



THE NORTH AMERICAN PAUL TILlich SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume XXVII, Number 1

Spring 2001

Religious Studies Department
336 Bannan Hall

Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA 95053

Editor: Frederick J. Parrella, Secretary-Treasurer, NAPTS
408-554-4714

fparrella@scu.edu

In this issue:

- News from the AAR/SBL about the Annual Meeting in Denver
- New Publications on Tillich and On the Calendar
- Call for Reviews
- Report from the Annual Meeting of the Deutsche Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft (DPTG)
- "Estrangement and Existential Angst in Human Life: An Examination of Paul Tillich and Cornel West" by Stephen Butler Murray
- "Paul Tillich's Theology of Intellectual Salvation" by John M. Page

A NEW FEATURE OF THE NEWSLETTER

Paul Tillich's impact is not only academic. His influence is broader and deeper than the philosophy and theology of many in the academic and ecclesiastical world. By the power of his ideas and the depth of his thought, he has also changed people's lives. In this spirit, the Newsletter would like to publish occasional papers less in the scholarly mode and more on the impact of Tillich's thought on individuals who have read him and see their lives differently.

This approach can be found elsewhere in the scholarly world. A recent two-part volume of the *Hopkins Quarterly*, a journal of scholarship on the poetry of the nineteenth century poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, devoted both issues to a collection of reminiscences by scholars and academics who address, in a very personal way, the history of their "encounters with the poet and the poems." (See Joaquin Kuhn, "Preface to the Jubilee Volume: As Kingfishers Catch Fire, *The Hopkins Quarterly* 25 [Winter-Spring 1998], 3.). Both the Winter-Spring and the Summer-Fall issues are dedicated to these more personal reflections.

Thus, we begin with John Page's essay in this issue. The editor would appreciate any other such pieces that could be published in the Newsletter—especially by individuals who knew Tillich personally. As new generations of Tillich scholars emerge,

the *Newsletter* can serve not only to keep Tillich's thought alive and apply it to contemporary issues but also to preserve the memory of Tillich himself as a scholar, teacher, and preacher and his impact on people.

NEWS FROM THE AAR/SBL

The 2001 Annual Meeting Registration & Housing opened ONLINE on May 14, 2001, at 1:01 AM EDT. You must be registered for the meeting before you can secure housing. Telephone, fax, and mail processing for Annual Meeting Registration & Housing opens on May 15, 2001 at 10:01am EDT. Registration and Housing Forms will be available online at <http://www.aarweb.org> in the "Of Note" box in early May, and in AAR's Spring issue of *Religious Studies News* is due to arrive in early May.

- Additional Meeting Request forms are now available for the Annual Meeting. Please see: <http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2001/addmeet.asp>.
- Preliminary Program Highlights are available online. Please see <http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2001/highlights.asp>.
- For the most current information about the AAR Annual Meeting, bookmark: <http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeet>.

• Employment Information Services Center registration opens on Monday, June 18, 2001.

The Spring 2001 issue of *Religious Studies News*, AAR Edition, which arrived in May has a special registration insert on the Annual Meeting and the newest Spotlight on Teaching: Religion and Music, edited by Tazim Kassam, Syracuse University.

The Status of Women in the Profession Committee will have an opening beginning in 2002 through 2004, to be filled by the president this November. Send expressions of interest and a CV to the executive director, AAR, 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA 30329.

AAR's Religion in Schools Task Force is recruiting for two opportunities at the Annual Meeting: (a) scholars to visit Denver area public schools to provide support to teachers, and (b) scholars with significant teaching experience in ethics, world religions, religion and literature, and Bible to converse with high school teachers during a roundtable luncheon. Please contact Edward Gray at: egray@aarweb.org if you are interested.

The Fulbright Scholar Program is offering lecturing/research awards in some 140 countries for the 2002-2003 academic year. Application deadlines in 2001 are May 1 for Distinguished Chair awards in Europe, Canada and Russia; August 1 for traditional lecturing grants worldwide; and November 1, for spring/summer seminars in Germany, Korea and Japan. For information, visit <http://www.cies.org>.

The AAR Web site now has a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page at: <http://www.aarweb.org/other/faq.asp>.

REGISTRATION AND HOUSING

For housing and registration information in Denver, contact the following:

Annual Meeting Registration and Housing
c/o Windham Jade
6400 International Parkway, Suite 2500
Plano, TX 75093
Telephone (available 24 hours): 1.888.447.2321
(United States and Canada)
1.972.349.7434 (Outside the United States and Canada)

CORRIGENDUM

Don Dreisbach's name was inadvertently left out of the list of officers in the Winter 2001 Newsletter. Don's term as a board member expires in 2001. The editor apologizes for the error.

NEW PUBLICATIONS ON TILLICH

A. James Reimer. *Mennonites and Classical Theology: Dogmatic Foundations for Christian Ethics*. Kitchener: Pandora Press/ Herald Press), 2001.

ON THE CALENDAR

A. James Reimer has been accepted to the Centre of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, for the academic semester of January to June, 2002.

CALL FOR REVIEWS

At the Nashville meeting, a Board member suggested that the Newsletter publish reviews of recent publications on Tillich. The editor request that anyone who has read a recent book or article on Tillich write a brief review on the book and send it to the Newsletter. The review may be several paragraphs or several pages long. Differing views can be published in subsequent Newsletters.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DEUTSCHE PAUL-TILLICH-GESELLSCHAFT (DPTG): A REPORT

DORIS LAX

From March 2nd to the 4th, 2001, the German Paul Tillich Society (DPTG) held its annual meeting in Bad Boll, close to Stuttgart, a place where the society has often met in the past. The annual meetings of the society are to be distinguished from the International Paul Tillich Symposia that are held every other year in Frankfurt/Main and address an international academic audience and participation. The annual meetings of the DPTG focus mainly on the German members of the society and address a less academically oriented, yet religiously and theological interested professional and lay audience. The annual meetings are always organized and held in co-operation with an "Evangelische Akademie," centers for adult education. Thus, the programs usually concentrate less exclusively on Tillich's thought even Tillich, of course, is always given significant of attention. They try to deal with any given topic from various angles.

This year's topic was "On Sacramentalism" and the four papers presented introduced the audience to a variety of Christian understandings and practices of sacraments in different churches. The opening

paper, Friday evening, March 2, was given by Prof. Dr. Gunther Wenz of the University of Munich. Entitled "The Mysterium of Jesus Christ and the Sacraments: Ecumenical Perspectives," it included a section on Tillich's understanding of the sacraments, interpreted by their relationship to the Confessio Augustana as well as in the context of the recent ecumenical efforts.

Saturday, March 3, began with an interesting paper, "The Sacraments in Orthodox View," presented by Father Armash Apegha Nalbandian of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Germany. Father Armash's explanations on how the seven sacraments of the Armenian Church are understood and practiced presented important insights into the theology and church life of an Orthodox Christian community. This theology is hardly known by the majority of western Christianity despite the fact that the Armenian Church probably is the oldest church in the world. In the second paper of that day, Prof. Dr. Adam Seigfried of University of Regensburg explained the Roman Catholic understanding of the sacraments against the background of the recent Vatican letter "Dominus Jesus." Prof. Seigfried's interpretations thus connected with the ecumenical perspectives of the evening before. After lunch the audience was presented with some perspectives on "The Renewed Sacraments in the 'Christengemeinschaft,'" a community of Christians indebted to Rudolph Steiner's anthroposophical thought. Johannes Lenk, one of the retired leaders of the community in Germany, and Dr. Wilhelm Maas—both from Stuttgart, the headquarters of the Christengemeinschaft—gave excellent reports on the basic understanding and practice of Christianity as well as the meaning of sacraments from their community's perspective.

The rest of the afternoon had been reserved for the annual business meeting of the DPTG. Led by the president of the society, Prof. Dr. Gert Hummel, the business meeting included annual issues like finances and questions of membership. It also discussed the extraordinary joint venture the DPTG envisages for June. For the first time, the Tillich-Society, thanks to the joint efforts of its members, Pastor Heidrun Doerken, Dr. Peter Haigis and others, will be able to participate in a number of activities in co-operation with and at the German annual "Evangelischer Kirchentag." This is a huge four-day event at which Protestants of all Protestant churches gather for papers, discuss, and worship. This year's "Kirchentag" will be in Frankfurt. Under the general

theme "Paul Tillich: 'Crosser of Boundaries' Between Religion and Culture," there will be a panel discussion on "Religious Concern and Theological Passion in Present Cultural Developments: Paul Tillich's Suggestions for the Present Debate of Culture and Education in Protestantism" with Prof. Dr. Matthias Kroeger (Hamburg); a walk tracing the places where Tillich lived and worked in Frankfurt (led by Pastor Mathias Fritsch, member of the board of directors of the DPTG); a "Biographical Report: On the Boundary of Religion and Culture," including music, pictures, and videos and featuring "eyewitnesses" like Prof. Dr. Eberhard Amelung (Munich) and Dr. Théo Junker (current president of the French speaking Tillich-Society); a presentation by Prof. Dr. Peter Steinacker (President of the German regional Protestant Church of Hesse and Nassau) on "Passion and Paradox. Approaching a Painting by Max Beckmann with the Assistance of Paul Tillich"; and a video presentation by Pastor M. Benn, Frankfurt. Topics of further discussions at the annual meeting included next year's meeting that will be held for the first time ever in Berlin, April 12-14, 2002. The theme will be "Does God Exist? Paul Tillich and the Legitimacy of Theological Questions." After some debate the members of the society decided that future meetings should be more focussed on Tillich's thought and therefore should schedule at least two papers that concentrate on Tillich's theology. Concluding the business meeting Prof. Hummel reported that the papers of the VIII International Paul Tillich Symposium were released recently, and that the IX International Paul-Tillich-Symposium will be held May 31 to June 2, 2002 in Frankfurt/Main. The general topic will be "Trinity and/or Quaternity. Tillich's Reopening of the Trinitarian Problem." Participation in the Frankfurt symposia is only possible through personal invitation.

An annual meeting of the German Paul-Tillich-Society would not be complete without closing the second day with an event that speaks less to the "head" and more to the "soul." This time the participants as well as a large number of people from Bad Boll and surrounding towns enjoyed listening to a concert given by the Choir of the Russian Orthodox Church in Stuttgart. The four artists, two women and two men, sang a variety of Russian songs which are integral parts of the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church. Each song was introduced by a few words of explanation, given by the group's leader, Dimitri Prokhorenko, of their contents and liturgical meaning, thus contributing another, quite different, aspect

to understanding sacraments. On Sunday, March 4, the closing day of the meeting, there was another aspect of understanding sacraments to be experienced. The "Herrnhuter Brudergemeinde" of Bad Boll had invited the group gathered at the meeting to participate in their Sunday morning worship service, including the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Bishop Prof. Dr. Hummel had been invited to preach. For many participating in this service, the

**ESTRANGEMENT AND EXISTENTIAL
ANGST IN HUMAN LIFE:
AN EXAMINATION OF PAUL TILlich AND
CORNEL WEST**

STEPHEN BUTLER MURRAY

A traditional theme in theological anthropology is that human beings are alienated from that which they ought to be. During the twentieth century, Paul Tillich and Cornel West were among the Christian thinkers who most convincingly addressed the existential situation of anxiety through discussions of "estrangement" and "angst," respectively. Tillich pursued this concern through a generalized ontological model of theological anthropology. West bases his understanding upon the cyclical structures of violence and meaninglessness which plague modern humanity, accentuated through the experiences of African-Americans in the United States. West's sharpest critiques come through crisp sociological and economic analysis. The intent of this paper is to examine how Tillich and West understand the origin and character of anxiety, and how that anxiety might be addressed, corrected, or reconciled. I shall examine Tillich and West separately before bringing them into conversation.

Paul Tillich

Although it is my purpose in this paper to discuss Tillich's perspective on anxiety, it is impossible to do so without engaging his ontology. Ontological questions arise when we are confronted by our encounter with nonbeing.¹ Such an encounter is inevitable and constitutive of what it is to be human. As Tillich states in *The Courage To Be*, "If being is interpreted in terms of life or process or becoming, nonbeing is ontologically as basic as being."² The structure of the human self, having a world to which it belongs and with which it can be in a subject-object dialogue, is preliminary to all other structural concepts. Constituting Tillich's basic ontological

experience of this community's faith and sharing in their understanding and use of the sacraments added a lot of flesh to the bones of the more abstract discussions of the previous days.

The meeting concluded with a panel discussion that summarized the presentations. Paul Tillich's views were again at the center of discussion.

structure are pairs of elements: individuality and universality, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. The conditions of existence not only express the power of being to exist, but differentiate essential and existential being. Finally, the categories of being and knowing are articulated as time, space, causality, and substance.³

Since it is our finitude, our encounter with nonbeing, that drives us to the question of God, Tillich examines the concept of finitude. It is our ontological concepts that determine the nature of our experience, and thus the conditions of existence are *a priori*, as they are presupposed in every experience. Human nature is bound to these conditions of existence. Although human nature changes, ontological concepts can be bound to it since human nature changes *in history*, changing within one of the categories of being.⁴ Thus, any doctrine of human anthropology must deal with humankind as historical beings in historical memory. Without this sense of history, this integration of centered self and world in subjective relationship, there is a danger. Deprived of our subjective elements, world and self crumble in the wake of a totally mechanical logic. And, we struggle against this loss of subjectivity. This is a struggle against nonbeing, for the first step toward the personal annihilation wrought by nonbeing is to lose one's meaning, one's purpose, to be reduced in consideration and then become merely a thing.

When we are confronted by this shocking encounter with nonbeing, we are thrown into anxiety, which Tillich defines as an awareness of our possible nonbeing through the experience of our finitude.⁵ Tillich wants to make sure that we do not confuse the ontological quality of anxiety with the psychological quality of fear. Anxiety is all-pervasive, a part of being, whereas fear is impermanent and affects us through definite objects upon which we can act.⁶ Anxiety has no object, indeed is the negation of every object, and so anxiety cannot be acted upon through participation, struggle, or love. There is a certain sense, Tillich says, in which it is best to

transform our anxiety into fear, because graspable fear can be met by courage.⁷

Tillich delineates three types of anxiety, each according to the three directions by which nonbeing threatens being.⁸ The first type is the anxiety of death, in which our ontic self-affirmation is assailed by questions of fate and death. Knowing that our fate is to die means that even when the immediate threat of death is absent, we cannot escape the omnipresence of nonbeing.⁹ The second type is the anxiety of meaninglessness, which results from emptiness and loss of meaning impinging upon our spiritual self-affirmation. Tillich affirms that we are social creatures, participating creatively in a world of meanings.¹⁰ When nonbeing threatens that world of meanings, we feel irreparably separated from any ultimate concern.¹¹ Since we relate to the world through meanings and values, the threat to our spiritual being is a threat to our whole being.¹² For Tillich, the concrete expression of this is suicide, by which one throws “away one’s ontic existence rather than stand the despair of emptiness and meaninglessness.”¹³ The third type is the anxiety of condemnation, by which our moral self-affirmation is tried by guilt and condemnation.¹⁴ We try to overcome our guilt through moral action, regardless of the imperfection and ambiguity of that action. Our attempts to do the moral good become demonically objective, turning moral action into a thing ungoverned by our subjectivity and not nuanced by faith. We try to do the good for our own alleviation from anxiety of condemnation, rather than for God or humanity. Thus, even moral action is transformed by anxiety into a deluding concupiscence. The result of such unchecked anxieties leads to despair, neurosis, and perhaps suicide. Tillich maintains that the “pain of despair is that a being is aware of itself as unable to affirm itself because of the power of nonbeing,” while neurosis is an attempt to avoid nonbeing by avoiding being.¹⁵

We might ask the question of Tillich, how are we able to grapple with these anxieties that dwell relentlessly amidst our very existence? Tillich responds that we do when the individual moves out of isolation and into participation with a group or movement. When an individual interacts and does not recede, that is how we can strive despite the anxieties. Simply, beautifully, he states, “The courage to be is essentially always the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself, in interdependence.”¹⁶ Therefore, we strive to find communities that will sustain us and nurture us. For Tillich,

that sustaining community is not necessarily the church, but it can be since churches “represent the Spiritual Community in a manifest religious self-expression.”¹⁷ Other communities can enable life-imbuing energies through art, music, poetry, and other creative endeavors.

I am reminded of E. M. Forster’s *Howard’s End*: “Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.” Only connect. I think Paul Tillich would have agreed entirely.

Cornel West

Cornel West, born in 1953 when Paul Tillich was already 67 years of age, grew up during the civil rights movement of the United States, acutely conscious of racism and classism. It is difficult to pinpoint specific times in West’s life when he has experienced alienation. This is because West is *black in America*, so subtle and not-so-subtle experiences of alienation permeate his lifetime. The alienation which West feels every day is not the alienation that Tillich experienced through certain events. It is the difference between living a life defined by alienation (West) and living a life in which one experiences alienation (Tillich).

West is acutely aware that slavery’s legacy of dehumanization leaves a deep imprint on the spiritual lives, cultural perceptions, and socio-economic realities of black people in America.¹⁸ This means that the dehumanization of black people is carried on not only by white people and their structures and institutions, but also revisited by black people upon themselves. This is due to the scars and wounds by which the terrible legacy of dehumanization has taught black people fundamental untruths about their innate worth and meaningfulness as citizens and as children of God. West seeks to address those untruths. However, he has no illusions about the desperate socio-economic stratification of contemporary American life, the seriousness of which is accentuated among the communities of black America.¹⁹ Blacks in America are “a pariah people—a people who had to make and remake themselves as outsiders on the margins of American society and culture.”²⁰ While West does not want to minimize the oppression of other peoples, he believes that the plight of black people best signifies the inhumanity at the heart of American capitalism. This is to say

that West affirms the suffering of black people in the United States as a very *human* suffering in its most accentuated form. West does not tolerate a separation of black humanity from American humanity in general, maintaining that “the presence and predicaments of black people are neither additions nor defection from American life, but rather *constitutive elements of that life*.”²¹

It would be easy to dwell strictly in the socio-economic plight that faces much of black America. Indeed, excellent scholars such as William Julius Wilson are devoted to exactly that project. However, since the most disturbing issue now facing blacks in America is a basic nihilistic attitude among blacks, threatening to destroy blacks as individuals and communities, West maintains that what we are called to do is “to face up to the monumental eclipse of hope, the unprecedented collapse of meaning, the incredible disregard for human (especially black) life and property in much of black America.”²² The nihilism that West addresses is not a philosophical doctrine, but “the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and, most important, lovelessness. The frightening result is a numbing detachment from others and a self-destructive disposition toward the world. Life without meaning, hope, and love breeds a cold-hearted, mean-spirited outlook that destroys both the individual and others.”²³

West meticulously grapples with the character of this nihilism. In one sense, he describes it as an *angst* resembling “a kind of collective clinical depression in significant pockets of black America.” This depression is linked to capitalist structures that affect all Americans, but is augmented by “the lived experience of ontological wounds and emotional scars inflicted by white supremacist beliefs and images permeating U.S. society and culture.”²⁴ West believes that black people in America share a “tragicomic” sense of life in which ultimate purpose and objective order are called into question due to the “sheer absurdity of the human condition.”²⁵ However, the enduring name that West ascribes to the fundamental condition of black culture is the term “black invisibility and namelessness.”²⁶ This is to say that black people are depicted as the following:

black people as a problem-people rather than people with problems; black people as abstractions and objects rather than individuals and persons; black and white worlds divided by a thick wall (or a “Veil”) that requires role-playing and mask-wearing rather than genuine

*humane interaction; black rage, anger, and fury concealed in order to assuage white fear and anxiety; and black people rootless and homeless on a perennial journey to discover who they are in a society content to see blacks remain the permanent underdog.*²⁷

What is most disturbing about this is that not only are black people defined in this way by white people, but also that black people may begin to believe this about themselves. To allow oneself to be so defined by others, such that one cannot figure a way out of that definition, is an existential prison which far too many people of color, especially black people, find themselves trapped. West takes seriously the danger of a self-fulfilling prophecy, when one “buys” what it is that others say when that demeans, debilitates, and dehumanizes the person or a people, bringing about a reality in which “without hope there can be no future, that without meaning there can be no struggle.”²⁸ As a prerequisite to any notion of liberation, it is a priority for black people to find ways to gain the power to withstand the assault of white definitions, to find the self-love that dehumanizing structures and institutions have denied them. Without hope, West maintains that black people do not equip themselves with the means by which black people might re-invest their communities economically, politically, and spiritually.²⁹

Faced with the relentless, absurd situations that black people find in America, a natural response is to dwell within the energizing dynamics of rage. However, West is cautious in his handling of such rage. He does not advocate that black people suppress their rage, as doing so leads to a self-pity that cannot cope with the tragicomic facts of life, finally accepting that life rather than fighting against its abuses and indignities.³⁰ Nor does West advocate the sort of “boiling black rage” that Malcolm X did, wondering how such an unabated rage can be contained such that its destructive and self-destructive consequences might be avoided.³¹ Instead of either of these alternatives, West believes that black people must channel the energies of their rage through a moral vision with “a sharp political analysis of wealth and power,” defined by a character of courage.³² This is a deep, soulful decision, in which despair and hope intermingle, fueling the desire to keep moving, to keep trying, to keep striving.

There are several cultural forms by which black people have been able to keep striving in America, two of which appear time and again in West’s literature: music and the black church. West maintains

that the “ur-text” of black culture is “a guttural cry and a wrenching moan—a cry not so much for help as for home, a moan less out of complaint than for recognition.”³³ This primal cry is then transformed by black culture into a means by which the tragicomic sense of black life is attested to and witnessed, opening the doorway toward a shout of joy rather than a groan of pain. The spirituals, the blues, jazz, and gospel music are distinctive musical forms of black people, “a form of affirmation in the midst of the darkness and the thunder.”³⁴ In an interview with Wynton Marsalis, West reflects on Duke Ellington’s statement “Jazz is freedom.”

I’ve always argued that jazz musicians are the freest black people in America. And what I mean by that is that they are free enough in their hearts and minds and souls to be themselves. I think that the courage to be is the most difficult thing for a human being. And it’s painful. It hurts. It creates discomfort. And if people have the audacity to view themselves as a jazz musician, that means they’re free. Which means they’re going to be digging deep into the abyss of themselves. And then producing a sound that will both allow people to feel good and also create both a comfort and a discomfort because you want to create enough comfort to bring them in but enough discomfort to solicit their struggle so that they start struggling within themselves to be free.³⁵

The very act of singing is liberating and liberated, for in song one is able to transform bottled-up pain into an open witness to the indignities one has suffered. Moreover, such a witness may inspire and empower outer movements toward activity and hope. One can hardly think of “We Shall Overcome” without images of the civil rights movement filling one’s heart with hope and fervor. Music stirs us up, allowing us to articulate the deep pains within us, transforming that which is dank and depressing into movement, dance, and witness. We find ourselves singing the song along with the singer. Music breaks us out of individual suffering, drawing us into a celebrating, driven community.

The black church tradition is a communal effort to address the existential and political situation through which meaninglessness is rampant within both the personal and collective situations of African-Americans. This is a tradition dominated by its music and rhythms, permeating song, prayer, and sermon.³⁶ There is a certain sense in which the black church’s emphasis on song and movement is an at-

tempt to keep despair at bay, putting a premium on change and activity such that communal music and connectivity are formed out of the abyss of black invisibility and namelessness.³⁷ At the heart of this communal call to identity and activity is a resistance against the situation of black people in America, a resistance founded upon a profound love of one’s self and one’s people, a black love that refuses to accept the claims of white America that blacks ought not love themselves.³⁸

West does not say, however, that the black church as an institution has always lived up to this vital role. He writes, “I think we have to make a distinction between institutional religion and forms of spirituality that are wrestling with the darkness. And the two are not always identical—by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, one could argue that it has been the relative failure of black churches that has contributed to the crisis of spirituality.”³⁹ This is not a call to fall away from the black churches, but to surge ahead, seeking out new forms of spirituality that are able to correct the mistakes of the past. The new combinations of institutionality and spirituality in the black churches are to have, in West’s vision, a distinctively prophetic character and calling.⁴⁰ West describes the goals of such a prophetic black spirituality in a three-fold manner: (1) provide a more sophisticated social analysis of the economic situation among black people in America; (2) promote a more independent black politics rather than an unwavering alliance with the Democratic party; and (3) spread a spiritual awakening throughout the country so that other communities might find new energy and new voice. What underlies all of these tasks is courage to tell the truth, especially the ugly truth, about America.

This courage to tell the truth is predicated upon the enduring heart of a prophetic black spirituality: a courage to be which defies the nullifying and enervating forces ranged against black Americans. This “courage to be” is characterized by a deep sense of struggle, and West does not downplay the difficulty in mustering the strength at the outset of this struggle, much less maintaining it, given the obstacles to be overcome.⁴¹ The courage to be is the quest first for respect, secondarily for recognition. The courage to be is the ultimate refusal to be defined by the oppressive “other,” instead claiming oneself by a definition that inherently values the black individual and black people. Within this new definition is a call to love oneself in ways that the definitions of white American society would never allow one to recog-

nize. And from this love, then, comes a renewed sense of joy, for the black person and black people are a cause for celebration. "Black is beautiful!" becomes the soulful cry of the black person who finds the courage to be. So there is a link between courage, love, and joy, and when these three are combined, the fruit they bear is the passion and conviction to move politically and socially.⁴² West maintains that when black people are so driven by the courage to be, they find the courage to die for something bigger than themselves. This is a sign of remarkable maturity through struggle,⁴³ for it is the sign that death is no longer the result of a meaning-draining despair leading to suicide, but the meaning-imbued valuation of one's life as worthy for sacrifice, for the benefit of others. Ultimately, the courage to be is to wrestle with despair, facing despair head on with courage and love, but never letting despair overwhelm the joy of what it is to be black, that is, to be defiantly, beautifully human.

Tillich and West

In the final section of this paper, I would like to examine five ways in which the thought of Paul Tillich and Cornel West converge regarding the character of anxiety. Although their life experiences and commitments come from, if you will, different streams, I believe that the analysis each brings to the table contributes to the overall human understanding of our anxieties and how we might overcome them. The five places of convergence I propose to explore are: (1) the struggle of human beings with the forces that would objectify and dehumanize them; (2) the significance of social participation to overcoming anxiety; (3) the importance of creativity and the arts to self-transcend and liberate human beings; (4) the character of despair and suicide; and (5) the courage to be.

First, both Tillich and West maintain that human beings live in a constant state of tension with forces that would dehumanize and devalue who they are fundamentally. It would seem that Tillich could only benefit from the sort of socio-economic and political analysis West applies to his understanding of this situation, for these are indeed forces which objectify humanity and would turn us into "things." In addition, by defining anxiety so much within the ontology of what it means to be human, Tillich does not seem to offer much hope for any enduring liberation from anxiety. Indeed, for Tillich, "the state of existence is the state of estrangement." West relies so much on the American political ideal of democracy

that his philosophy bears scant ontology. West would benefit from Tillich's sense of an essential ontological value to humanity as such, without the need for political values (which can vary according to the present "mood" of the country) to verify that. Tillich and West realize the dangers involved in the forces that would devalue humanity, and both recognize the struggle that must be enacted lest these forces be given final say in the matter.

Second, the language of Tillich and West is similar when dealing with the dynamics of social participation as necessary to overcome the forces which would dehumanize the individual. While participation opens the door to being hurt, it is the only way that human beings might find a collective hope unavailable to the degraded individual. Out of this participation springs a determination and self-esteem that can only be found by a people as a people, not as an individual alone.

Third, Tillich and West both find artistic forms to have a liberating effect upon human beings who are suffering self-doubt and alienation. Tillich's theology would benefit from the communal aspect of witnessing involved in the music West discusses. Such witnessing is a concrete example of what Tillich was discussing in the need for human beings to participate with one another in order to be centered, developed selves. West might also find something profound in Tillich's use of imagination as part of the creative process of developing artistic forms, because imagination itself is a way of escaping the bonds of what others would falsely define as one's own identity. Imagination is able to reach out from the limitations of one's present existence and envision a different sort of existence, nurturing the hope that such an existence may be sought after and reached. Singing and writing and speaking with one's heart full of imagination may inspire others as well, leading to a communal attempt to be bold and strike forth from where the forces of annihilation have put a people.

Fourth, on the topic of suicide, Tillich's overly abstract discussion of suicide would be enriched by concrete examples of the structures of estrangement leading to despair in the black communities of America. The despair that affluent people have is of an entirely different character than that of those who are marginalized and disenfranchised systematically.⁴⁴ West may also find a more theological approach to suicide to be of benefit as well, especially since he names the black church as one of the loci of liberation for black people in America.

Fifth, Tillich's courage to be is that of an individual's struggle with anxiety, which West would certainly attest to as well. However, Tillich would benefit by incorporating the social nature of the courage to be which West advocates into his own sense of courage. There is a sense in which, for West, the task is not done when one is able to affirm oneself, for the courage to be calls for that affirmation to be shared with others and spread to them as well. On the other hand, West's assessment does not deal with the first step of courage that Tillich proffers, the courage to accept the place of anxiety within human life. I do not think that West's model can include such a notion of courage, for to accept anxiety as a natural part of human life might defuse the rightful rage that black Americans feel. This rage, when directed by courage, is the impetus for socially transforming acts, for the music and other art which inspires others toward courage, and so forth. In this respect, West's understanding of courage ought not be tempered by acceptance, for to accept the social dynamics that put down oneself and one's people is to allow the status quo to continue. West's courage to be provides for a responsible social revolution, whereas Tillich's courage to be fights the internal battle of an individual's own anxiety.

¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 163-164.

² Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 32.

³ These "categories" in the Tillichian vocabulary are reformulations of Kant's discussion on the forms of intuition, time and space.

⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1., 166-168.

⁵ *The Courage to Be*, 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, 50-51, 53.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54-55, 66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

¹⁷ *Systematic Theology*, 3:153.

¹⁸ Michael Lerner and Cornel West, *Jews & Blacks: Let the Healing Begin* (New York: Grosset/Putnam Books, 1995), 46.

¹⁹ Cornel West, *Restoring Hope: Conversations on the Future of Black America*. ed., Kelvin Shawn Sealey (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), xi. In other works, West underscores that black people are not alone in the seriousness of the socio-economic stratification in America: "Present arrangements perpetuate a predominantly black, Latino, and Native American underclass - poor, uneducated, and save for their religious life, desperate and disorganized. Family life in this underclass is deranged, with children depending upon single mothers and young males resigned in overwhelming numbers to a life of violence, drugs, joblessness, and imprisonment, at war with a society that has first abandoned and then condemned them rather than condemning itself for this abandonment." Roberto Mangabeira Unger and Cornel West, *The Future of American Progressivism: An Initiative for Political and Economic Reform* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 35.

²⁰ Lerner and West, *Jews and Blacks*, 1-2.

²¹ Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 6.

²² *Ibid.*, 19.

²³ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

²⁴ Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 27.

²⁵ Cornel West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization" from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West, *The Future of the Race* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 57.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁸ Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 23.

²⁹ Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments: Illuminations of the Crisis in American Religion & Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Trenton: Africa World Press, 1988), 35.

³⁰ Cornel West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 87. West takes seriously the most dangerous consequences of profound despair, when one can no longer face the degradation that a white-dominated society constantly presses, leading to suicide. He laments, "We've got increasing suicide rates. Rate of suicide among young black men and women between eighteen and twenty-four has quadrupled in the last sixteen years. Unprecedented. Black folk always killed themselves less than any other group in America, even though they often had more reason to do so than other groups. No longer the case," in *Restoring Hope*, 92.

³¹ Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 141-142.

³² Cornel West, *Restoring Hope*, 28-29.

³³ Cornel West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 81.

³⁴ Cornel West, *Restoring Hope*, 117. West also makes an important statement about the nature of witness-

ing: "To bear witness is to make and remake, invent and reinvent oneself as a person and people by keeping faith with the best of such earlier efforts, yet also to acknowledge that the very new selves and people to emerge will never fully find a space, place, or face in American society—or Africa. This perennial process of self-making and self-inventing is propelled by a self-loving and self-trusting made possible by overcoming a colonized mind, body and soul." "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 92.

³⁵ Cornel West, *Restoring Hope*, 120-121.

³⁶ Cornel West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 101.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 90. West offers a beautiful passage crediting those who came before him with constructing these fundamental means by which black people traditionally combat the nihilistic forces which would claim them: "The genius of our black foremothers and forefathers was to create powerful buffers to ward off the nihilistic threat, to equip black folk with cultural armor to beat back the demons of hopelessness, meaninglessness, and lovelessness. These buffers consisted of cultural structures of meaning and feeling that created and sustained communities; this armor constituted ways of life and struggle that embodied values of service and sacrifice, love and care, discipline and excellence." Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 23-24.

³⁹ Cornel West, *Restoring Hope*, 103. West also seems to indict black theology as not reaching its potential as a spiritually restoring, politically energizing movement. He writes, "Black theologians all agree that black liberation has something to do with ameliorating the socioeconomic conditions of black people. But it is not clear what this amelioration amounts to. There is little discussion in their writings about what the liberating society will be like. The notion and process of liberation are often mentioned, but, surprisingly, one is hard put to find a sketch of what liberation would actually mean in the everyday lives of black people, what power they would possess, and what resources they would have access to." Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982).

⁴⁰ Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments*, 36-37.

⁴¹ Cornel West, *Restoring Hope*, 89-91. It is important to note that *Restoring Hope* is a collection of interviews and dialogues which West has with people from different cultural spheres, discussing the past, present and future of black life in America. The two times that West speaks most eloquently to this "courage to be" in this

book, where he speaks on this topic more than in any other text, is in his dialogue with James Forbes and James Washington and his interview with Wynton Marsalis; which is to say, that these topics come forth when West is in conversation with black clergy and a black musician. It seems organic, not abstractly intellectual or coincidental, for West to talk about the "courage to be" with these exemplars of the cultural forces which he believes best embody black strivings.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 97-100.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁴⁴ I knew a student at my high school that underwent months of psychological counseling because he slit his wrists the night he found out he had not been accepted to his father's alma mater, Princeton. Although he was accepted by extraordinarily good schools such as Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania, the shame he felt at disappointing his parents was nearly deadly. I wonder how West would interpret the despair of such a child of privilege. Is this really despair, and if we call it that, do we "cheapen" the despair of those that are oppressed on broad, social levels? Conversely, does anyone have the right to interpret anyone else's despair as false?



**PAUL TILlich'S THEOLOGY OF
INTELLECTUAL SALVATION**

JOHN M. PAGE

Introduction

Paul Tillich first came to my attention in the Fall of 1963 at a layman's seminar on religion and business that was sponsored by the Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago. As the civil rights, equal rights, and youth movements gained momentum against the older white male establishment, I had become deeply troubled and thought the seminar would be helpful. I wanted in particular to find a relationship between religion and the corporate culture where my job security was in jeopardy.

Most of the participants in the seminar reflected their anxiety over the radical divisions present in American culture and religion. One participant, a missionary attending as an observer from Taiwan, sat relaxed and smiling during the heated discussions. He must have already learned from Paul Tillich that "culture is the form of religion and religion the substance of culture."¹ One evening, I said to him in a private conversation, "You know something that I don't know, and I want to know what it is." He responded by recommending three books: *The Courage To Be* by Paul Tillich; *Honest To God* by John A.T. Robinson; and *The Unfinished Society* by Herbert Von Borch. Both Robinson and Von Borch had been influenced by Tillich's theology.

In January 1964 after reading the three books, I became aware of something vital to my existence. After rereading the section entitled "Theism Transcended" in the last chapter of *The Courage To Be*,² I was grasped by what Tillich calls "the God beyond the God of theism." Later I learned that this is the center of Tillich's systematic theology. In an obituary from the *Chicago Daily News* after Tillich's death October 22, 1965, entitled "Paul Tillich's 'Courage To Be' His Own Story," Dave Meade wrote the following about the center of Tillich's thought:

The German-born son of a Lutheran minister once said "I was thinking about infinity at the age of 8." He was thinking about other things in 1915...the realities of death, human carnage and the horrors of war...as a 29 year old chaplain in the German army at the battle of Champagne: "...all night long I moved among the wounded and dying as they were brought in—many of

them my close friends...and much of my German classical philosophy broke down..." The prevailing European nihilism had proclaimed philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's obituarial "God is dead." As far as Tillich was concerned, he said later, "Well, the traditional concept of God was dead." And so he went about the monumental task of building a new concept of God that would come alive as "Ground of Being," "Being Itself," or "Ultimate Concern." Tillich apparently encountered the source of intellectual salvation on the battlefields of World War I.

Contemporary theism ordinarily assumes God to be a heavenly perfect being who created the world, who presides over it, and to whom we pray. As early as 1915, Tillich was saying that God is not a being beside other beings.³ "God transcends every being and also the totality of beings—the world." Beginning with this entrance into Tillich's theology, I learned to understand better the experience of life as "finite freedom," the freedom of deliberation, decision, and responsibility,⁴ and to teach through example this understanding to my three children and to others.

I.

According to Tillich, the question of being itself is best expressed in the question: "Why is there something; why not nothing?"⁵ As the ontological question, it is fundamentally an expression of existence in the need of intellectual salvation rather than a formulated question. To my surprise, I found that this question or feeling of existence had been in my mind since childhood.

I was born at home in Bull Frog Valley, located in the Ozark Mountains of north central Arkansas. This valley, where I lived until the age of eight, was once part of a Cherokee Indian reservation before the Territory of Arkansas was settled as a state. Sequoyah, who invented the Cherokee alphabet and published a newspaper for the Cherokee Nation, once lived nearby at a salt lick where he also operated a salt business. Some of my ancestors participated in settling the land after the Indians were moved to Indian Territory, now the State of Oklahoma. The families of my great grandparents, the Ladds, Howards, Pages, and Waldos helped to settle Bull Frog Valley and surrounding areas. My Mother, to whom I was close, was a descendent of these two families. Both my Mother and Father were born and educated in Bull Frog Valley where they later lived for the first fifteen years of their married life. The

root of political thought in the valley was what Tillich called in his early writings the “powers of origin,”⁶ the powers of land, blood, family, race, community, and state. This was the political thought of my Father who as the oldest son in his family inherited the family “mantle.” I was not conscious of my resistance to the patriarchal authority that ruled the home and community of my youth. However, when looking at the mountains around Bull Frog Valley and the sky overhead, I was sometimes puzzled by why there is something, rather than nothing. This question or feeling continued into adulthood while I served in the United States Navy, attended college, and established a family and business career. Whenever the ontological question or feeling enters the mind, the threat of nothingness (nonbeing) appears and one must ask for an answer. Paul Tillich is an answering theologian.

Historically the great theologians and philosophers have dealt with the question of being from different perspectives. As a virtuoso of both philosophy and theology, Tillich used philosophy to deal with the structure of being, and theology to deal with the meaning of being in a method of correlation. God is the answer to the question implied in human existence according to the biblical message. But, the answer cannot be derived from the analysis of existence since God transcends existence. However, if the thought of the God beyond the God of ordinary theism is correlated with the threat of nothingness, which is implied in the question, God as the ground of being must be the infinite power of being which resists the threat of nothingness. If the anxiety derived from the threat of nothingness is an awareness of being finite, then God can be called the infinite ground of courage.⁷ The verb “to be, become” is derived from the Hebrew root *HWH*. The power of being, the power to deliberate, decide, and act as a free finite person comes from the “God beyond the God of theism.”

After becoming conscious of the God that transcends the God of ordinary theism and gives the courage to be, my concerns were not eliminated but I had a new understanding of these concerns, which included my “ultimate concern.”⁸ One concern was how to relate the natural sciences to social sciences and religion. After World War II, as a student at a land grant college located in the Midwest, I was deeply impressed with a statement, credited to J. J. Riggs and inscribed in stone on a wall of the Student Union: “We come to college not only to prepare to make a living but to learn to live a life.” But my cur-

riculum did not include courses on how to live a life. What I learned was how to use a “scientific method” or method of reason in the practice of dairy chemistry and in the manufacture of dairy products. The college motto was “Science With Practice.” Science and the so-called liberal arts were treated as a dichotomy, mutually exclusive as if they were contradictory disciplines. In later years, I learned from Tillich that divisions in thought, like this dichotomy, symbolizes “estrangement” or separation. Reconciliation of the separated parts represents “redemption.” For his systematic theology, Tillich chose the category of “being” to express the essential unity as well as the differences in the various areas of thought. Though the use of this category, he developed a theology of intellectual salvation.

II.

After my marriage in 1949, I graduated from college with a bachelor of science degree and was employed as a Factory Superintendent of a cheese factory in northern Arkansas. In 1951, after 70-hour work weeks, with little time for my family, and no time to pursue intellectual interests, I had experienced enough “science with practice.” I moved with my family to the Chicago area to become an Industrial Sales Specialist with a major corporation. During the 1950s, some of my work involved making sales calls throughout the United States with field sales personnel. Yet there was still time for family and time to read psychology, philosophy, history, religion, and biographies of famous people. The combination of travel and study provided a basis for “learning about life” which had been excluded from my college curriculum. Later I was responsible for classroom teaching and field training of a new national sales force in the use of science and technology to gain product sales. Through teaching and learning with the scientific method, I came to understand better the natural sciences and the art of salesmanship as an integrated whole rather than a dichotomy. However, my interpretation of the scientific method flew in the face of others in the corporate culture whose reason was based on what Tillich calls technical reason with “controlling knowledge.”⁹ I was criticized as being an “idealist” rather than a “realist.” Tillich wrote the following about realism and faith: “There seems to be no wider gap than that between a realistic and a belief-ful attitude. Faith transcends every conceivable reality; realism questions every transcending of the real...”¹⁰

A friend identified my problem as a confronta-

tion with "Machiavelli." In fact, Machiavellian quotations were placed on the walls of some executive offices. After reading *The Prince* by Nicco Machiavelli (1469-1527), I was shocked to learn that leadership based on fear, deception, and authority assumed to be absolute was so common in American culture. Instinctively I felt that Machiavellian loyalty would compromise my intellectual integrity, a sacred trust. A person of integrity deliberates and decides through a personal center that struggles with motives and possibilities. Each person is responsible for what happens through the center of the self, the seat and origin of freedom. Deliberation, decision, and responsibility should not be controlled outside the personal center. I had visions of my "open grave" if I conformed as expected. It was a "life or death" decision in terms of intellectual salvation.

I came to think of this experience as resistance to the deification of a group's culture. Because of my resistance, I was gradually excluded as a participant in the technical services area to which I was assigned and encouraged to resign my position in the corporation. In an effort to explain my position, I wrote a paper entitled "The Scientific Method as a Discipline For Economic Performance." In a supplement to this paper, I wrote of the "confidence man" who practices factionalism and psychological brow beating in the unconscious belief that his group is sacred. I also wrote of the "man of integrity," the unpurchasable man whose integrated mind is so much his own that he can with a sense of easiness talk to anyone across the boundaries of factionalism. I had become convinced that the ability to use the scientific method as a discipline for economic performance most effectively depended decisively on intellectual integrity. This involves what Tillich calls technical reason continuously nourished by ontological reason.¹¹ The CEO of the corporation acknowledged receiving a copy of the paper and asked to keep it. He later overruled lower authority to approve my application for a new position in another business group of the same Division. The new Division President used a corporate publication to inform all employees that integrity was an "absolute requisite" of the corporation's founder. My career counselor advised me to follow the Golden Rule in future involvement with business group culture. In declining his advice, I sent him the following excerpt from Tillich's interpretation of the Golden Rule:

The measure of what we shall do to men cannot be our wishes about what they shall do to us. For wishes express not only our right but also our

wrong, and our foolishness more than our wisdom. This is the limit of the Golden Rule. This is the limit of calculating justice. Only for him who knows what he should wish and who actually wishes it, is the Golden Rule ultimately valid. Only love can transform calculating justice into creative justice. Love makes justice just.¹²

Beginning in 1963, Paul Tillich's books helped me to understand more fully the cause and effect of my refusal in 1962 to be conformed to the ultimate concern of a business group. Tillich then became my mentor and guide through some nearly unbearable experiences during the 25 years that remained in my business career. He used the scripture "Do not be conformed to this eon, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12:2a) as the text for his sermon "Do Not Be Conformed"¹³ and describes this transformation in his published sermons. To use ontological symbols rather than religious symbols, the more non-being the intellect can absorb without being destroyed, the more creative the intellect becomes. "Nonbeing belongs to being, it cannot be separated from it. But nonbeing drives being out of its seclusion, it forces it to affirm itself dynamically."¹⁴ The intellect is renewed when non-being drives out being.

III.

After reading Part I, Volume 1, of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, "Reason and Revelation," I concluded that our destiny does not depend ultimately on what we believe or our rules of behavior. Rather our quality of life depends on the quality of reason (scientific method) we use to engage our finite freedom. As adults, we become creatures of our own choices for better or for worse. The scientific method is more than scientific inquiry, logical analysis, and organization of information. It is technical reason balanced with what Tillich calls the "ground of reason." It is reason and culture on the one hand and revelation and religion on the other hand. The quality of our finite freedom to deliberate, decide, and to act depends on the balance between autonomous, heteronomous, and theonomous reason. Autonomy means the obedience of the individual self (autos) to the law (nomos) of objective-subjective reason. Heteronomy imposes a strange (heteros) law on autonomy. Autonomous reason is challenged to liberate and maintain itself against a never-ending fight with heteronomy. Autonomy and heteronomy are rooted in theonomy, and each goes

astray when their theonomous unity is broken. Since God (*theos*) is the law for both the structure (ontology) and ground (theology) of reason, they are united in Him. The quest for reunion of what is split in time and space arises out of reason. This quest is the quest for revelation, the ground of reason.¹⁵

In his autobiographical sketch, *On The Boundary*, Tillich writes: "The boundary is the best place to acquire knowledge."¹⁶ I was aware of the theonomous boundary between autonomy and heteronomy in the mid-1960s when my children were in the elementary public schools. Disturbed because my daughter had been mistreated by her fifth grade teacher, I competed in a hotly contested public election between four candidates for two seats on the local board of education. Each of two organizations in the community endorsed two candidates. One group was called the General Caucus. The other was a splinter group. I was one of two candidates endorsed by the General Caucus made up mostly of representatives of the Parent/Teacher Associations in eight schools. The publicly stated purpose of the "non-partisan" Caucus was to find and endorse qualified candidates who would make autonomous decisions as members of the board. However, after my endorsement and a public announcement of my candidacy, I was contacted by the representative of a heteronomous group of taxpayers and school officials outside the General Caucus who proposed to manage my campaign against the heteronomous splinter group's candidates. To have accepted this offer would have compromised my intellectual integrity, the integrity of the General Caucus, and would have prevented me from becoming an autonomous board member. Taking the position in the public debate that my loyalty was to the children in the schools, I won a seat by a margin of 30 votes and without the support of either political faction. When the Board was reconstituted after the election, each of the two factions controlled three seats. I controlled the seventh seat. From this position, I worked with others against political factionalism in the school system until the two heteronomous groups dissolved, the integrity of General Caucus restored, and leadership in the school buildings reorganized. It was through the books of Tillich that I came to understand better my experience with the political dynamics among groups of all kinds.

IV.

Tillich sums up the Christian message in two words, the "New Being" or the "New Creation."¹⁷

Tillich's exact translation from the New Testament is: "If anyone is in union with Christ he is a new being; the old state of things has passed away; there is a new state of things." The New Being or New Reality appeared with Jesus as the Christ. No particular interpretation of any religion, liberal or conservative, is ultimately important. No particular code of ethics or cultural belief, liberal or conservative, is ultimately important. All that ultimately matters is whether we have experienced something of a New Being in ourselves. With Tillich's Systematic Theology, the understanding of God moves from an awareness of God as Spirit in religious experience through knowledge of God as Being-itself in philosophical theology to an awareness of God as New Being in the finite freedom of deliberation, decision, and responsibility. New being (the meaning of being) in technical reason nourished with ontological reason (the structure of being) is Dr. Tillich's prescription for intellectual salvation or healing.

In the late 1960's, I was aware of New Being in technical reason nourished with ontological reason when I became involved with a controversial youth program as board member in a local Christian church of a major denomination. The program had already been established by an aggressive Assistant Pastor, with a heteronomous following from the Christian left, and over the objections of the Director of Children's Work who represented a traditional and conservative point of view. This local controversy reflected a Christian left-right conflict that was present at all levels of the judicatories of the church. In a letter to members of the Board with copies to the Assistant Pastor and Director of Children's Work, I wrote of "new life in Christ" as my ultimate concern. Assuming the role of what Tillich called "the theologian,"¹⁸ I wrote in part: "Whether trying to live within the 'law', as the idealistic Paul tried to live before his ideals were transformed, or 'outside the law', as the realistic Athenians to whom he preached tried to live, we have the freedom to let ourselves become arrested and be blessed with new being. If this happens, the members of the Board can mediate an ultimate concern which transcends both the church's idealism and the political social realism within and without its judicatories." The Director of Children's Work, responding in writing, agreed but lamented: "Unfortunately, we are only two among 'millions' of board members and therefore relatively useless." She was right. A new and aggressive Senior Pastor, called to stop the controversy, gained control of all the votes except mine. The Board, over

my single dissenting vote, promoted the Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor and officially adopted political and social programs advocated by the Christian left. Later when invited to join a local group associated with the church's conservative faction, I declined. After deciding to leave the church to protect my youngest son from heteronomous leadership of the church's youth program, I wrote in part to the Board of Trustees: "I do not accept political social concern as the ultimate concern of His church whether the concern reflects a liberal, conservative, or coalition view point."

V.

Tillich used the Protestant symbol "justification by grace through faith"¹⁹ to describe the way to intellectual salvation. Salvation is an unearned gift of the New Being by grace. New being cannot be earned by intellectual "works." Even the receiving act, faith (New Being as Ultimate Concern), is itself a gift of grace. Paul used the word "justification" in reference to ancient Hebrew law. Tillich substitutes the word "acceptance" in his formula that reads "acceptance by grace through faith."²⁰ Tillich says the following about grace:

We cannot transform our lives, unless we allow them to be transformed by that stroke of grace. It happens; or it does not happen. And certainly it does not happen if we try to force it upon ourselves, just as it shall not happen so long as we think, in our self-complacency, that we have no need of it...It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us. Sometimes in that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are *accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you..." And nothing is demanded of this experience, no religious or moral or intellectual presupposition, nothing but acceptance...*Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!* If this happens to us, we experience grace.²¹

The fundamental character of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is that the intellect must negate itself in order to save itself as Jesus negated himself and rose as the Christ. "Resurrection is not an event that might happen in some remote future, but it is the power of the New Being to create life out of death, here and now, today and tomorrow. Where there is New Being, there is resurrection" (intellectual salvation).²² We need the courage to doubt our convictions,

not the courage of our convictions. The courage of our convictions, including the courage of religious convictions, is finite courage. The courage to accept the anxiety of doubt in convictions is "the courage to be," the courage that takes doubt as well as guilt into our convictions. The courage comes from the God beyond the God of convictions or theism. To be in the state of doubt about one's convictions is to be in the state of faith.

The predominate faith in American culture appears to be faith in convictions, religious or otherwise, rather than what Tillich called "absolute faith"²³ that accepts the uncertainty of convictions. Both religious and secular groups create all kinds of ideologies and rationalizations to reject and sometimes despise those who would lead them to intellectual salvation. This is understandable because intellectual salvation becomes possible only after our convictions, including theism and atheism, have been broken as He who represented the wisdom of the world was broken on the Cross. "Man ceases to be man if he ceases to be an intellect. But the depth of sacrifice, of suffering, and of the Cross is demanded of our thinking."²⁴ "And out of this foolishness we win wisdom to use what is ours, the wisdom of the world, even philosophy. If it be unbroken, it controls us. If it is broken, it is ours. Broken does not mean reduced or emaciated or controlled, but it means undercut in its idolatric claim."²⁵ When I read the title of Tillich's sermon, "All Is Yours," from which this last quotation was taken, it says to me in the Bull Frog Valley language of my youth: Brother you are saved.

¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 158.

² Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 182-190.

³ Paul Tillich *Political Expectations*, edited by James Luther Adams (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), xvii.

⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 184.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶ Langdon Gilkey, *Gilkey On Tillich* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 7.

⁷ *Systematic Theology* I, 64.

⁸ Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 1-4.

⁹ *Systematic Theology* I, 97.

¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, abridged edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 67.

¹¹ *Systematic Theology* I, 73.

¹² Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 32.

¹³ Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 135-144.

¹⁴ *The Courage To Be*, 179.

¹⁵ *Systematic Theology* I, 71-100.

¹⁶ Paul Tillich, *On The Boundary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 13.

¹⁷ *The New Being*, 15.

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 118-129.

¹⁹ *Systematic Theology* III, 224.

²⁰ *Systematic Theology* III, 224-225.

²¹ *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 161-162.

²² *The New Being*, 24.

²³ *The Courage To Be*, 188.

²⁴ *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 62.

²⁵ *The New Being*, 112.



The Officers of the North American Paul Tillich Society

Young-Ho Chun, St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City

President

Robison James, University of Richmond

Vice President

Frederick J. Parrella, Santa Clara University

Secretary-Treasurer

Garrett Paul, Gustavus Adolphus College

Past President

Board of Directors

Term Expiring 2001

Tom F. Driver, Union Theological Seminary, emeritus.

Robert Scharlemann, University of Virginia, emeritus

Don Dreisbach, University of Northern Michigan

Term Expiring 2002

Mel Vulgamore, Albion College

Robison James, University of Richmond

Dan Peterson, Graduate Student

Doris Lax, Secretary, Deutsche Paul Tillich Gesellschaft

Term Expiring 2003

Paul Carr, University of Massachusetts, Lowell,

Don Arther, Ballwin Missouri

Mary Ann Cooney, New York City