate to the USA, where he continued his academic **career** at the Theological Union of New York (1933-1955) and in the Divinity

Schools of Harvard (1955-1962) and Chicago Universities (1962-1965). He died in Chicago on 22nd October 1965, a few days after having given an intriguing conference on the theology of religions, which reported some insights he had gotten from a joint seminar held with Mircea Eliade. In the conference, Tillich prospected the necessity to revisit the format of systematic theology in the perspective of the history and theology of religions.³ His theological achievement is condensed in his monumental *Systematic Theology*.⁴

Assessing Paul Tillich’s theological legacy, we could say that he cannot be called the founder of a school of thought, as Karl Barth or Bernard Lonergan have been. Yet, he can be considered a pervasive inspiration for having had an undisputable impact on contemporary theology.⁵ Somebody speaks of a certain lack of interest in Tillich’s thought in recent years. Though Tillich may seem at times to have been forgotten, nevertheless “he is rightly considered one of the ‘giants’ of the theology of the XX century and as one who changed the way with which men and women think and speak of God. [...] His impact has been deeper than the expectations.”⁶

His influence, often hidden and not always openly recognized, is shown in the modern sensitivity towards the dialogue of theology with culture, arts, sciences, and religious traditions. Tillich remains the master of correlation for his strong commitment to the mediating function of theology, “which has shown to be his most enduring legacy for contemporary theology.”⁷ He is the master of the *et-et* versus the *aut-aut* of Karl Barth. As David Tracy highlights, Tillich can still today be our master in posing the right ultimate religious and theological questions and in being critical of any answer that claims absoluteness. Each theologian must ever more learn “what it means in the contemporary situation really to believe and to think, and to do both in the gifted clearing of that participating, defamiliarizing ‘and’ ”.⁸ This implies that any “existential question” represents a transcendental opening, through which divine revelation, in a hidden or veiled way, irrupts with its transforming and energizing “theological answer.”⁹

What are the relevant and inspiring elements that the Tillichian project offers today to the sys-

tematic theologian, to the Christian believer, or to any person of good will? I could try to answer these questions with four basic trajectories in thought: (1) the transcendental hermeneutical dialectics between “existential questions” and “theological answers” and its application to various areas of practical interest; (2) the radical implications of Tillich’s hyper-theistic view of God and his fundamentally pragmatic doctrine of the Trinity in terms of a human and spiritual empowerment, coupled with the doctrine of the *Ne Being* and the power of participation in it by all beings; (3) the refreshing insights of Tillich’s “protestant principle” and “Catholic substance” in an ecumenical perspective of the Church; (4) basic principles of interreligious dialogue in a world culturally and religiously pluralistic.

In this paper, I present the first trajectory: the method of correlation applied to a few areas of practical concern. Before trying to apply the method of correlation, one needs to appreciate the transcendental dynamic relationship between “existential question” and “theological answer,” based on the hermeneutical key of the Christological paradox, which constitutes the backbone of the method.

2. The transcendental dialectics between “existential questions” and “theological answers”

Paul Tillich states that there should be a correlation between God’s revelation and the human situation that has to receive it. “Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received.”¹⁰ In other words, there should be a correlation between human “existential questions,” expressing our human condition, and the “theological answers,” coming from God’s concern for our situation through his revelation. The message cannot be imposed on people as an answer to questions they have never asked. “Man cannot receive answers to questions he never has asked.”¹¹ Tillich explains his method of correlation as follows: “The method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through “existential questions” and “theological answers” in mutual inter-

dependence.”¹² Tillich describes this method thus: “It makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions.”¹³ In my doctoral dissertation in systematic theology in Milan, I studied Paul Tillich’s method of correlation in an attempt of assessing its plausibility,¹⁴ in spite of some criticism of the method raised by scholars.¹⁵

One is open to research, and thus transcends oneself, when one poses questions relevant to one’s cultural or existential situation.¹⁶ “Where one poses the question, there is the possibility of transcendence.”¹⁷ Bernard Lonergan is in the same line of thought when he vividly states: “The transcendental notions, that is, our questions for intelligence, for reflection and for deliberation, constitutes our capacity for self-transcendence. That capacity becomes an actuality when one falls in love,” namely, in one’s “being in love with God... in an unrestricted fashion”¹⁸ as it happens in religious experience. Such dynamics in Tillich—as Lonergan himself recognizes—consists in being grasped by “an ultimate concern,”¹⁹ which motivates the person to journey towards self-fulfillment (*eros*), that is, to discover and love the truth (*logos*) and, consequently, to decide about one’s life (*praxis*).²⁰ Faith is defined by Tillich as “the state of being ultimately concerned.”²¹ Eventually our ultimate concern is Jesus Christ himself and our unconditional dedication to him.²²

The one who poses the question, consciously or unconsciously, awaits a pertinent answer. The question is not simply fruit of an abstract intellectual reasoning, but is an expression of a vital need. It may derive from an exigency of inner healing, a conflict calling for a resolution, a request of clarification, a necessity of reconciliation, or a search that is motivated by love and demands love. In one word, the question begins a transcendental dynamics that calls for a re-composition of the missing element eagerly hoped for. It establishes a dialectical tension that draws towards the resolving synthesis by introducing the questioning person into a heuristic process that brings, if needed, even to a progressive reformulation of the question in view of the expected answer, thus causing the experience of conversion to a new reality or to

a new appropriation of the truth, without fully breaking with the past acquisitions, which are the basis for one's further longing. The aim of this process is opening "new roads to truth."²³

The "existential question" is an essential part of the polar tension that through the theological answer leads—so to speak—to the re-composition of a global perspective of reality or truth inherent to the particular situation that provokes the question. The dialectics of the method of correlation between "existential questions" and "theological answers" is, in other terms, the dynamics of the "symbol" (*syn-ballo* = putting together), that is, the re-composition of the two peoples of a reality that are thus re-connected in a vital union, thus making one's perception of reality more complete and meaningful. Theology itself is a symbolic activity, which finds in the dimension of research or of posing the "existential question" the motivation that leads "teleologically" to the "religious answer." Hence, it allows theological reflection by contemplating the relevance of the epistemological, ontological, and religious connection between "existential questions" and "theological answers."²⁴

The "existential question" can be provoked by the shock caused by a particular experience or by the wonder aroused by an unexpected extraordinary event. Such existential shock or ecstatic wonder, which we perceive in these singular experiences, represents that historical situation that could be defined "self-transcendent", because it opens our spirit up to a transformative experience of reality in which the one who poses the question finds himself. The crisis, which a particular event causes, expresses a judgment on our "being in the world," provokes our openness to, and reception of, a new understanding of reality in the light of the truth that makes us free (cf. *Jn* 8:32). Hence, this new acquisition becomes an answer of grace, a "theological answer" to the "existential question." This is the situation of the *kairos*, which comes to shake the formal, monotonous, and frustrating *chronos* of our existence. The correlation between question and answer, crisis and grace, *chronos* and *kairos*, constitutes that experience characterized by a revelatory factor that breaks into our historical situation to challenge our habits or prejudices by infusing into us new

meanings, thus making us open to self-transcendence, that is, to a transformative interpretation of reality, experience-able in terms of a new creation, a new being, "new heavens and a new earth" (*Is* 65:17; cf. *2 Pt* 3:13; *Rev* 2:1).

Somehow in the same vein of Tillich, Lonergan defines assimilation of new meanings, change or conversion, as an "ontic factor," and not just the reformulation of new doctrinal statement. It implies a transformation in the light of *2 Cor* 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"²⁵ This vision of a new creation is precisely what Tillich expresses in the concept of Christ as the New Being. Salvation, namely, the transformative reception of the "theological answer", means becoming existentially new beings in Jesus Christ, the New Being.²⁶

This Tillichian reading of reality can be described in terms of "historical realism", "believing realism", or "self-transcendent realism", which motivates an attitude of humble opening to the challenges of history, so that we may grasp in them the *kairoi*, the "signs of the times", namely, that mysterious presence of the "Unconditional" or unconditioned God, who breaks through our human existence helping us to relate to him by shaking us from our "chronological" slumber and making us enter a new "kairic" relationship in terms of conversion.²⁷ Lonergan too speaks of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.²⁸

In other words, the "existential question" of the method of correlation is the phenomenological expression of the "opening" of reality ("historical realism") to the Transcendent, through which the disruptive innovative breakthrough of the revelation of the Word of God manifests itself. The Word of God - according to Tillich - is thus every reality through which the ultimate power (power or ground of being) breaks through our contingent and precarious situation. This Word can be a person (Jesus Christ), a thing (a sacramental sign), a written text (the Bible), or a non-written word (preaching).²⁹ In the perspective of overcoming any form of absolute a-historical biblicalism, any event that mediates the power of the Unconditioned (God) in the contingent situation of our history is called Word of God. This contingent situation mediating the power of God's

Word is precisely defined as “believing realism” or “self-transcendent realism” in terms of a salvation history in action.

The message, which the revelatory breakthrough communicates, is reflectively thematized as “theological answer” in terms of a symbolic-phenomenological reflection on revelation. This means that the “existential question” becomes the expression of the *crisis* inherent to the “historical realism”, through which the depth of the transcendent meaning of the “theological answer” erupts, thus expressing judgment-crisis (shock) or grace (conversion). Crisis and grace, therefore, are the dimensions or historical modalities of the fragmentary breakthrough of revelation, which finds its supreme historical manifestation in the paradoxical event of “Jesus as the Christ.” In this event the dialectics between humanity and divinity, hermeneutically expressed as correlation between “existential question,” culminating in the death on the cross, and “theological answer” culminating in the resurrection, reached its fulfillment.³⁰

Undoubtedly for Tillich Jesus Christ is the center and focus of all his theological system. His statements are very clear about this absolute Christological primacy. “Jesus is the Christ [that] contains in some way the whole theological system.”³¹ “The term “New Being”... points directly to the cleavage between *essential being* [the being we should be] and *existential being* [the distorted being we are in our predicament] and is the restorative principle of the whole of this theological system.”³² The theology of Tillich is “radically Christological. He always speaks about art, science, philosophy, history, and religion with the purpose of understanding and disclosing their relation to Christ.”³³ Jesus Christ is the revelatory “symbol of the unity of reality.”³⁴ Hence, Jesus Christ is the meeting point between “existential question” and “theological answer.” It is the real symbol that joins the two.

The dialectical interdependence between “question” and “answer” can be applied to various fields of investigation, implying a heuristic dynamics. We can have various meaningful forms of application or actualization.

3. An attempt to apply the method of correlation

I now attempt a practical application of the method of correlation to the following areas of concern: scientific research, process of *Lectio divina*, spiritual discernment, spiritual direction, psychological accompaniment, preaching, theological work, inculturation, politics, and economics. What follows are insights that would demand further explorations especially in the various forms of the heuristic process that I have characterized in general as the transcendent dialectics between “question” and “answer,” implying underpinning ontological, epistemological, and eventually religious-revelatory dimensions. This expresses a vision of “the multidimensional unity of life”³⁵ in the perception that human beings participate in all levels of life as “microcosmos of the macrocosmos.”³⁶ “Man participates in the universe through the rational structure of mind and reality.”³⁷

a) Scientific research

Scientific research is based on the dialectics “question-answer.” The scientific hypothesis implies a question or a query which, through the heuristic process of experimentation, leads to a resolving answer, expressed by the exciting interjection “*Eureka*” (“I have found [it]”), attributed to the ancient Greek mathematician and inventor [Archimedes](#). This term celebrates a discovery, an invention, an answer to a process of empirical research. The expression is “closely related to [heuristic](#), which refers to experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning, and discovery.”³⁸ Obviously, the answers cannot be known before the experiments are done. But there are not adequate answers (discoveries) unless likewise adequate questions (hypotheses) are posed; questions which, in the course of the heuristic process, can be better reformulated according to the fragmentary results attained in the experimentation process.

One may object that a scientific discovery has nothing to do with a “theological answer.” I would respond to this objection by saying that God is the same author of both creation and re-

demption. Thus, any discovery in the field of creation (scientific research), if achieved according to moral standards in the respect of the dignity of the human person, is a sort of “theological” discovery or answer that leads to praise God as the supreme creator and pervasive provident Lord of the whole universe. The centrality of the *Logos*, the future Jesus Christ, also in creation is here expressed by his being the mediation of God the creator. “All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be” (*Jn* 1:3). Indeed, “we participate in the universe as a whole because of the universal structures, forms, and laws are open to us; through these we participate in the remotest star and the remotest past.”³⁹

As Carpenter writes, “Tillich’s way of doing theology is hardly conceivable apart from his belonging to the age of science and its requirement that enlighten theologians give their discipline not only religious relevance but also intellectual stature.”⁴⁰ Indeed, “science and theology are independent ways of arriving at truth, and so one cannot logically contradict the other.”⁴¹ Tillich comments: “It is a very poor method of defending the truth of faith against the truth of science.... Science can conflict only with science, and faith only with faith; science which remains science cannot conflict with faith which remains faith.”⁴²

Tillich criticizes the dichotomy between naturalism, which deals with the structures of finite reality, and supra-naturalism, which considers the existence of God as a supreme being above other beings. Supra-naturalism which “transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude.... Against this kind of supernaturalism the arguments of naturalism are valid and, as such, represents the true concern of religion, the infinity of the infinite, and the inviolability of the created structures of the finite. Theology must accept the anti-supranatural criticism of naturalism.”⁴³ This is so because the God of supra-naturalism is not the ground or power of being that conquers the threat of non-being. Therefore, it cannot be worshipped and must be rejected in name of authentic faith.⁴⁴ John F. Haught concludes the complex discussion thus: “Neither naturalism nor supra-naturalism can be religiously satisfying in the final analysis. And the dispute between them distracts

the participants from looking carefully at the deeper question of how science relates to religion.”⁴⁵

Pope Francis highlights that the dialogue between science and faith is integral part of evangelization at the service of peace. The Church proposes a synthesis between: 1) the responsible use of the methods of the empirical sciences; 2) and other areas of knowledge such as philosophy, theology, and faith, “which elevates us to the mystery transcending nature and human intelligence.”⁴⁶ Faith does not fear reason, but seeks and trusts reason, because “the light of reason and the light of faith both come from God.”⁴⁷ They cannot contradict each other. Evangelization or, in Tillichian terms, the “theological answer,” must pay attention to the scientific discoveries and shed on them the light of faith and the natural law, so that science may respect “the centrality and supreme value of the human person at every stage of life.” All of society will be enriched by this dialogue between science and faith. This dialogue opens up “new horizons for thought and expands the possibilities of reason,” thus promoting harmony and peace.⁴⁸ At times, scientists exceed the limits of their scientific expertise by making certain statements that sound more ideological, thus blocking “the path to authentic, serene, and productive dialogue.”⁴⁹

b) *Lectio divina*

The experience of *Lectio divina* is fundamentally based on the heuristic dynamic of “question-answer” in the process of being grasped by “ultimate concern,” which ultimately is Jesus Christ. In the meditation of Scripture, we go to the biblical text with our own life experiences, thus with our own “existential questions.” God uses the biblical text to mediate his answer, therefore, the “theological answer.” Scripture becomes a *locus theologicus* when one relates to it with deep “existential questions.” At the right time (*kairos*), through the biblical the Holy Spirit answers to the human queries by enlightening and empowering those who open themselves to it with humility.

Using a metaphor from the field of electricity, we can say that the *negative pole* of life (crisis) enters into contact with the *positive pole* of Scripture

(breakthrough of God's revelation), and a transforming and energizing encounter occurs. Scripture begins to make sense, to illumine our existence, to give it a new flavor, a new dynamism, and a new orientation. In such a situation of grace, we have an experience of revelation which is continually actualized in terms of human and spiritual empowerment, provoking a strong desire of conversion of one's existential attitudes and one's religious and theologian views.⁵⁰

As Tillich says, "The Bible is the original document about the events on which Christianity is based," but is not the only source.⁵¹ This is seen not only in the process of systematic theology,⁵² but in the process of *Lectio divina* as well. For the latter pays attention to the biblical text mainly in the first step of the process (*lectio*) and then, inspired by the biblical insight, moves to other integrative moods and contents of reflection, personal application, prayer, contemplation, and mission through the other stages of the process (*meditatio*, *oratio*, *contemplatio*, and *missio*).

Tillich comments of the biblical episode of Martha and Mary stating that "Martha is concerned about many things, but all of them are finite, preliminary, transitory. Mary is concerned about one thing, which is infinite, ultimate, lasting."⁵³ The process of *Lectio divina* could be very well illustrated by the biblical icon of Mary that offers "infinite attention, unconditional devotion, ultimate passion"⁵⁴ to the person of Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. "Mary was infinitely concerned."⁵⁵ The process of *Lectio divina* is a concrete way of biblical prayer that progressively helps us to overcome in us the attitude of Martha, that is, to be concerned with many finite, preliminary, transitory things.

In other words, the process of *Lectio divina* helps us to be ultimately concerned with "the Eternal Now," which is Christ, "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end" (Rev 21:6). Since in our "already" we are also anxious and concerned also about the "not yet," we are thus enabled "to elevate ourselves in prayer, meditation and thought, to the eternal."⁵⁶ *Lectio divina* is a way of continually becoming aware that the "Eternal Now" is present "now." But most of the times the process of *Lectio divina* helps us to experience that the divine "breaks powerfully into our

consciousness and gives us the certainty of the eternal, of a dimension of time which cuts into time and gives us our time."⁵⁷ Christ asserts that he is "the beginning and the end." He tells it to us who live in time and have to face the end. Each time has its own particular anxiety "which drives us to an ultimate question. There is *one* answer to these questions—the eternal. There is *one* power that surpasses the all-consuming power of time—the eternal: he who was and is and is to come, the beginning and the end. He gives us forgiveness for what has passed. He gives us courage for what is to come. He gives us rest in his eternal Presence."⁵⁸

Pope Francis says that the preacher has to develop a great personal familiarity with the Word of God.⁵⁹ If he does not do that, "he will indeed be a false prophet, a fraud, a shallow impostor."⁶⁰ A particular way of listening what the Lord wants to tell us and letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit is the process of *Lectio divina*, expressed an attitude of prayerful reading of the Scripture together with the study of the biblical text, so that we may grasp the central message of the text and understand how the same message speaks to our life today.⁶¹ Before a biblical text, one should ask: (1) Lord, what does this text say to me? (2) Which changes in my life is this text moving me to undertake? (3) What troubles me about this text? (4) Why am I not interested in this text? (5) What do I find pleasant in this text? (6) In this Word, what moves me, attract me, and why?⁶² The preacher, therefore, has first to experience what he preaches to others. One has to communicate to others what one has contemplated (*lectio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*) ("*aliis tradere contemplata*"⁶³) (*missio*).⁶⁴

c) Spiritual discernment

Any spiritual discernment implies the dynamics of "question-answer." One may ask: "In this particular situation of mine what is God's will for me? What is the best choice for me in life?" The process of clarification of one's existential query can occur by critically analyzing particular events, by reading one's or others' life experiences, by listening to the advice of wise people who generously gave themselves to God and neighbor in

difficult situations, or by meditating on God's Word in Holy Scripture.

We have seen that for Tillich the Word of God is not univocally identified with the text of the Holy Scripture. The Word of God is present in every reality through which the ultimate power breaks through in our contingent situation. This Word can be the person of Jesus Christ, a sacramental sign, the written text of the Bible, or preaching.⁶⁵ Tillich states clearly that the Word of God has many different meanings but all are unified in one meaning: "God manifests... in himself, in creation, in the history of revelation, in the final revelation, in the Bible, in the words of the Church and her members." The meaning of the symbol, the "Word of God" is God's manifestation in "the mystery of the divine abyss expressing itself through the divine Logos."⁶⁶ This variety of expressions of the Word of God allows the most different ways of spiritual discernment to take place.

In one's existential struggle, one can grasp a meaningful insight that can offer a liberating answer, helping the person to take a particular decision in life. In this way, the "existential question" is correlated to the "theological answer" that communicates a possible clarification of one's perplexities and thus offers an appeasing relief from one's searching tension in the happy discovery attained, in the hope given by the new perspective, in the energizing joy received. The newly discovered answer stimulates people to move courageously in their new journey of life.

d) Spiritual direction and psychological accompaniment

In spiritual discernment or psychological accompaniment, through the heuristic dialogue of "question-answer," a dynamics of search is established that opens one's spirit up to possible solutions of a particular existential struggle. In psychiatry itself, the association of ideas, the interpretations of dreams or other methods reveal a dynamism that implies a "teleological" relation of the "question" searching for an "answer" in terms of healing or resolution of a conflict. It is to be made clear, however, that spiritual direction is distinct from psychological accompaniment, as religion is

distinct from science or theology from philosophy, but the two dimensions have to interact and be mutually supportive.

As John Dourley says, "Depth psychology could truly mediate to a suffering humanity a reconnection with its essential truth in its own depth from which the healing approach of the divine would touch and transform the human mind and soul."⁶⁷ Tillich is clear in stating that the situation of anxiety in the experience of the destructive power of non-being in society or in the individual psyche must be detected either by sociological analysis or by depth psychology. Tillich was aware that the discoveries about the unconscious in human beings could help theological analysis of the ambiguities of our existence. "Psychoanalysis... could uncover the forms of self-deception, the unacknowledged ruthlessness of tyrannical social programs concealed by pseudo-religious justifications, and the apparently ironic intermingling of faith and doubt even in authentic religious experience."⁶⁸

As William R. Rogers points out, Tillich acknowledges that we tend to resist against uncovering "the painful revelations of hidden complexity of reality."⁶⁹ Tillich in his autobiography *On the Boundary* states: "Without this painful process the ultimate meaning of the Christian gospel cannot be perceived. The theologian, therefore, should use these means for exposing the true condition of man as often as he can rather than for propagating an idealism that smooths over the ambiguities of existence."⁷⁰ Yet, Tillich challenges psychiatric analysis which is just interested in individualistic orientations. They should consider the deep social questions, the "self-world correlation." Because "the self can never be understood in itself, but only in dynamic interaction with a world—especially the world of significant others."⁷¹ Ultimately, the consideration concerning the interaction between theology and psychology in Tillich's thought leaves half-open the question whether "in the existential situation the spiritual dimension can be distinguished, but never dissociated from the psychological."⁷²

Spiritual direction and psychological accompaniment find a meeting point in the reception of meaning. In spiritual direction, the meaning is focused on the person of Jesus, offering his freeing

Spirit in the experience of the truth that makes people free when they paradoxically accept their unacceptability.⁷³ Thus they can undergo a transforming participation in Christ as the New Being. In the process of spiritual direction, through the heuristic process of “question-answer,” people need to become aware of their shadows created by the power of the non-being outside and inside themselves. Then they are helped through the power of the Spirit to be grasped by the ultimate concern of the person of Jesus Christ the New Being that makes them new beings to the glory of the Father.

The psychological accompaniment for Christians eventually could end up in due time in spiritual direction. For non-Christians the liberating “theological answer”, perceived in the new transforming meaning, can be embodied in other religious or secular symbols or values helping people to feel a meaning purpose in life at the service of others in peaceful acceptance of their unacceptability.

The attentive and empathic listening attitude of the spiritual director or of the psychologist implies taking seriously the “existential question” of the inquirer who is painfully searching for a “theological answer” in terms of empowering new meanings. The heuristic process itself that from the question leads to the liberating answer is therapeutic. The spiritual director, led by the Spirit, or the psychologist, guided by empathic insights, helped by the sensitive listening to and concern for the situation of the directee or client, represents a sort of “catalyst” of the heuristic process towards a resolving answer to the existential inquiry.

e) Preaching

In preaching or delivering homilies, the dialectics “question-answer” is fundamental. The announcer of the Word of God cannot ignore the listeners by imposing a univocal monologue. The homilist must get the listeners involved, at least virtually, by anticipating their “existential questions,” so as to lead them towards those “theological answers” that the Word raises by enlightening them towards a transforming experience.

Presenting his third collections of sermons, *The Eternal Now*, Tillich gives a hint about the importance of speaking a language relevant to our times whether it is in professional theology or in preaching. “It is my hope that... the Christian message... is relevant for our time if it uses the language of our time.”⁷⁴ Also in his preaching Tillich was a theologian. “Tillich remained above all a systematic theologian. His sermons, in much the same way as his famous method of correlation, are determined by his insistence upon posing with all seriousness the question of the relevance of the Christian message to his contemporary society.”⁷⁵

According to Tillich, the theologian must be inspired by the words of Paul (1 *Cor* 9:19-23). He has to become all things to all men. He has to accept to become weak with the weak in order to gain the weak. One can become weak “by restraining from all fanaticism and theological self-certainty, and by participating - not from the outside, but from inside - in the weakness of all those to whom we speak... We are strong... only in so far as we point [...] to the truth which possesses us, but which we do not possess.”⁷⁶

The theologian must be “an *answering* theologian who, in spite of his participation in the weakness and in the errors of all men, is able to answer their questions through the power of his foundation, the New Being in Christ.”⁷⁷ Tillich says that we must answer to people who ask questions not with abstract statements but in the form of “continuous interpretation of our human existence, in all its hidden motions and abysses and certainties.”⁷⁸

Tillich speaks of the theologian, but his statements are also true for the preacher, who is asked to answer the “existential questions” of people. “We must not distort, by ecclesiastical and theological arrogance, that great cosmic paradox that there is victory over death within the world of death itself. We must not impose the heavy burden of wrong stumbling blocks upon those who ask us questions. But neither must we empty the true paradox of its power. For true theological existence is the witnessing to him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light, to him who is the true paradox.”⁷⁹

Commenting on Tillich’s Sermons, gathered in the volume *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Presby-

terian Life states: “Dr. Tillich has translated into a layman’s language the insights of his theological thoughts and has developed a most effective way of re-expressing, in terms which will be immediately grasped by present-day congregations, the basic human experiences to which the Biblical and ecclesiastical terminology points.”⁸⁰ The comment given on the second collection of sermons, *The New Being*, reads thus: “Each chapter has an unmistakable vigor and persuasive power which will arouse and stimulate.”⁸¹

Pope Francis is in the same line of thought, when he states that the preacher has to take seriously the Word of God, but also the needs of the people. “A preacher has to contemplate the Word, but he also has to contemplate his people,” using its symbols and answering its questions.⁸² We have not to offer answers to questions that nobody asks. We must “develop a broad and profound sensitivity to what really affects other people’s lives.”⁸³

f) Theological work

In theological reflection, the “existential question” formulates the “soteriological need” (in reference to one’s salvation in Christ), to which the religious symbol offers a “theological answer,” in terms of a redemptive transformation of one’s being in Jesus Christ, the New Being. In this way, a revelatory and liberating relationship is created between God and the people, which the systematic theologian thematizes reflectively and elaborates organically.

In systematic theology, the collaboration of philosophy and theology are indispensable. *Philosophy* formulates the “existential questions” in ontological terms, namely, in reference to the basic structures of the personal being under the threats of the non-being. *Theology* elaborates reflectively the “theological answer” (or religious answer) also in ontological terms. In other words, the systematic theologian “does theology” in terms of a transformative interpretation of reality,⁸⁴ that is, in terms of a new creation in Jesus Christ, the New Being. Through his divine Spirit Jesus Christ transformed the threats of the non-being experienced by the human being in hope-filled motivation for an unconditional or ultimate concern in

one’s infinite destiny, Christ the Alpha and the Omega, the “Eternal Now” who gracefully breaks into our present predicament.

In this perspective, the two *formal criteria* of theology for Tillich become clear: (1) “The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become matter of ultimate concern for us”⁸⁵; (2) “Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become matter of being or not-being for us.”⁸⁶ These formal criteria need to be filled with substance or content. This is the constructive work that *Systematic Theology* intends to formulate with the presentation of God as Being itself, the power and ground of being, of Christ as the New Being in whom all creature participate, and of the Spirit as the power and meaning of Being itself that acts through the Son for the Father’s glory.⁸⁷

The absolute foundation and content of the twofold formal criteria of theology, ultimately, is Jesus Christ, who becomes “the point of identity between the *absolutely concrete* and the *absolute universal*.”⁸⁸ As the absolutely concrete, Jesus Christ can become the ultimate existential concern for people who relate individually to him in faith. As absolutely universal, Jesus Christ becomes the possible focus of all relations in the universe, thus becoming “unconditional and infinite.” These relations with the absolutely concrete, identifiable with the absolutely universal, are expressed by the biblical Pauline expression “in Christ.” If we understand and accept the assertion of faith that in Jesus Christ the *Logos* has become flesh, as Tillich states, we realize that “Christian theology has a foundation which infinitely transcends the foundation of everything in the history of religion which could be called ‘theology.’”⁸⁹

The dialectics between “existential questions” and “theological answers” could be understood as the dialectics between the *absolutely concrete*, experienced indirectly in the need of posing of the “existential question,” searching for its identification with the *absolutely universal*, explicitly experienced in the meaningful liberating “theological answer” as the individual’s consciousness of belonging to a history of salvation that is bigger than one’s own

personal story, to a humanity and universe that is broader than one's narrow time and space, and to an infinite that transcends one's finite and transitory concerns, thus opening up to the unconditional concern of immortality.

g) Process of Inculturation

The process of inculturation of the evangelical message responds to the dynamics "question-answer." In the light of the Tillichian principle that "man cannot receive answers to questions he never has asked,"⁹⁰ a culture must make incarnate or appropriate the Gospel values in ways that help people to make them "flesh of their flesh" by inspiring their thinking, feeling, deciding, and acting in life.

The African culture, for instance, expresses its vital needs through "existential questions" in search for liberating "theological answers." The "theological answer" to these needs must be a "religious symbol" that in a liberating and energizing way unifies the two poles of the dialectics between culture and religion. Tillich states that the "existential question" is the "form" of the answer, and the "theological answer" is the "substance" of the question.⁹¹ The Tillichian axiom "religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion" represents the foundation of the process of inculturation. Any cultural form is looking for its religious full substance to give meaning and life to culture itself.

A Dominican African Theologian, Anthony A. Akinwale, reflects on the relevance of the method of correlation for Africa and its urgent need of inculturation. "African theology is a quest for correlation between the Christian message and the African situation, between Christian faith and African culture."⁹² This dialogue between the Christian message and the African culture must motivate a new interpretation of existence and "the long-awaited genuine emancipation of the African." Our author intends to use two expressions of Tillich to interpret the task of African theologians. African theology could be expressed as a "theology of African culture" and an "answering theology." As an African theologian, he asks himself the following questions: "Can the African become a Christian without becoming

alienated from his or her culture? Can the Christian message become flesh in the African situation without losing... its essential and unique character?"⁹³ These questions are similar to the questions that Paul Tillich tried to answer. "To answer them, critical African theology seeks to respect the double imperative of fidelity to the Christian message and consciousness of the African situation in which it is being proclaimed."⁹⁴

Inculturation, therefore, does not imply evangelizing people and cultures "in a purely decorative way as if it were by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots."⁹⁵ In other words, "evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life."⁹⁶ The Post-Synodal Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, following the First Assembly of Bishops for Africa, states that inculturation is "an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa." Inculturation is said to be "a requirement for evangelization," "a path towards full evangelization" and "one of the greatest challenges for the Church" in Africa.⁹⁷

I suggest a concrete example for the need of inculturation. The experience of reconciliation in an African context is felt normally as a community process whereby the offended community by a mishap of an individual (e.g. murder, adultery, theft, etc.) is directly involved in the therapeutic and reconciling process. In order to heal a social conflict caused by a wrong behavior, the traditional rite of individual reconciliation cannot be sufficient and efficacious in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation because of the social and cultural implications of the sinful misbehavior. Some forms of community involvement have to be devised in the process of reconciliation so that reconciliation may be really effective. Expressions of community involvement could be, for instance, organizing a meeting with the elders of the community to mediate between the guilty person and the offended community or performing community rites of purification.⁹⁸

For the inculturation of the sacraments in general, having saved the theological dimension of the celebration, in terms of faithfulness to the event of the crucified and risen Lord, it is important to grasp the symbolic relationship of “question-answer” between the Christ event and people’s existential situation. In this regard, we should ask: What do people consider important in their particular cultural and religious contexts that would motivate a deep transformation in, and conversion to, Jesus Christ? The process of incarnation or inculturation of the evangelical message implies the respect of this dynamics.

According to the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon (451), *humanity* maintains its own proper characteristics in its hypostatic relationship with *divinity* in the divine person of Jesus Christ. The natures are not annihilated. Such human-divine dialectics creates a real salvific transformation of humanity. The Chalcedonian model presents deep analogies with the method of correlation,⁹⁹ which should be at the basis of any process of inculturation of the liturgy in general and sacraments in particular.

h) Politics

In the political life, the correlation “question-answer” is fundamental to create a dialogical relationship between the various political forces in view of promoting the true common good of society in the process of overcoming heteronomous destructive ideological positions. Thanks to an authentic listening to people’s questions, through a heuristic process that respects the dialectic “question-answer,” political forces can formulate interpretative and transformative projects that efficaciously answer to the real needs of the community.

Martin Luther King was inspired by the thought of Paul Tillich, who was one of the two thinkers with whom he dealt in his doctoral dissertation at Boston University in 1955.¹⁰⁰ There is an often-quoted sentence of Martin Luther King: “I am convinced that we shall overcome because the arc of the universe is long but it bends towards justice.” This axiomatic expression is in line

with another axiomatic statement of Tillich: “Justice is not an abstract ideal standing over existence; it is the fulfilment of primal being, the fulfilment of that which was intended by the origin.” In this perspective justice is not a precept from a transcendent divinity, or a legal commandment or primarily the virtue of a good person. The commitment to justice and peace is thus inspired both in King and in Tillich by “an ontological presumption that the universe, in which all participate, is, in spite of every political corruption and systematic distortion, created from its origin with an arc that points and carries a struggling people towards justice.”¹⁰¹

Tillich struggles to define the relation between the concrete existence of politics and the ontological-theological vision of reality. “The treatment of political existence was basically a horizontal move embracing the complexity and anguish of a situation, while his treatments of ontology were a more vertical discerning of the depths of political existence to find structures and elements that helped define the situation.”¹⁰² In Tillich, we find awareness that an abstract ontology, which is rather an expression of the myth of the origin, how things should ideally be, needs to be broken by a philosophy of history. In his earlier socialist vision, embodied in the book *The Socialistic Decision*, he tried to relate his ontology to history.¹⁰³ Tillich frequently reminds us that there is no theological system of thought, either inductive or deductive, that can avoid that “point where individual experience, traditional valuation, and personal commitment must decide the issue. This point, often hidden to the authors... is obvious to those who look at them with other experiences and other commitments.”¹⁰⁴

Even in political existence, Tillich felt the tension between being and non-being in the distortions of the political crises of the Western culture. Tillich could be considered in line with the statement of Alain Badiou when the latter writes: “The militant of a truth is not only the political militant working for the emancipation of humanity in its entirety. He or she is also the artist-creator, the scientist who opens up a new theoretical field, or the lover whose world is enchanted.”¹⁰⁵

Pope Francis I calls for collaboration between politics and economy to be actively in dialogue for

human fulfilment. "Politics must not be subject to the economy, nor should the economy be subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy. Today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life."¹⁰⁶ Francis calls for a new form of politics that overcomes all forms of corruption and faces with courage the crisis in particular regarding the abuse of creation and consequently of the poor. "What is needed is a politics which is farsighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis,"¹⁰⁷ which expresses itself "in different forms of organized crime, human trafficking, the drug trade and violence."

Hence, "a strategy for real change calls for rethinking processes in their entirety, for it is not enough to include a few superficial ecological considerations while failing to question the logic that underlies present-day culture. A healthy politics needs to be able to take up this challenge."¹⁰⁸ Again politics and the economy are called to acknowledge their mistakes in protecting the common good and overcome the greed of power. "What we are left with are conflicts or spurious agreements where the last thing either party is concerned about is caring for the environment and protecting those who are most vulnerable. Here too, we see how true it is that "unity is greater than conflict."¹⁰⁹

i) Economics

In economy, the correlation "question-answer" is essential to guarantee a dialectical relationship between the fundamental needs of people and the solution adequate to these very needs. The dictatorial imposition of the solutions, either of "communist" or "capitalistic" type, which do not respect the dialectics "question-answer," are destructive of the very dignity of the human person.

This is so either because the "question" is ignored, since the "answer" is forced in a heteronomous or arbitrary way, or the "answer" is imposed as "question" and "answer" at the same time, thus provoking false questions-needs. This

is the situation of a technocratic and consumeristic society which creates false needs, thus preventing adequate answers to more authentic human longings. Every ideology is a heteronomous imposition of an "answer" not dialectically and proportionately adequate to the "question," hence creating serious distortions together with violent forms of destruction of social life.

Tillich highlighted the problems created by "technical reason," which neglects the "depth of reason," where the human person is seen in his/her deep longings towards the unconditional and not the technological finite. He criticized the dictatorship of "technical reason" expressed in the following situations: the possible threats of nuclear physics and molecular biology; the "dilemma of steadily increasing military power and steadily decreasing national security"; "the divorce of technical reason from... humanistic reason"; the acceleration of economy for one part of the world, thus creating a deeper gap between the poor and the rich and, therefore, "more miserable people in the world"; "the sickness of inflation, unemployment, shortage of energy and critical resources, and monstrously unequal distribution of good"; finally, ecological problems. The problematic is created by the fact that the politicians, the industrialists, the military generals and others, who try to manipulate the forces of nature, are not able to manage them for the common good of humanity.¹¹⁰ Part of the reasons of this unfortunate situation is that "technical reason has detached itself from humanistic reason and human concern."¹¹¹

Pope Francis too challenges "the efficient-driven paradigm of technocracy."¹¹² He denounces an economy concerned with pure profit at the detriment of the common good and invokes a reform of the entire system. "Saving banks at any cost, making the public pay the price... only reaffirms the absolute power of a financial system, a power which has no future and will only give rise to new crises after a slow, costly and only apparent recovery."¹¹³ A correct reading of financial crisis should provoke a rethinking of the entire financial system, but it did not happen. "The financial crisis of 2007-2008 provided an opportunity to develop a new economy, more attentive to ethical principles, and new ways of regulating

speculative financial practices and virtual wealth. But the response to the crisis did not include rethinking the outdated criteria which continue to rule the world.”¹¹⁴ Finally, the Pope invites economy to open up to new courageous ways. “It is a matter of openness to different possibilities which do not involve stifling human creativity and its ideals of progress, but rather directing that energy along new channels.”¹¹⁵

The method of correlation of Tillich addresses the world’s economic life by challenging the use of “technical reason” over and above “humanistic reason.” Paul Tillich continues to inspire our present economical world. “A civilization, habituated to look for a ‘technical fix’ for its difficulties, finds that it is “in a fix” because technical reason is inadequate. Almost everywhere people recognize the necessity to relate technique to values and commitments. But if these values and commitments are to be more than arbitrary or heteronomous assertions, they must have some grounding in the nature of humanity and of being. And that leads to Tillich’s theonomy,”¹¹⁶ in the sense of “autonomous reason united with its own depth.”¹¹⁷

In sum, the method of correlation of “existential questions” and “theological answers” registers the inadequacy of the destructive economic policies in line with “technical reason” (heteronomy), thus provoking “existential questions” (or concerns) calling for “theological answers”, namely, for the respect of the demands of the “depth of reason” (or humanistic reason), where the Spirit of God is at work for the authenticity of an integral human individual and collective human life (theonomy).

Conclusion

The transcendental dialectics of the method of correlation “question-answer” is the hermeneutical expression of the “theandric” structure of the world in “the multidimensional unity of life,”¹¹⁸ at ontological, epistemological, and religious level. Such “theandric” structure finds in the Christological paradox (“existential question”: the cross; “theological answer”: the resurrection) its interpretative key in terms of the revelatory “symbol of the unity of reality.”¹¹⁹

The concrete application of the method of correlation would need further explorations concerning the complexity of the heuristic process in each application. The aim of my considerations has been just to show its possible fecundity. It is clear that in each area the heuristic process has different modalities according to the object and the finality of each case. In each application, there would be the need of a particular study in depth. I have tried to raise some critical questions in each application in the light of some crucial aspects of Tillich’s complex thought.

In the light of the relatively comparable systems of Lonergan and Tillich, I also dare say that Tillich incisively states the hermeneutical importance of the method of correlation in its ontological, epistemological, and religious-revelatory implications, which are basic for any experience of meaning in life. Lonergan studies the general critical principles of the heuristic process of empirical research and reasoning, which are ultimately foundational for any dialectics “question-answer.” A more adequate research concerning the comparison of Lonergan’s and Tillich’s method would be necessary. Already studies are available, but the research has to continue.¹²⁰

I stated at the beginning of this article that Tillich is not the founder of a particular school. His thought is a volcanic source of so many elements powerfully interacting that it is not always easy to reduce them to a single-minded system. His variegated, vital, complex, and multidimensional reflection is a kind of ontological, epistemological, and hermeneutical echo of his hypertheistic understanding of God: not as a being as such, however infinite he may be alongside other beings (theism, supernaturalism), but a power of being or ground of being, not above reality, but in the depth of reality.

Notwithstanding his complex ontological, speculative, and systematic thinking, Paul Tillich has still to say something important at the level of spirituality which should be the springboard of the method of correlation itself. “In this post-modern era... the spiritual dimension of Tillich’s theology stands as a sign of hope, a place to lay one’s head, from persons asking questions. He offers solace to those confused and distressed, to those who seek the simplicity of the Spirit and a

sense of meaning in an authentic religious substance.”¹²¹

A beautiful prayer of Tillich summarizes well his understanding of reality as being open to the multiform richness of life, which finds its source in the eternal presence of Jesus Christ, the New Being, the Lord, the Alpha and Omega, the “Eternal Now”: “Our words of thanks are poor and often we cannot find words at all. There are days and months and years in which we were or are still unable to speak to you. Give us the power, at such times, to keep our hearts open to the abundance of life, and in silent gratefulness, to experience you unchanging, eternal presence. Take the silent sacrifice of a heart when words of thanks become rare in us. Accept pour silent gratefulness and keep our heart and minds open to you always!”¹²²

Bibliography

- AKINWALE A. A., “The Method of Correlation and African Theologians”, in R. F. BULMANN – F. J. PARRELLA (edd.), *Paul Tillich. A New Catholic Assessment*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press 1994, 189-212.
- BADIOU A., *Being and Event*, New York: Continuum 2004.
- BROWN, D. MACKENZIE (ed.), *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue*, New York: Harper & Row 1965.
- CARPENTER J. A., “Tillich and the Multidimensional Unity of Life”, in ID., *Nature & Grace. Toward an Integral Perspective*, New York: Crossroad 1988, 37-56.
- DOURLEY J., “Tillich in Dialogue with Psychology”, in R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 238-253.
- FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* (2013), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2013.
- HAMMOND G. B., *The Power of Self-Transcendence. An Introduction to the Philosophical Theology of Paul Tillich*, St. Louis, MO: The Bethany Press 1966.
- HAUGHT J. F., “Tillich in dialogue with natural science”, in R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 223-237.
- INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, “L’unità della fede e il pluralismo teologico”, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum 4* (Documenti Ufficiali della Santa Sede) 1971-1873, Bologna: EDB 1982.¹²
- IBUOMA S. I., *Paul Tillich’s Theology of Culture In Dialogue with African Theology. A Contextual Analysis* (Tillich Studien 11), Münster: Lit Verlag 2004.
- JOHN PAUL II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa (Ecclesia in Africa)* (4 September 1995), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1995.
- LONERGAN B. J. F., *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, London: Longmans and New York: Philosophical Library 1957 (rev. ed. 1958, repr. 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, etc.)
- _____, *Method in Theology*, Lonergan Research Institute for Regis College, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1971, 105.
- _____, “Theology in Its New Context”, in *Renewal of Religious Thought*. Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church Centenary of Canada, 1867- 1967, ed. L. K. Shook, Montreal: Palm Publishers 1968, 44-45.
- MAGESA L., *Anatomy of Inculturation. Transforming the Church in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2004.
- MANNING R. R., “Preface”, in ID (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press 2009, XV-XVII.
- MOIOLI G., “ ‘Status quaestionis’ del problema cristologico: presentazione e prime riflessioni”, in G. SEGALLA (ed.), *Il problema cristologico oggi*, Assisi: Cittadella Editrice 1973, 198-241.
- MOLLEGEN A. T. , “Christology and Biblical Criticism in Tillich”, in CH. W. KEGLEY (ed.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, New York: The Pilgrim Press 1982 (1st edition, New York: The Macmillan Company 1952), 265-281.
- OLIANA G., *Lectio Divina, Spirituality for the Mission*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1998, repr. 2009.
- _____, “Theology as *Lectio Divina*: An Insight into the Identity and Method of Doing The-

- ology at Tangaza, in DECLAN O'BYRNE - BEATRICE CHURU - JEKETULE (ed.), *Proclaiming the Good News. In Joyful Service and Hope*. The Catholic University in the 21st Century Celebrating the Silver Jubilee of Tangaza University College (Tangaza Occasional Papers 24), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2013, 51-67.
- _____, *The Joyful Power of the Gospel. A Spirituality for the New Evangelization*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2014, 2nd repr. 2015.
- _____, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta. Il metodo della correlazione nella teologia cristomorfica di Paul Tillich*, Tione (TN): Antolini 2011.
- _____, *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich. La sfida del coraggio di essere e del realismo credente*, Tione (TN): Antolini 2012.
- _____, "African Language, Drum, and Dance: Powerful Symbols of God's Saving Mystery", in S. B. MURRAY – AIMÉE UPJOHN LIGHT (edd.), *God and Popular Culture. A Behind-the-Scene Look at the Entertainment Industry's Most Influential Figure*, Santa Barbara, CA – Denver, CO: Praeger. An imprint of ABC-OLIO, LLC 20015, vol. II, 224-244.
- PAUCK W. – PAUCK M., *Paul Tillich. His Life & Thought*, New York: Harper & Row 1976, 1989.²
- PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)* (8 December 1975), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1992, 2nd repr. 2004.
- RING NANCY C., *Doctrine Within the Dialectic of Subjectivity and Objectivity: A Critical Study of the Positions of Paul Tillich and Bernard Lonergan* (Distinguished Dissertations), Lewiston, New York and Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press 1991.
- ROGERS W. R., "Tillich and Depth Psychology", in J. L. ADAMS, W. PAUCK, AND R. L. SHINN, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 102-118.
- SHINN R. L., "Tillich as Interpreter and Disturber of Contemporary Civilization", in J. L. ADAMS, W. PAUCK, AND R. L. SHINN, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, San Francisco: Harper and Row 1985, 44-62.
- STURM E., " 'First, read my sermon!' Tillich as preacher", in R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 105-120.
- TAYLOR M. L., "Tillich's ethics: between politics and ontology", R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 189-207.
- THOMAS J. M., "Introduction", in P. TILlich, *The Spiritual Situation in our Technical Society*, ed. M. Thomas, Macon, GA: Mercer University Press 1988, XIII-XVII.
- TILlich P., *The Shaking of the Foundations*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1948.
- _____, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University, 1952.
- _____, *Systematic Theology*, Three volumes in one, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967 (Vol. I was published in 1951, Vol. II in 1957, and Vol. III in 1963).
- _____, *Dynamics of Faith*, New York: Harper & Row 1957.
- _____, "Realism and Faith", in ID., *The Protestant Era* (Abridged Edition), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1957, 66-82.
- _____, *The New Being*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1955.
- _____, *Theology of Culture*, London-Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press 1959.
- _____, *The Eternal Now*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1963.
- _____, *On the Boundary. An Autobiographical Sketch*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1966, 88 (first edition, 1936).
- _____, *The Socialist Decision*, New York, Hagerstown – San Francisco, London: Harper & Row Publishers 1977; orig. Germ. *Die sozialistische Entscheidung*, Postdam: Alfred Protte , 1933.
- TRACY D., "Tillich and Contemporary Theology", in J. L. ADAMS - W. PAUCK – R.L. SHINN, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, San Francisco: Harper and Row 1985, 260-277.

¹ G. OLIANA, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta. Il metodo della correlazione nella teologia cristomorfica di Paul Tillich*, Tione (TN): Antolini 2011. I published my doctoral dissertation in two volumes: the first is the volume just mentioned; the second carries the title: *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich. La sfida del coraggio di essere e del realismo credente*, Tione (TN): Antolini 2012, the Eng. tr. being: "The Theological Project of Paul Tillich. The Challenge of the Courage to Be and of the Believing Realism."

- ² For some of these considerations, cf. G. OLIANA, *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich*, 360-367.
- ³ For this biographical sketch of Paul Tillich in this and previous paragraph, cf. G. OLIANA, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta*, 15. For a classic biography of Paul Tillich, cf. W. PAUCK – M. PAUCK, *Paul Tillich. His Life & Thought*, New York: Harper & Row 1976, 1989.
- ⁴ P. TILlich, *Systematic Theology*, Three volumes in one, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1967 (Vol. I was published in 1951, Vol. II in 1957, and Vol. III in 1963). In the course of this article, I will use the abbreviation ST in reference to this work.
- ⁵ Cf. D. TRACY, “Tillich and Contemporary Theology”, in J. L. ADAMS - W. PAUCK - R.L. SHINN (edd.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, San Francisco: Harper and Row 1985, 260.
- ⁶ R. R. MANNING, “Preface”, in ID (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009, XV.
- ⁷ R. MANNING, “Preface”, XVI.
- ⁸ D. TRACY, “Tillich and Contemporary Theology”, 275 (italics mine).
- ⁹ Cf. ST I, 8; 30-31; 34; 59-60; 64-66; II, 13-16.
- ¹⁰ ST I, 3.
- ¹¹ Cf. ST I, 65.
- ¹² ST I, 60.
- ¹³ ST, 62.
- ¹⁴ Cf. G. OLIANA, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta*; ID., *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich* (cf. note 1).
- ¹⁵ In my doctoral dissertation, I precisely try to consider both the negative and positive assessment of Tillich in the USA; cf. G. OLIANA, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta*, 37-233.
- ¹⁶ For a good introduction to the dimension of self-transcendence in the theology of Paul Tillich, cf. G. B. HAMMOND, *The Power of Self-Transcendence. An Introduction to the Philosophical Theology of Paul Tillich*, St. Louis, MO: The Bethany Press 1966.
- ¹⁷ J. M. THOMAS, “Introduction”, in P. TILlich, *The Spiritual Situation in our Technical Society*, ed. M. Thomas, Macon, GA 1988: Mercer University Press XVIII.
- ¹⁸ B. J. F. LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 105.
- ¹⁹ Cf. B. J. F. LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 106. For references concerning “ultimate concern” in Tillich (as reported in the Index of ST, 442), cf. ST I, 10, 12-14, 21, 24-25, 28, 36, 42, 50, 53, 110-111, 115, 118, 120-121, 124, 127, 131, 146, 148, 156, 211, 214-216, 218, 220-223, 230, 273; ST II, 9, 14, 26, 30, 87, 116; ST III, 102, 125, 130, 154, 223, 283, 287, 289, 293, 349, 422. One can see also the synthetic statement of “faith

as ultimate concern” in P. TILlich, *Dynamics of Faith*, New York: Harper & Row 1957, 1-4. See also P. TILlich, “Our ultimate concern”, in ID., *The New Being*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1955, 152-160; BROWN, D. MACKENZIE (ed.), *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue*, New York: Harper & Row 1965.

²⁰ For a consideration of the process from *Logos* to *Kairos*, cf. G. OLIANA, *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich*, 124-126.

²¹ P. TILlich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1, 4.

²² Cf. P. TILlich, *The New Being*, 153.

²³ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 44. Indirectly, the process reflects the way of “the master of a house-hold who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old (*nova et vetera*)” (Mt 13:52). In expressing his task of finding new ways for an adequate critical thinking, Lonergan adopted a phrase from the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of Pope Leo XIII, inspired by Mt 13:52: *vetera novis augere et perficere*, meaning that to enlarge and perfect the old one needs to adopt the new. Cf. B. J. F. LONERGAN, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, London: Longmans and New York: Philosophical Library 1957 (rev. ed. 1958, repr. 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, etc.), 747.

²⁴ Cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, “L’unità della fede e il pluralismo teologico”, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 4 (Documenti Ufficiali della Santa Sede) 1971-1873, Bologna: EDB 1982¹², 1141, no. 1810.

²⁵ Cf. B. J. F. LONERGAN, “Theology in Its New Context”, in *Renewal of Religious Thought*. Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church Centenary of Canada, 1867-1967, ed. L. K. Shook, Montreal: Palm Publishers 1968, 44-45.

²⁶ Among other Tillichian references, cf. ST II: *Existence and the Christ*; *The New Being*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1955.

²⁷ Cf. P. TILlich, “Realism and Faith”, in ID., *The Protestant Era* (Abridged Edition), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1957, 66-83.

²⁸ Cf. B. J. F. LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 217, 289-299, 318, 338.

²⁹ Cf. P. TILlich, “Realism and Faith”, 81.

³⁰ Cf. G. OLIANA, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta*, 243-245. The two sentences put on Jesus’ lips by the evangelist express this twofold situation: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:24) (existential question) and “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46) (theological answer).

³¹ ST III, 201.

³² ST II, 119. Italics mine.

³³ A. T. MOLLEGEN, “Christology and Biblical

Criticism in Tillich”, in CH. W. KEGLEY (ed.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, New York: The Pilgrim Press 1982 (1st ed. by CH. W. KEGLEY – R. W. BRETALL (edd.), New York: The Macmillan Company 1952), 265.

³⁴ G. MOIOLI, “*Status quaestionis*” del problema cristologico: *presentazione e prime riflessioni*, in G. SEGALLA (ed.), *Il problema cristologico oggi*, Assisi: Cittadella Editrice 1973, 220.

³⁵ ST III, 11-30.

³⁶ Cf. J. A. CARPENTER “Tillich and the Multidimensional Unity of Life”, in ID., *Nature & Grace. Toward an Integral Perspective*, New York: Crossroad 1988, 37-56, here 45.

³⁷ ST I, 176.

³⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eureka_\(word\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eureka_(word)).

³⁹ Cf. J. A. CARPENTER “Tillich and the Multidimensional Unity of Life”, 45.

⁴⁰ J. F. HAUGHT, “Tillich in dialogue with natural science”, in R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 223.

⁴¹ J. F. HAUGHT, “Tillich in dialogue with natural science”, 223.

⁴² P. TILlich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 82.

⁴³ ST II, 6. As shown, Tillich uses both terms: “supra-naturalism” and “supernaturalism.”

⁴⁴ Cf. J. F. HAUGHT, “Tillich in dialogue with natural science”, 228.

⁴⁵ J. F. HAUGHT, “Tillich in dialogue with natural science”, 236.

⁴⁶ FRANCIS, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 242.

⁴⁷ ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 7; cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Ratio et Fides*, n. 43.

⁴⁸ FRANCIS, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 242.

⁴⁹ FRANCIS, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 243.

⁵⁰ Cf. G. OLIANA, *Gesù, la domanda, e Cristo, la risposta*, 7-8. I discuss the process of *Lectio divina* in G. OLIANA, *Lectio Divina, Spirituality for the Mission*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1998, repr. 2009, *The Joyful Power of the Gospel. A Spirituality for the New Evangelization*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2014, 33-40 and in the article “Theology as *Lectio Divina*: An Insight into the Identity and Method of Doing Theology at Tangaza”, in DECLAN O’BYRNE - BEATRICE CHURU - JEKETULE (ed.), *Proclaiming the Good News. In Joyful Service and Hope. The Catholic University in the 21st Century*

Celebrating the Silver Jubilee of Tangaza University College (Tangaza Occasional Papers 24), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2013, 51-67.

⁵¹ ST I, 34.

⁵² Cf. ST I, 34-40.

⁵³ P. TILlich, *The New Being*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1955, 152.

⁵⁴ P. TILlich, *The New Being*, 153.

⁵⁵ P. TILlich, *The New Being*, 159.

⁵⁶ P. TILlich, *The Eternal Now*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1963, 123.

⁵⁷ P. TILlich, *The Eternal Now*, 131.

⁵⁸ P. TILlich, *The Eternal Now*, 131-132.

⁵⁹ Cf. FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* (2013), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2013, no.150.

⁶⁰ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no.151.

⁶¹ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no.152.

⁶² FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 153.

⁶³ ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *S. Th.* II-II, q. 188, a. 6

⁶⁴ Cf. FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 150.

⁶⁵ Cf. P. TILlich, “Realism and Faith”, 81.

⁶⁶ ST I, 159.

⁶⁷ J. DOURLEY, “Tillich in dialogue with psychology”, in R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 248.

⁶⁸ W. R. ROGERS, “Tillich and Depth Psychology”, in J.L. ADAMS - W. PAUCK – R.L. SHINN (edd.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 103.

⁶⁹ W. R. ROGERS, “Tillich and Depth Psychology”, 103.

⁷⁰ P. TILlich, *On the Boundary. An Autobiographical Sketch*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1966, 88 (first edition, 1936)

⁷¹ W. R. ROGERS, “Tillich and Depth Psychology”, 108.

⁷² J. DOURLEY, “Tillich in dialogue with psychology”, 212.

⁷³ In *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University, 1952¹, 2000), Tillich states the confident courage that one experiences in life derives from divine forgiveness. God’s forgiveness facilitates “the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable” (164). It is not so much the good or wise or pious person as such who receive the courage to accept acceptance but “those who are lacking in all these qualities and are aware of being unacceptable” (165).

⁷⁴ P. TILlich, “Preface”, in ID., *The Eternal Now*.

⁷⁵ E. STURM, “‘First, read my sermon!’ Tillich as preacher”, in R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 105.

⁷⁶ P. TILlich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1948, 125.

⁷⁷ P. TILlich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 127

⁷⁸ P. TILlich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 128.

⁷⁹ P. TILlich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 129.

⁸⁰ From the back cover of TILlich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*.

⁸¹ From the inner front cover.

⁸² FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 154.

⁸³ FRANCIS, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no.155.

⁸⁴ Cf. ST I, 18-28.

⁸⁵ ST I, 12.

⁸⁶ ST I, 14.

⁸⁷ These three dimensions are respectively the content of three volumes of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*.

⁸⁸ ST I, 17. Italics mine.

⁸⁹ ST I, 18.

⁹⁰ Cf. ST I, 65.

⁹¹ Cf. ST. I, 64: "There is a mutual dependence between question and answer. In respect to *content* [substance] the Christian answers are dependent on the revelatory events in which they appear; in respect to *form* they are dependent on the structure of the question which they answer." This recalls the famous axiom "Religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion." P. TILlich, *Theology of Culture*, London-Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press 1959, 42; or in the final version: "Culture is the form of religion and religion is the substance of culture" (ST III, 158). See G. OLIANA, *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich*, 37-40.

⁹² A. A. Akinwale, "The Method of Correlation and African Theologians", in F. BULMANN - F. J. PARRELLA, eds., *Paul Tillich. A New Catholic Assessment*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press 1994, 201.

⁹³ A. A. Akinwale, "The Method of Correlation and African Theologians", 202.

⁹⁴ A. A. Akinwale, "The Method of Correlation and African Theologians", 202. For a more articulated study on the relevance of Paul Tillich's theology of culture in dialogue with African theology, cf. S. I. IBUOMA, *Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture In Dialogue with African Theology. A Contextual Analysis* (Tillich-Studien 11), Münster: Lit Verlag 2004.

⁹⁵ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)* (1975), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1992, 2nd repr. 2004, n. 20.

⁹⁶ Cf. PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 63. For a discussion on inculturation in the light of the principles of incarnation and catholicity, cf. G. OLIANA, *The Joyful Power of the Gospel. A Spirituality for the New Evangelization*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2014, 1st repr. 2015, 22-32.

⁹⁷ JOHN PAUL II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa (Ecclesia in Africa)* (1995), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1995, n. 59.

⁹⁸ For a contextualized discussion in an African context about inculturation with concrete examples, cf. L. MAGESA, *Anatomy of Inculturation. Transforming the*

Church in Africa, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2004. I have tried a theological-liturgical reflection on inculturation in an Africa context in a recent two-volume publication in the USA: G. OLIANA, "African language, Drum, and Dance: Powerful Symbols of God's Saving Mystery", in S. B. MURRAY – AIMÉE UPJOHN LIGHT (edd.), *God and Popular Culture. A Behind-the-Scene Look at the Entertainment Industry's Most Influential Figure*, Santa Barbara, CA – Denver, CO: Praeger. An imprint of ABC-OLIO, LLC 20015, vol. II, 224-244.

⁹⁹ Cf. G. OLIANA, *Il progetto teologico di Paul Tillich*, 187-240.

¹⁰⁰ MARTIN LUTHER KING, *A comparison of the conception of God in the thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman* (Boston University, 1955).

http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/enc_dissertation_of_martin_luther_king_jr_1955/

¹⁰¹ M. L. TAYLOR, "Tillich's ethics: between politics and ontology", R. R. MANNING (ed.), *Cambridge Companion of Paul Tillich*, 189.

¹⁰² M. L. TAYLOR, "Tillich's ethics: between politics and ontology", 189-190.

¹⁰³ P. TILlich, *The Socialist Decision*, New York, Hagerstown – San Francisco, London: Harper & Row Publishers 1977; orig. Germ. *Die sozialistische Entscheidung*, Postdam: Alfred Protte 1933.

¹⁰⁴ ST I, 8.

¹⁰⁵ A. BADIOU, *Being and Event*, New York: Continuum 2004, XIII, quoted in M. L. TAYLOR, "Tillich's ethics: between politics and ontology", 192-193.

¹⁰⁶ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*. Encyclical Letter on Care for our Common Good (2015), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2025, no. 189.

¹⁰⁷ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 197.

¹⁰⁸ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 197.

¹⁰⁹ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 198.

¹¹⁰ Cf. R. L. SHINN, "Tillich as Interpreter and Disturber of Contemporary Civilization", in J. L. ADAMS - W. PAUCK – R. L. SHINN (edd.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 54-55.

¹¹¹ R. L. SHINN, "Tillich as Interpreter and Disturber of Contemporary Civilization", in J. L. ADAMS - W. PAUCK – R. L. SHINN (edd.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 55.

¹¹² FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 189.

¹¹³ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 189.

¹¹⁴ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 189.

¹¹⁵ FRANCIS, *Laudato sí*, no. 191.

¹¹⁶ R. L. SHINN, "Tillich as Interpreter and Disturber of Contemporary Civilization", 55.

¹¹⁷ R. L. SHINN, "Tillich as Interpreter and Disturber of Contemporary Civilization", 50.

¹¹⁸ ST III, 11-30.

¹¹⁹ G. MOIOLI, “‘Status quaestionis’ del problema cristologico”, 220.

¹²⁰ Cf. ad ex., NANCY C. RING, *Doctrine Within the Dialectic of Subjectivity and Objectivity: A Critical Study of the Positions of Paul Tillich and Bernard Lonergan* (Distinguished Dissertations), Lewiston, New York – Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press 1991.

¹²¹ F. J. PARRELLA, “Spirituality for the Twenty-first Century: An Introduction”, in R. F. BULMANN - F. J. PARRELLA, eds., *Paul Tillich. A New Catholic Assessment*, 198.

¹²² P. TILlich, *The Eternal Now*, 184.

Please send your papers for future Bulletins to me at:

fparrella@scu.edu

**Frederick Parrella
Secretary Treasurer, NAPTS**

**Religious Studies
Department
Santa Clara University
500 East El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA 95053**

**OFFICERS OF
THE NORTH AMERICAN
PAUL TILLICH SOCIETY**

President

Adam Pryor, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas

President Elect

Devan Stahl, College of Human
Medicine, Michigan State University

Vice President

Verna Ehret, Mercyhurst University

Secretary Treasurer

Frederick J. Parrella, Santa Clara University

Past President

Bryan Wagoner, Davis and Elkins College

Board of Directors

Term Expiring 2017

Rachel Sophia Baard, Villanova University
Verna Ehret, Mercyhurst University
Lawrence Whitney, Boston University

Term Expiring 2018

Jawanza Clark, Manhattan College
Joanna Kristensen, University of Copenhagen
Jari Ristiniemi, University of Gävle

Term Expiring 2019

Ted Farris, New York City
Charles Fox, SUNY Empire State College
Ronald Stone, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary