



BULLETIN

The North American Paul Tillich Society

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**2020 ANNUAL MEETING
IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS HAS BEEN
CANCELLED**

The officers may attempt a limited virtual meeting, at least for the current officers and board.

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**AVE ATQUE VALE FROM YOUR
SECRETARY TREASURER,
FREDERICK PARRELLA**

In the spirit of poet Catullus, I must inevitably say Ave atque Vale as the Secretary Treasurer of the North American Paul Tillich Society. It was after a session at the 1997 meeting that Sharon Burch pulled me aside and asked me to take the position. I was deeply honored at the request to serve as an officer of a scholarly society that had such distinguished scholars, colleagues, friends, and students of Tillich such as Wilhelm Pauck, James Luther Adams, Jerald Brauer, John Dillenberger, Langdon Gilkey, and many others too many to mention. John Carey was the first president of the Society and its first meeting was a 1975.

I find it hard to believe that I have served in the position for more than two decades, beginning as an associate professor and ending as a professor soon to be entering into retirement. The Bulletin

was a great deal of work, probably more than I first imagined or understood. I set the policy that all papers given at the annual meeting of the Society and at the Tillich session as part of the AAR would be published, whether they were outstanding or mediocre. We have had some gems through the years and a few that I struggled to read, comprehend, and edit! I could never have done the work without the assistance of Victoria Gonzalez, Senior Administrative Assistant in the Religious Studies Department of Santa Clara University.

This is the last Bulletin that I will edit. Verna Ehret will take over the position as editor of the Bulletin beginning with the Summer issue. In this upside-down world that we are living in, I hope that all of you and your families are in good health. How fitting that the Winter-Spring Bulletin should come out between in Summer! It has been a joy for me to serve as secretary-treasurer. I hope that the North American Paul Tillich Society will continue to flourish in the years ahead, encouraging scholarship in Tillich and applying his ideas and his wisdom to the world of the 21st century. To conclude with the entire final line of the poet:

Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Amarkwei, Charles. *Paul Tillich and His System of Paradoxical Correlation. Forging a New Way for Science and Theology Relations*, with a Forward by Koo Choon-Seo. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2020.

TO HONOR ONE OF OUR OWN

Jean Richard received an honorary doctorate (Doc-

TILlich AND BONHÖFFER: PHILOSOPHY AND BIBLICAL THEOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF RESISTANCE¹

M. LON WEAVER

[Professor Weaver teaches at the Marshall School in Duluth, Minnesota. This is an article that began as a paper

given *in honoris causa*) from the University of Sherbrooke, Quebec on February 5, 2020. Congratulations to Jean from the NAPTS!

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE 2019 SOCIETY IN SAN DIEGO AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW OFFICERS

The NAPTS had a very successful annual meeting in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in Denver, Colorado, Friday, November 16, and

The following officers of the NAPTS were elected:

President

Lawrence Whitney, LC+

President Elect

Bin song

Vice President

Ilona Nord

Secretary Treasurer

Frederick J. Parrella (till Summer 2020)

Past President

Verna Ehret (and incoming Secretary and new Editor of the Bulletin)

Board of Directors

Term Expiring 2020

Rachel Baard

Ronald Stone

Term Expiring 2021

Benjamin Chicka

Hannah Hofheinz

Russell Re Manning

Term Expiring 2022

Duane Olsen

Johanne Stebbe Teglbaerg

given at the annual meetings of the North American Paul Tillich Society in Boston, MA, November 2017. A separate article by the author on the political radicalization of Tillich and Bonhoeffer is "Theology and Resistance in Bonhoeffer and Tillich," in *Resistance and Theological Ethics*, eds. Ronald H. Stone and Robert L. Stivers (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 299-312.]

Introduction

In various places in his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer summarized the effort of the institutional church to recover from the failure of the 19th century project of European culture to bring about a liberal utopia. In one entry, Bonhoeffer criticized the approach of Paul Tillich:

Tillich sought to interpret the evolution of the world (against its will) in a religious to give it its shape through religion. That was very brave of him, but the world unseated him and went on by itself; he, too, sought to understand the world better than it understood itself; but it felt that it was completely misunderstood, and rejected the imputation. (Of course, the world *must* be understood better than it understands itself, but not ‘religiously’ as the religious socialists wanted.)²

As for Tillich’s perspective on Bonhoeffer, there are two places in Tillich’s late work where he commented with interest on Bonhoeffer’s thought. In the 1961 Bampton lectures, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, Tillich spoke of theologians who insisted “that Christianity must become secular,” citing “Bonhoeffer martyred by the Nazis” as an example.³ In an April 1965 address before the National Conference on Church Architecture, Tillich pointed to the biblical and Reformation periods’ devaluation of the significance of church physical structures, noting that “the most radical attack on church buildings comes from theology itself,” which he saw as “express[ing] God’s freedom from religion...[and] God’s freedom for the secular, as emphasized powerfully by the martyr-theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.”⁴

These two observations by Tillich imply the impact of the world crises of the Nazi terror and World War II upon both thinkers. Tillich, thrown out of Germany for his politics and theology, vigorously devoted himself to the twenty-six-month-long project of writing speeches for the Voice of America, providing weekly commentaries on the state of German culture under Nazi rule.⁵ Bonhoeffer – imprisoned for reasons seemingly amorphous yet ultimately resulting in his execution – penned reflections and letters over twenty-two months on the nature of Christian identity, preserved and edited by his brother-in-law and former student

Eberhard Bethge in the *Letters and Papers from Prison*.⁶ In the end, Bonhoeffer’s pursuit of a direct, unmediated biblical theology and Tillich’s embrace of the broad German philosophical and cultural tradition compelled them to resist the destructive forces driving a deadening life under the Nazi tyranny, while providing new visions for the future of Christianity.

I. Shared Themes in the Thought of Tillich and Bonhoeffer

To begin, it would be helpful to be cognizant of themes that arose in the minds of both thinkers. Timing and resistance were strands in the thought of both Tillich and Bonhoeffer. Born in August 1886 into the home of a German pastor and church leader, Tillich came to find the idea of *kairos* useful for capturing those moments or periods in which the fabric of life and history brought together the forces required for effective action: that is, when time was “ripe” for action. Having experienced the horrors of World War I as a chaplain on the front line of the German Imperial Army, he saw the war’s end combined with the postwar revolution in Germany as a time propitious for meaningful change in European culture. It led him to embrace elements of Marx which – in its social analysis – seemed to be more consistent with the Judeo-Christian traditions of love and justice than what he had experienced in the institutional church up to that time. A decade-and-a-half later, it would lead to his removal from German academia and force his emigration to the United States.⁷

Bonhoeffer, born nearly two decades after Tillich in February 1906, would grow to believe the world had evolved, even matured, to a point in time on the brink of a “world come of age.” He saw it as ready to shed the illusions that had fed 19th century optimism and that had dampened the behavior of the church to a mere shadow of the call of Christ. Bonhoeffer was born into the cultural comfort of the household of the noted German psychiatrist, Karl Bonhoeffer, and a close-knit family. Among the elements that ultimately nurtured this view was the perspective of his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi, who served as an attorney in Nazi Germany’s counter-intelligence (the Abwehr) and who ultimately invited Bonhoeffer to become a

participant a conspiracy centered in the *Abwehr*. This, combined with the passivity and consent of the German church in the face of Nazi crimes, fed his inquiry into the meaning of that moment in history and what that moment called for Christ's church to become.⁸

Tillich and Bonhöffer represented two sides of the prevailing theological culture of Germany at the time. Tillich was an heir to the idealism of Kant and Hegel. As suggested before, his World War I experiences radicalized his thinking, leading him to turn to Marx and Nietzsche, and to move toward cultural-theologizing. With Bonhöffer, Tillich appreciated his contemporary Karl Barth's confrontation of a domesticated, 19th century liberalism that betrayed its promises and ideals, ending in the onset of the world war. At the same time, he never let go of the metaphysical mindset of his philosophical forefather, Schelling: the notion that all reality arises out of God – God of the abyss, the abysmal God – the divine reality both utterly beyond humanity's understanding, while imminent as the ground of being, including humanity's being. Tillich's appreciation of Barth did not extend to the latter's thorough-going biblicism.⁹

Bonhöffer's roots in the broad German cultural tradition extended not only into science and government, but into the arts as well. Hans von Dohnanyi was not only the son of composer, pianist, and conductor Ernst von Dohnanyi, but the father of the future conductor Christoph von Dohnanyi,¹⁰ with whom Bonhöffer (his uncle) maintained correspondence while in prison. Bonhöffer himself was a gifted pianist. While Tillich had been born into the household of a preacher, Bonhöffer was a "new" Christian. He converted amidst his serious, later formal studies but early on rejected the philosophical orientation of the theology driving the church in favor of a biblicism that called for direct obedience to the Christ, the assumption being that such a Christ was unmediated. Bonhöffer was a pro-Barthian, though, on occasion, critical of Barth.¹¹

On the surface, Tillich and Bonhöffer took differing views on the "place" God and Christ. For Tillich, God was in an exclusive class, a reality who is the ground of being or being itself. God is not a being nor even the greatest of beings, as if God were merely the best within a category. The idea of

the abysmal quality of God that Tillich drew from Schelling expressed the incomparability of the divine majesty, which is what makes God both the only proper focus of our ultimate concern as well as one whom finite humanity can experience only in a fragmentary way. In Tillich's thought, Jesus as the Christ is the center of history whose salvific work is the cosmic healing and reconciliation of the estrangement brought about by human sin. Humanity's experience of salvation is in a zone Tillich termed the boundary-situation in which the fullness of human finitude and brokenness can be faced and the infinitude of divine grace can be experienced in the New Being brought about by Jesus as the Christ.¹²

As will become clear below, Bonhöffer had difficulty with Tillich's idea of the boundary-situation. He declared that by seeing Christ as the center of history, Christianity rejects the idea of Christ on the boundaries or the fringes. He believed that the idealist tradition had domesticated God into an entity at the periphery. Instead, Christ is the one who lives for others in the very stuff of life. Christ calls us to live concretely versus merely intellectually and inwardly and individualistically and via a personal and private piety out of touch with the realities of the world.

Both Tillich and Bonhöffer came to see the place of the church (Bonhöffer) or religion (Tillich) in the world as one of world-embracing rather than world-escaping.¹³ It is important to clarify that Tillich and Bonhöffer understood the term, "religion," differently from one another. For Bonhöffer (and Barth, as well), religion meant exchanging true, biblical Christianity for surrender to a culture rooted in idealism.¹⁴ For Tillich, religion was the pursuit of the meaning-giving substance within reality as a whole, the substantial foundation of all other realms of existence, infusing all of reality with meaning.¹⁵

With this clarification in hand, the role of religion in Tillich's life and work was affected by his experience of World War I: the impact of human brutality in war upon people, which he experienced in two mental breakdowns; the cynicism of the working class he grew to know as a military chaplain, particularly their attitude toward a church it perceived as in complete alliance with the empire; and his willingness to take seriously Marx and to

theologize about the relationship of Marxist sociology and Christian community, highlighting the social dimension of religion, rooted in the prophetic tradition of Judeo-Christianity. This led to more than a decade of work within Germany during which Tillich developed his version of religious socialism: elsewhere he called it belief-ful (or believing) realism.¹⁶ The theology of culture he created during the German Weimar period culminated in his book, *The Socialist Decision* in late 1932.¹⁷ Hitler's rise to power in January 1933 led to his removal a few months later and his departure for the United States. After establishing a secure place at New York's Union Theological Seminary, he was ultimately invited by the U.S. Office of War Information to write speeches for broadcast over the Voice of America. These were weekly messages intended to persuade his German listeners to reclaim their culture by resisting Nazism.¹⁸

Bonhöffer's experience of the church was as an institution set apart from the everyday issues of life.¹⁹ With the rise of Adolf Hitler to power, he witnessed the submission of the church to totalitarian political power as profoundly problematic. With the establishment of the Nazi-sponsored German Christian church, he joined others in the formation of the Confessing Church, directing its underground seminaries at Zingst and Finkenwalde.²⁰ While generally affirming of the Theological Declaration of Barmen, largely authored by Karl Barth, he was disappointed in the silence of this document as well as the results of other Confessing Church councils and synods regarding the Jewish Question in the face of the consequent fate of the Jewish people.²¹ During this time he wrote perhaps his most popular work, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), his effort to provide a biblical basis for the church's call to give concrete expression to Christian faith through ethical lives. During this same period, he wrote the short book that gave his most explicit prescriptions for life in the church, *Life Together* (1939).²² It was at this stage that Bonhöffer became aware of the resistance conspiracies within the government through his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi, and by late 1940 he had joined the resistance associated with the Abwehr.²³

II. Bonhöffer's Misinterpretation of Tillich

Here, the discussion turns to Bonhöffer's published criticism of Tillich's thinking. Tillich's only published comments regarding Bonhöffer were general, uncritical ones published years after the latter's death. Bonhöffer's are relevant because they highlight his sense of significant differences between the two thinkers that informed their peculiar responses to the Nazi crisis which the next section of the article will address.

In his interpretation of Tillich's thought, Bonhöffer was vulnerable to ignorance of both the context and evolution of Tillich's thought. As alluded to before, an important part of the general context of Tillich's perspective was the particular impact of World War I upon him. His biographers, Marion and Wilhelm Pauck, provided this memorable characterization of that impact:

At the beginning of the war Tillich was a shy, grown boy, truly a 'dreaming innocent.' He was a German patriot, a proud Prussian, as eager to fight for his country as anyone else, but politically inactive. When he returned to Berlin four years later he was utterly transformed. The traditional monarchist had become a religious socialist, the Christian believer a cultural pessimist, and the repressed puritanical boy a 'wild man.' These years represent *the* turning point in Paul Tillich's life—the first, last, and only one.²⁴

Tillich's own description of that change describes its intellectual consequences: My entrance into the religious socialist movement meant for me the definitive break with philosophical idealism and theological transcendentalism. It opened my eyes to the religious significance of political Calvinism and social sectarianism, over against the predominantly sacramental character of my own Lutheran tradition.

Religious socialism is not a political party but a spiritual power trying to be effective in as many parties as possible.²⁵ ("Author's Introduction," *The Protestant Era*, p. xviii)

A key concept at the heart of Tillich's religious socialism was the Protestant principle. Tillich wrote that the "Protestant Principle as derived from the doctrine of justification through faith rejects heteronomy (represented by the doctrine of

papal infallibility) as well as a self-complacent autonomy (represented by secular humanism). It demands a self-transcending autonomy, or theonomy.²⁶ The religious socialism that grew out of the Protestant Principle “was always interested in human life as a whole and never its economic basis exclusively.”²⁷ Rather, he saw it as a new theonomy that included the economy in the pursuit of a social structure that more truly provided for “spiritual security,” bearing the insight ignored by most Christian theologians “that there are social structures that unavoidably frustrate any spiritual appeal to the people subjected to them.”²⁸

Bonhöffer’s blanket critique of Tillich’s analysis of German culture in June 1944 noted at the beginning was the last (and the single posthumous one) of a series of three published criticisms. The first was in his 1930 book, *Sanctorum Communio*. There, Bonhöffer’s demand for “personal appropriation” of the biblical word as well as his sacralization of Christian community led him to condemn Tillich’s 1922 examination of mass (collective) identity in the face of capitalism, „Masse und Geist.“ The three essays that composed Tillich’s work argued that out of the creative depth of reality, a substance that conquered the separation of personality and mass society was required, which could transform the “mechanized masses” into dynamic and organic expressions of mass, and that revealed to humanity the actuality of the holy not only within the human soul and the church, but within the world as a whole.²⁹

In Bonhöffer’s judgment, Tillich saw “the holiness of the formless mass in the fact that it can be given form by the revelation of the forming absolute,” which Bonhöffer saw as “no longer [having] anything to do with Christian theology.”³⁰ Instead, he declared, “We know only the holiness of God’s church-community that is bound to and formed by the word in Christ. The word is received only by personal appropriation, which is why God’s church-community is impelled away from the mass.”³¹ In the end, “the Christian concept of the church-community is the criterion for evaluating the notion of the mass, and not the other way around.”³²

In this, there is a definite disagreement on the social dimension of the gospel which Bonhöffer reduced to merely announcing the church’s presence

in their midst. In short, one either favored personal appropriation of the gospel as truth or imposed spurious notions of spiritual presence or absence in the broader cultural community as truth, the latter being outside the pale of true Christianity: to Bonhöffer, Tillich had done the latter. Tillich could have responded to Bonhöffer’s diatribe by noting that the sacred texts for Jesus of Nazareth were the books of the Hebrew Bible. By turning to the creation story of Genesis 1, creation arises out of a formless void with the Spirit moving over the face of the deep, one can see that “the creative depth of reality” fully resonates with Genesis. In turning to the prophets of ancient Judaism, one reads that these texts enunciated a message of judgment upon nations which failed to bring justice to the masses: in fact, the prophetic community is the “criterion for evaluating the notion of the mass.” Rather than having nothing “to do with Christian theology,” Tillich’s understanding of mass and spirit was deeply rooted in the teachings – the sacred texts – to which Jesus of Nazareth turned. Thus, Tillich rightfully assessed the exploitative impact of capitalism upon the masses and directed the Protestant principle—in both its critical and creative dimensions—squarely at this social ill.

The following year, in his book, *Act and Being*, Bonhöffer focused his attention on Tillich’s idea of the boundary situation. Here, he selectively focused on parts of a chapter in Tillich’s 1929/1930 book, *Religiöse Verwirklichung*, “Chapter 1—“The Religious as Critical Principle: The Protestant Message and the Man of Today.” Bonhöffer could not accept Tillich’s willingness to use philosophy and theology in interaction with one another as a path of truth-seeking. As a result, he seemed flummoxed by the idea of a boundary situation in which one experienced the competing claims of heteronomous powers, through the autonomous assertion of self over against heteronomy, a self only capable of experiencing meaning by transcending the impotence of autonomy through theonomy, that is, the New Being in Christ, a new being only capable of ambiguous, fragmentary experience of the ground of being within existence. For Tillich, all of this expressed the same reality experienced by the ancient prophets of the Hebrew Bible, the apostle Paul, and Martin Luther.³³ Giving no attention to the trio of concepts (heteronomy, autonomy, and

theonomy – the latter being belief-ful realism in the original German chapter) nor the other elements of Tillich’s argument, Bonhöffer concluded that Tillich’s boundary-situation was a graceless zone of sin.³⁴

Bonhöffer’s misunderstanding of Tillich’s boundary concept is a basic one. It ignores the profundity and intellectual/theological generosity of Tillich’s shift in thought. In the aftermath of World War I, Tillich rejected the idolatrous sacralization of German culture, empire, and church in order to embrace a philosophical, theological, intellectual, and political humility that the younger Bonhöffer was perhaps not yet ready to understand. It contradicted Bonhöffer’s views in its broad openness to extra-biblical, extra-ecclesiastical and extra-“theological” yet—nonetheless—richly theonomous resources for interpreting meaning. Bonhöffer arrived at the centrality of the suffering Christ in captivity while not understanding that Tillich’s understanding of the exploited masses offered an important critique to the limiting personalism of Bonhoeffer’s understanding of spirituality. Tillich’s shift implied a world-come-of-age of different sort than Bonhöffer’s, yet cognizant of the same culturally seismic shift of the younger scholar. As Bethge observed, “If Bonhoeffer had been able to examine the material more thoroughly, he would have seen that the religious socialist Leonhard Ragaz and Paul Tillich had made similar breakthroughs earlier.”³⁵

With this explication of Bonhoeffer’s critique of Tillich, the distinction between the theology of culture approach in Tillich and the personal appropriation of God’s word path in Bonhoeffer becomes clearer. Now, the discussion will turn to a specific fruit of the perspective of each thinker: for Tillich, the nearly six hundred pages of speeches he wrote for broadcast over the Voice of America between March 1942 and May 1944; and, for Bonhöffer, the scores of documents composed of correspondence and fragments of reflections recorded during his two years as a prisoner of the Third Reich between April 1943 and his execution in April 1945.

III. “To My German Friends” and *Letters and Papers from Prison*

A. Tillich and the Voice of America

Paul Tillich saw Nazism as a cultural, civilizational, and world catastrophe for humankind. The theological analysis of culture that he began after World War I and that matured over the subsequent decades gave him the insight required to reflect on German culture during the Nazi terror. He did so most intensively through the one hundred fourteen addresses over the Voice of America (VOA), each of them beginning with the opening address, “*An meine deutschen Freunde*” (“To my German friends”). Here, the discussion will focus on four prominent themes in those addresses: (1) freedom, democracy, and human dignity; (2) nationalist idolatry; (3) racism and the Jewish people; and (4) resistance.

1. Democracy, Freedom, Human Dignity

Tillich gave particular attention to freedom, democracy, and human dignity within the first month of the VOA project.³⁶ In the fourth speech of the VOA project, he contrasted internal and external freedom. He argued that Germany’s history of repressing political freedom had produced an internalized absence of freedom: “Not once did Schiller—whose freedom dramas are banished from German theaters today—bring the German freedom struggle from the stage onto the street...now the street has captured even the stage and...the false freedom of drama.”³⁷ While political freedom has matured in the modern era outside of Germany, he urged his German audience to “allow the Protestant protest to become strong among you, as it did among your fathers in their time. Internal and external freedom have proven to be one. The struggle for both is what your time requires of you.”³⁸

In June 1942, Tillich described for his listeners his experience of American democracy. He too saw respect for human dignity as key to the spirit of democracy. He called democracy “a human outlook, an interpretation of life, prior to being a system and a political method... The word has more of a religious than a political ring, although it includes the political.”³⁹ Noting that its roots drew on both Christianity and German humanism, Tillich experienced it as “the acknowledgement of the human dignity within every person”: democracy elevated human dignity in contrast to the oppression of nondemocratic regimes.⁴⁰

A year later, Tillich urged Germans to reeducate their children for freedom, warning of the dehumanizing impact of blind, “cadaver-obedience”: “[N]othing destroys humanity more than an obedience which no longer asks, no longer decides, and has no ultimate responsibility. For this reason, the ancients said that the slave is no true person, that only the free person, who decides independently, can grow to full humanity. For this reason, one speaks of cadaver-obedience. A cadaver is a thing; the person who is no longer permitted to decide has become a thing. Like the cadaver, he has only the external appearance of the human. For this reason, everything depends on the German children being educated into inner freedom.”⁴¹

Near the end of his time writing for the *Voice of America*, Tillich described the cost of surrendering freedom as consenting to a spirit of subjugation. He saw what went wrong in Germany as “the inability of the German people to tolerate freedom,” thus, the absence of a genuine. Revolution and the consequent failure to see “the breath of freedom to be the life bestowing breath of humanism.”⁴²

2. Nationalism/Idolatry

By the time of World War II, Tillich had already rejected the priority of national identity.⁴³ Given the horrors of World War I, he expressed surprise in a July 1942 speech that the idea of “nation” had advanced and been victorious over international entities: the Roman Catholic Church; the general international, cosmopolitan spirit in science and culture, and the labor movement.⁴⁴ He observed that the idea of nation has become the “poison” of nationalistic idolatry in Germany. He believed that “as hate gives birth to hate, so nationalism gives birth to nationalism, and national idolatry to national idolatry.”⁴⁵ Seeing pure nationalism as pure will-to-power, he had hopes that after reaching its horrific zenith in Nazism it would give way to nobler direction.⁴⁶

A week later, Tillich endorsed the idea of a world federation over against the post-World War I pattern of the League of Nations. He pointed to the best thinkers in German-occupied territories who supported the establishment of such a federa-

tion for oversight of military, diplomatic, and economic matters.⁴⁷ He quoted an American politician who declared, “The old idea of the independent Sovereignty of nations is a formula for anarchy. The old principle of the equal sovereignty of nations is a recipe for irresponsibility and inactivity. Since all who possess a human nature and demand a new world order with such domineering urgency, then it is sensible to believe that a path to it in our time is being found.”⁴⁸

In April 1943, provoked by the execution of American POWs (pilots) by the Japanese Empire,⁴⁹ Tillich spoke of nationalistic gods that had blinded Germany and Japan: “[T]he gods—or rather the evil forces in the soul of humankind and nations – act in such a way that they first give successes in order to make humanity secure. When they become secure, they become further and further driven. In the blindness caused by their success, they can no longer see the abyss toward which they are hastening and into which they are ultimately falling.”⁵⁰

That summer, he returned to the ideal of blindness, specifically blind patriotism. There, Tillich distinguished between blind and seeing patriotism: “What is genuine love for one's fatherland? It is *seeing*, not blind, love. Blind love overrates everything peculiar to itself and underrates everything strange. And for that reason it is incapable of adapting to the rest of humanity. Nothing has become so difficult for the German nation than this adaptation to the spirit of other nations. It has always swayed between senselessly overrating another nation and senselessly overrating itself.”⁵¹

3. Racism/The Jewish Question

The status and fate of the Jewish people was woven into Tillich's *Voice of America* speeches from the very start:⁵² the first speech focused on “The Question of the Jewish People.” In the opening paragraph, he directed his thoughts to Protestant Christians “who cannot avoid these facts: that their religion was prepared in the womb of Jewish history; that he in whom they see the presence of God in the world was of Jewish lineage; that the Old Testament is also part of the Christian Bible; that the achievement of the [Protestant] Reformers took place in the spirit and

in the name of the Jew, Paul; and that for two thousand years, Jews and Christians have drawn religious strength from the same commands of the law and the same promises of the prophets and the same words of prayer from the Psalms. We could renounce our claim to being Christians, but as long as we want to remain Christians, we cannot renounce that we live out of the same religious roots from which the religious Jew lives.”⁵³

From there, Tillich noted that the prophetic tradition of scripture stands against nationalism and idolatry. Therefore, the German nationalistic idolatry was in direct contradiction to Judeo-Christian teaching. Probing further, Tillich argued, “The depth of the Jewish question is that the Jews are the people of history, the people of the prophetic, future-judging spirit.”⁵⁴ More than this, the alleged “Jewish question” is ultimately a human question: whether “the meaning and value of human existence is to reach out over such boundedness to a realm beyond nation and beyond every limited space.”⁵⁵

Calling his audience of November 1942 to admit their knowledge about Jewish genocide, Tillich wrote, “You have experienced, and are experiencing it even today, the indescribably cruel extermination of the Jewish people in Germany and Europe. You know the horror of the concentration camps, where countless, precious people are being tortured to death by criminals and imbeciles.”⁵⁶

With vivid force of rhetoric, in the summer of 1943, Tillich compared the trains of Germans fleeing bombing raids with those carrying their Jewish victims to the camps: “...today, when the trains with Germans who are fleeing from the cities roll from west to east, then this is an atonement for the death trains which, filled with Jewish women and children and old people, traveled out of all German cities from west to east to certain death. The German cities slept when the death trains rolled through their train stations with their burden of indescribable misery.”⁵⁷

In the following December, Tillich drew out the revelatory impact of the suffering of profoundly vulnerable people, indicting German Christians ready to celebrate their fifth war Christmas, the feast of Christ’s birth:

“As long as we are seeking the Christ child in markets and palaces, we will not find him. Much more

likely, he is in the bomb-torn foxholes of the British and the Russians, in the quarters of the German working-class or in the loaded stock-cars in which mothers with their infants are driven into the death-camps of the east; or in the dark nights in which innocent hostages look forward to their death in the coming morning; or in the cold rooms in which badly fed, freezing women and children mourn the death of their father and husband and son. There, above all, can we find the Savior, the child in the manger, the child among the ruins.”⁵⁸

Three months later, on Good Friday 1944, commemorating Christ’s crucifixion, Tillich drove the theme of complicity still further: “Millions have been nailed to the cross of the most profound suffering and the most agonizing death by the henchmen of National Socialism. And the German people stood by and looked on, just as in the old pictures of the crucifixion. No one became outraged over the suffering of the innocents.”⁵⁹

4. Resistance

Resistance and opposition to Hitler’s regime arose overtly in Tillich’s speeches and was regularly implied. While present in his fourth speech and its call to exercise external freedom, the Tillich’s fifth speech of late April 1942 on the resistance of the Norwegian church was his first, powerful foray into the issue. He contrasted the political activism of Norwegian Lutheranism with its German counterpart, ruing the historic failure of the German church to offer prophetic criticism of the government. He called the German church to present itself “as the sacrifice in the face of injustice. Such a church would be the most active force of a nation. Out of it, a nation that had fallen dead could be born anew.”⁶⁰

Six months later, Tillich expressed concern about the caricaturing of Germans within Allied countries.: in particular, Nazism seen as expressing German character. He saw this as potentially as destructive as the Nazi caricaturing of the Jewish people, which led to “the ruinous fate of the Jews,” particularly for the postwar future of Germany.⁶¹ As a consequence, Tillich called for the German opposition to lead the way in convincing the broader world that Nazism was not the same as

German culture, and that militarism and subservience did not define German character.⁶²

By March 1944, Tillich could describe three levels of awareness within Germany about the inevitability of Germany's defeat: those in the know militarily, but who didn't speak, those who knew in their minds without admitting it to themselves, and those who didn't know because they weren't perceptive enough.⁶³ He exhorted those who knew to distinguish between loyalty to Germany and Nazism: "It is your responsibility to get rid of the Nazis for the sake of Germany."⁶⁴

In the same Good Friday address cited before, Tillich described the greatness of the suffering of Jesus as one rooted in innocent suffering. He saw it as the embodiment of innocent suffering "because it is the picture of innocent one, it points beyond itself" and "has a helping, saving force for everyone who is grasped by it," showing that "within all the guilt and self-destruction of people" reconciliation is possible.⁶⁵ Because many Germans saw Germany as the innocent martyr following World War I, Hitler could lead Germans into a war in which Germany crucified Europe and the world. Now, Germany's alternatives were to bear their suffering without bitterness or to do so with bitterness, ending in "a suffering without reconciliation and a death without resurrection."⁶⁶

B. Bonhöffer and the *Letters and Papers from Prison*

The most important record available of Dietrich Bonhöffer's years as a prisoner of the Nazis is the collection of letters to and from loved ones and colleagues, as well as Bonhöffer's reflections of varying lengths interpreting what the church had become and what true faith in Christ demanded. These were assembled and edited by Bonhöffer's student and brother-in-law, Eberhard Bethge, in *Letters and Papers from Prison*. All of the material is conditioned by the context of the profound stress of being a prisoner of a terror state. In light of this, the coherence of it all is remarkable. Here, the focus will be upon three areas: Bonhöffer's sense of the mindset required for facing the period he and his allies encountered; his thoughts on time and "the feeling of time"; and his interpretation of what was required of the faithful in a "world-come-of-age."

1. A Mindset for Facing Terror

The first document in the book is an essay Bonhöffer shared with Bethge, Han von Dohnanyi, and Hans Oster on Christmas Eve 1942, three-and-a-half months prior to his arrest. A copy of it was also kept beneath the roof-beams of Bonhöffer's parents home.⁶⁷ This document is the starting point for three themes addressed here, beginning with the personal, cultural and strategic mindset required for such a time.

As the Hitler regime approached its tenth anniversary, Bonhöffer wondered "whether there have ever before in human history been people with so little ground under their feet—people to whom every available alternative seemed equally intolerable ... [amidst such a] great masquerade of evil."⁶⁸ He urged his friends to understand that God "demands responsible action in a bold venture of faith" promising grace to one "who becomes a sinner in that venture."⁶⁹ While he knew the concrete situation required realism regarding the context for any action, he also argued that "...all historically important action is constantly overstepping the limits set by [the permanent laws of human social life]."⁷⁰

Bonhöffer called for a return to depth in social in cultural life, exemplified in "a return from the newspaper and the radio to the book, from feverish activity to unhurried leisure, from dispersion to concentration, from sensationalism to reflection, from virtuosity to art, from snobbery to modesty, from extravagance to moderation."⁷¹ For followers of Christ, he asserted that faithfulness meant embodying Christ's "large-heartedness by acting with responsibility and in freedom when the hour of danger comes," and ministering to the suffering out of Christ's "liberating and redeeming love."⁷² Further, he declared that through the experience he shared with those of common spirit they had "learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcasts, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled – in short, from the perspective of those who suffer."⁷³

Five months after his arrest, as Bonhöffer awaited his trial and reflected on bombing raids in the vicinity, life-shaking circumstances combined with his yearning for the love and social fabric

which supports what is meaningful in life. He wrote to his parents in early September 1943, “It’s remarkable how we think at such times about people that we should not like to live without...It is only then that we feel how closely our own lives are bound up with other people’s, and in fact how the center of our own lives is outside ourselves, and how little we are separate entities.”⁷⁴ In the same letter, he commented on two biblical passages that struck him as meaningful: “Behold, what I have built up I am breaking down, and what I have planted I am plucking up...And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not...but I will give your life as a prize of war (Jer. 45)... Thou hast made the land to quake, thou hast rent it open; repair its breaches, for it totters (Ps. 60).”⁷⁵

Nearly two months later, Bonhöffer commented on the difference between one’s intended outcome and the actual outcome of actions, pointing to a range of examples in German history.⁷⁶ In a mid-November 1943 letter to Eberhard Bethge, Bonhöffer wrote in passing of writing an essay speaking the truth. In the same letter, he wrote of praying “quite simply for freedom... As Christians, we needn’t be at all ashamed of some impatience, longing, opposition to what is unnatural, and our full share of desire for freedom, earthly happiness, and opportunity for effective work.”⁷⁷

Ten days before Christmas 1943, Bonhöffer wrote to Bethge, “I often wonder who I really am—the man who goes on squirming under these ghastly experiences in wretchedness that cries to heaven, or the man who scourges himself and pretends to others (and even to himself) that he is placid, cheerful, composed, and in control of himself,” though he immediately discounted the usefulness of excessive self-analysis.⁷⁸

Defying the destruction going on around him and preventing him from contributing directly to the cause outside, Bonhöffer wrote to his parents in February 1944, “Even if the pressure of outward events may split our lives into fragments, like bombs falling on houses, we must do our best to keep in view how the whole was planned and thought out; and we shall still be able to see what material was used, or was to be used, here for building.”⁷⁹

A month later, in the weeks before Easter 1944, Bonhöffer sent these words to Bethge: “It’s

not from [Socrates’] *ars moriendi*, the art of dying, but from the resurrection of Christ, that a new and purifying wind can blow through our present world...To live in the light of the resurrection—that is what Easter means. Do you find, too, that most people don’t know what they really live by?”⁸⁰

2 – Time and Place

Turning from the theme of mindset to that of the powerful, context-setting impact of time and place, Bonhöffer’s thinking in *Letters and Papers from Prison* revealed the influence of these forces on both mundane and profound matters.

The seemingly normal and everyday experiences held significance for Bonhöffer. In a July 1943 letter to his parents, he wrote of the significance of church bells in human life: he noted that the prison chapel’s bells marked the best time for him to write home. Among his papers are a few letters from his nephew, Christoph von Dohnanyi. In one of them from late September 1943, Christoph wrote of his flute teacher, describing the fourteen instruments this instructor owned. The teacher had the double misfortune of living in a location vulnerable to air raids and of needing to bring all fourteen flutes along with him to the cellar every time the air raid sirens sounded.⁸¹

In contrast to an orientation toward the future in normal times, Bonhöffer’s pre-arrest essay from late 1942 called attention to the guidance of Matthew 6:34, surrendering “anxiety about tomorrow,” for the difficult “narrow way... of living every day as if it were our last, and yet living in faith and responsibility as though there were to be a great future.”⁸² His various thoughts on what the moment called for evidently led Bonhöffer to begin writing a now lost essay on “the feeling of time” a month after his arrest. There, he explained to his parents his initial thoughts of seeing a biblical contrast between “My time is in your hands” (Ps. 31) and “How long, O Lord?” (Ps. 13).⁸³ Six months later, he explained his motivation for the essay to Bethge as “the need to bring before me my own past in a situation that could so easily seem *empty* and *waste*,” seeing the past as present in “thankfulness and penitence.”⁸⁴

In the Christmas 1942 essay, Bonhöffer provided his allies a brief insight into what may have

driven him to join the conspiracy. As a respecter of law and human dignity, Bonhöffer argued that these laws could be violated only in rare contexts: “the odd occasion in case of brief necessity,” adding that turning “brief necessity” into a general principle for life was dangerous and destabilizing.⁸⁵

In a June 1943 letter, Bonhöffer’s mother made an observation on the impact of war upon one’s experience of time: “They say that war years count double. I have the feeling that they count ‘four-fold.’”⁸⁶ A year later, at a poignant moment in the lives of his family—the baptism of Bethge’s son (and Bonhöffer’s nephew) in May 1944—Bonhöffer wrote to Eberhard Bethge, “There is no place for sentimentality on a day like this [the day of Dietrich Wilhelm’s baptism]. If in the middle of an air raid God sends out the gospel call to his kingdom in baptism, it will be quite clear what that kingdom is and what it means. It is a kingdom stronger than war and danger...one as wide as the earth...a kingdom for which it is worthwhile risking our lives.”⁸⁷

As Bonhöffer coped with the competing desires of maintaining creative thought within prison and the extensive work that needed to be completed on the outside, he wrestled with the meaning and meaninglessness of any creativity in light of its relationship to the historical moment. In a February 1944 letter to his parents he wrote, “...when one thinks of all the tasks waiting to be done outside, one is apt to feel, however hard one tries to be patient and understanding, that it is better to write no letters” because of the difficulty or ordering thoughts *and* the lack of timeliness of the thoughts.⁸⁸

Particularly moving were Bonhöffer’s hopeful anticipation – perhaps bearing an ambiguous hope – of reunions after his release from prison. In August 1943, he envisioned the power of a hoped-for future time when he would meet his parents in freedom: “one of those days which we shall never forget in our lives.”⁸⁹ In a similar spirit, he wrote to Bethge in March 1944, “I’m curious as to how the future will lead us on, whether perhaps we shall be together again in our work—which I should very much like, or whether we shall have to be content with what has been.”⁹⁰

3. A World-Come-of-Age

Bonhöffer’s idea of a world come of age is his final formulation of his anti-religion position. In November 1943, he wrote to Bethge, “my fear and distrust of ‘religiosity’ have become greater than ever here. The fact that the Israelites *never* uttered the name of God always makes me think, and I can understand it better as I go on.”⁹¹ Two weeks later he continued along the same path:

“My thoughts and feelings seem to be getting more and more like those of the Old Testament...It is only when one knows the unutterability of the name of God that one can utter the name of Jesus Christ; it is only when one loves life and the earth so much that without them everything seems to be over that one may believe in the resurrection and a new world; it is only when one submits to God’s law that one may speak of grace; and it is only when God’s wrath and vengeance are hanging as grim realities over one’s enemies that something of what it means to love and forgive them can touch our hearts. In my opinion it is not Christian to want to take our thoughts and feelings too quickly and too directly from the New Testament.”⁹²

In late April 1944, Bonhöffer described his thoughts still further: “What is bothering me incessantly is the question what Christianity really is, or indeed who Christ really is, for us today. The time when people could be told everything by means of words, whether theological or pious, is over, and so is the time of inwardness and conscience – and that means the time of religion in general. We are moving towards a completely religionless time; people as they are now simply cannot be religious anymore.”⁹³ He mused, “How can Christ become the Lord of the religionless as well? Are there religionless Christians?... What do a church, a community, a sermon, a liturgy, a Christian life mean in a religionless world? How do we speak about God – without religion?... In what way are we ‘religionless-secular Christians, in what way are we *ek-klesia*, those who are called forth... belonging wholly to the world... [with Christ] no longer an object of religion, but... really the Lord of the world.”⁹⁴

In December 1943, Bonhöffer told Bethge of his work on an essay about truth-telling: context was crucial to truth-telling for him. He described

his goal in the piece: “I’m trying to draw a sharp contrast between trust, loyalty and secrecy on the one hand, and the ‘cynical’ conception of truth, for which all these obligations do not exist, on the other. ‘Falsehood’ is the destruction of, and hostility to, reality as it is in God; anyone who tells the truth cynically is lying.”⁹⁵ On the occasion of the May 1944 baptism of his nephew and Bethge’s son, Bonhöffer claimed that the word of God becomes something different in a world come of age, this time focused on the new context of such a world. In it, God’s word would be so uttered “that the world will be changed and renewed by it... [understood as] a new language... liberating and redeeming – as was Jesus’ language... shock[ing] people and yet overcome[ing] them by its power... [bearing] a new righteousness and truth, proclaiming God’s peace with men and the coming of his kingdom,” in the face of which the faithful expectantly and prayerfully awake God’s movement in secret.⁹⁶ Soon thereafter, he wrote that in such a world, “Jesus claims for himself and the Kingdom of God the whole of human life in all its manifestations.”⁹⁷ Context would matter not only for truth but for the future pronouncement and reception of the word of God.

Turning to specific biblical texts, Bonhöffer drew on sixteen examples from the gospels and Acts in July 1944, declaring that “The only thing that is common to all these is their sharing in the suffering of God in Christ. That is their ‘faith’. There is nothing of religious method here... Jesus calls men, not to a new religion, but to life.”⁹⁸ In contrast to all-powerful God, he argued that “The Bible directs man to God’s powerlessness and suffering; only the suffering God can help... the God of the Bible, who wins power and space in the world by his weakness. This will probably be the starting-point for our secular interpretation.”⁹⁹ As with Jesus in Gethsemane, “Man is summoned to share in God’s suffering at the hands of a godless world,” to be Christian means participation in the sufferings of God in the secular life... allowing oneself to be caught up into the way of Jesus Christ, into the messianic event...¹⁰⁰

All of this persuaded Bonhöffer of “the profound this-worldliness of Christianity” and that the Christian is not a *homo religiosus*, but simply a man, as Jesus was a man...¹⁰¹ In a set of notes including a

brief outline for a book on the “real meaning of Christian Faith,” Bonhöffer called the significance of Jesus the embodiment of “‘being there for others,’ maintained till death, that is the ground of his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.”¹⁰² The consequence is a new understanding of the church: “The church is the church only when it exists for others. To make a new start, it should give away all its property to those in need. The clergy must live solely on the free-will offering of their congregation, or possibly engage in some secular calling. The church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others.”¹⁰³

Conclusion

On the occasion of his one hundredth VOA address, Tillich explained his intentions for the speeches to his audience: “What I have attempted, week after week over the last two years, is to lead the German people to a new, genuine hope;” further, it was “to challenge you to break with the barriers of the disastrous present;” and, ultimately, to wage “a continuous struggle for the liberation of the German people from the enslavement to the Nazi spirit.”¹⁰⁴ A month before the July 20, 1944 attempted assassination of Hitler, Bonhöffer wrote these words to Bethge, “[O]ne can’t just can’t choose where one has to be. So we must keep on trying to find our way through the petty thoughts that irritate us, to the great thoughts that strengthen us.”¹⁰⁵

In these two projects – one part of a government strategy, the other a collection of accidental, subtle inquiries into what being Christian meant, perhaps the theological basis for a surprising action against a tyrannical government—Tillich and Bonhöffer turned to two sets of sources. Tillich mined the broad and deep cultural resources that together formed the fabric of his German heritage. Bonhöffer found wisdom and solace in the rich teachings of scripture. In the end, Bonhöffer sought a direct, bare-bones, utterly unmediated relationship to the Jesus of the Bible, one who existed for others and summoned his followers to do the same. Tillich had a far limited goal in mind: mustering the

forces of theonomy—experienced in a fragmentary way—to work toward the reconciliation of the estranged the reached beyond the lives of individuals to justice for all people in the social and cultural and world levels of existence.

In 1854, Thoreau wrote, “There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.”¹⁰⁶ Further on he continued, “The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but

only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life.”¹⁰⁷ One way to understand the labors of Tillich and Bonhöffer—and their two projects highlighted here—is as their distinctive efforts—sometimes poetic and frequently inspired—to sever the evil root of Nazism and end its stranglehold on the German culture.

¹ This is an article that began as a paper given at the annual meetings of the North American Paul Tillich Society in Boston, MA, November 2017. A separate article by the author on the political radicalization of Tillich and Bonhöffer is “Theology and Resistance in Bonhoeffer and Tillich,” in *Resistance and Theological Ethics*, eds. Ronald H. Stone and Robert L. Stivers (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 299-312.

² Dietrich Bonhöffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: The Enlarged Edition*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Collier Books, 1953/1967/1971), 327-8. These documents were written by Bonhöffer in late 1942 (the “Prologue,” prior to his imprisonment) and in the period of imprisonment, April 1943 – February 1945. While Bonhöffer was executed April 9, 1945, the final documents in the volume are from February 1945.

³ Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 94.

⁴ Paul Tillich, “Honesty and Consecration in Art and Architecture,” (1965) in Paul Tillich, *On Art and Architecture* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 225.

⁵ Marion & Wilhelm Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976), 129-38, 198-9.

⁶ Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (Germ., Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1967; 7th German edition, 1989; rev./ed., Victoria J. Barnett, English transl., Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 724-80; Bonhöffer, *Letters and Papers*....

⁷ Pauck, 41-60.

⁸ Bethge, 13-25, 623-5.

⁹ Pauck, 16-20, 41-60, 62, 70, 95-6, & 99; Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 3-8. Hereafter, this will be cited as ST I.

¹⁰ The weekend of the Tillich Society meetings at which the original version of this article was presented (Boston, November 2017), the elderly Christoph von

Dohnanyi was scheduled to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra, though he ultimately canceled due to illness.

¹¹ Bethge, 13-25, 46; Bonhöffer, *Letters and Papers*..., 106-7, 114-5, & 175.

¹² Paul Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling’s Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions*

and Principles, 1910, transl. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1974); Paul Tillich, “The Protestant Message and the Man of Today,” in *The Protestant Era* (transl. of chapter 1 of *Religiöse Verwirklichung* [Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1930], trans. James Luther Adams); Tillich, ST I, 211-89; Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume Two* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 44ff., 125ff., 165ff. Hereafter, this will be cited as ST II.

¹³ Paul Tillich, „Religion und Weltpolitik,“ 1939, in *Die Religiöse Substanz der Kultur: Schriften zur Theologie der Kultur*, Vol. 9 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Renate Albrecht, 139-204 (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1967); Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume Three* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 38-9, 63, 422; Bethge, 853-70.

¹⁴ Bethge, 871-79. Hereafter, this will be cited as ST III.

¹⁵ Tillich, ST I, 18, 211-89.

¹⁶ Pauck, 50-56, 67ff.

¹⁷ Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision, 1933* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

¹⁸ The entire corpus of the Voice of America speeches are found at the Paul Tillich Archive at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library, <https://holisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/12/resources/1030>. Eighty-seven out of the one hundred fourteen speeches are found in Paul Tillich, *An meine deutschen Freunde: Die politischen Reden Paul Tillichs während des Zweiten Weltkriegs über die „Stimme Amerikas“* (1942-1944), Vol. 3 of *Ergänzungs- und Nachlassbände zu den*

Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1973). Fifty-five of the speeches are found in

Paul Tillich, *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany: 1942-1944*, transl.

Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Bethge, 857.

²⁰ Bethge, 424ff.

²¹ Richard Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth for the Dumb: The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1879-1950* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 124-5, 128, 278.

²² Dietrich Bonhöffer, *Nachfolge* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1937; translated as *The Cost of Discipleship*, 2nd edition, trans., R.H. Fuller [New York: Macmillan, 1959]) and *Gemeinsames Leben* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1939; translated as *Life Together*, trans., John W. Doberstein [New York: Harper & Row, 1954]).

²³ John W. Doberstein, "Introduction," *Life Together*, trans., John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 11 and Bethge, 724ff.

²⁴ Pauck, 41.

²⁵ Paul Tillich, "Author's Introduction," *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), xviii.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, xvi.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xviii.

²⁹ Paul Tillich, „Masse und Geist. Studien zur Philosophie der Masse: Masse und Persönlichkeit; Masse und Bildung;

Masse und Religion," in *Christentum und Soziale Gestaltung: Frühe Schriften zum Religiösen Sozialismus*, vol. 2 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Renate Albrecht, 35-90 (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1962; first published in *Volk und Geist*, No. 1. Berlin/Frankfurt-a-M.: Verlag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 1922), 35, 56, 66-69, 90.

³⁰ Dietrich Bonhöffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, trans. Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens (Trowlitzsch & Sohn, 1930; trans., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 239. See also note 430, pp. 273-4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

³² *Ibid.*, 240.

³³ Paul Tillich, "The Protestant Message and the Man of Today," in *The Protestant Era* (transl. of chapter 1 of *Religiöse Verwirklichung* [Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1930], trans. James Luther Adams), 192, 193, 195-6, 197-8, 201, & 203-5.

³⁴ Dietrich Bonhöffer, *Act and Being* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 1931; trans. H. Martin Rumscheidt, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 88 note 15.

³⁵ Bethge, 867.

³⁶ Tillich made reference to freedom at least fifty times, human dignity more than a dozen times, as well as democracy and dehumanization, each of them ten or more times.

³⁷ *Against the Third Reich*, 21, 22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁹ *An meine deutschen Freunde*, 54.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁴² *Against the Third Reich*, 247.

⁴³ Tillich commented on nationalist idolatry at least twenty-five times in the speeches.

⁴⁴ *An meine deutschen Freunde*, 64-5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 66-7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 70-1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁹ *Against the Third Reich*, 149.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵¹ *An meine deutschen Freunde*, 240.

⁵² Tillich made reference to the crimes directed against the Jewish people on dozens of occasions in the speeches.

⁵³ *Against the Third Reich*, 13

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁶ Paul Tillich, *World War II Radio Broadcast #33*, handwritten and typescript, in German. Tillich, Paul, 1886-1965, Papers, 1894-1974, bMS 649, bMS 649/112 (3). Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, p. 2. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/c/div00649c01829/catalog>, accessed May 30, 2020

⁵⁷ *Against the Third Reich*, 183, 184.

⁵⁸ *An meine deutschen Freunde*, 287.

⁵⁹ *Against the Third Reich*, 237, 239.

⁶⁰ *An meine deutschen Freunde*, 29-30, 33.

⁶¹ *Against the Third Reich*, 81-2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 83-5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 233-5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 237, 238.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 238-40.

⁶⁷ *Letters and Papers...*, 17, note 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 4.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

- 72 Ibid., 14.
 73 Ibid., 17.
 74 Ibid., 105.
 75 Ibid., 105.
 76 Ibid., 123.
 77 Ibid., 130-2.
 78 Ibid., 162.
 79 Ibid., 215.
 80 Ibid., 240.
 81 Ibid., 73, 114.
 82 Ibid., 14, 15.
 83 Ibid., 39.
 84 Ibid., 129.
 85 Ibid., 11.
 86 Ibid., 73.
 87 Ibid., 304.
 88 Ibid., 215.
 89 Ibid., 95.
 90 Ibid., 234-5.

- 91 Ibid., 135.
 92 Ibid., 156-7.
 93 Ibid., 279.
 94 Ibid., 280-1.
 95 Ibid., 163.
 96 Ibid., 300.
 97 Ibid., 342.
 98 Ibid., 362.
 99 Ibid., 361.
 100 Ibid., 361-2.
 101 Ibid., 369.
 102 Ibid., 381.
 103 Ibid., 382-3.
 104 *Against the Third Reich*, 262, 264.
 105 Ibid., 333.
 106 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, 1854* in *Thoreau: Walden and Other Writings* (New York: Bantam Books, 1962), 161.
 107 Ibid., 172.

**TECHNICAL—INDUCTIVE—HUMANISTIC.
 PAUL TILlich ON A THEOLOGY OF
 EDUCATION**

ILONA NORD

[Professor Nord of University of Würzburg, Germany, delivered this paper at the NAPTS meeting in San Diego, 19 November 2019 in San Diego, California]

Introduction

“In the spring of 1856... a young schoolteacher arrived in a carriage at a large property of ponds and woods near Concord, New Hampshire, where a wealthy Boston physician had provided land to create a new school. St. Paul’s began that same day, as three boys received their first assignments...”¹

This narrative can be found on the homepage of St. Paul’s School in Concord, New Hampshire, USA.² It is here at this school that Paul Tillich gave a speech in 1957 on “The Church School in Our Time”. The text was documented in the School’s Centennial publication. He later rewrote it, and it became part of the volume on “Theology of Culture”, edited by Robert C. Kimball at Oxford University Press in 1959. He also chose a new title: “Theology of Education” and reflected more systematically and theologically on the

topic of the lecture.³

The concrete context of the speech was also preserved in the later printing. This is apparent, for example, in the aim of his argumentation. He is of the opinion that church schools have a special relevance for theology and churches. He called them, among other things, laboratories for testing the relationship between Christianity and culture. In these it would become clear that it is a special challenge for churches and theology to strengthen the humanistic dimension of education in them.⁴

On the other hand, a different approach could have been expected: The theologian places the strengthening of Christian profile and tradition formation in the mandate of the leadership of the church school. This would mean that church schools are places of education in society which represent the church, which are supposed to make the significance of Christianity tangible in society, and which ultimately contribute towards the church taking care of its future generations.

A realistic consideration of the establishment of church schools and kindergartens will certainly have to confirm such an interest. But if this justified interest leads to the functionalization of people for the church, it should be rejected by strengthening a humanistic ideal of education. Thus, Tillich pleads at least for a stronger development of the humanistic dimension in

theology and church. Only when it comes to its full right in these areas can the gospel - carried by the divine Spirit - also come to its unfolding. This argumentation corresponded to his approach of the method of correlation⁵, in which the existential questions of man determine the development of theology as a whole.

Tillich is concerned with determining the relationship between educational goals from three different perspectives: these are the humanistic ideal of the development of human individuality, then the dimension of (training) skills in the sense of more technical competences, and finally the introduction to certain social and societal traditions and their existing knowledge. The following areas will now be examined:

A brief reference will now be made to the current school curriculum of St. Paul's in order to examine the context of Tillich's speech diachronically, but also from the perspective of today's church schools (1.1). Then educational-historical classifications with regard to the proposal of a Theology of Education will be undertaken. (1.2)

1. ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL IN CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

St. Paul's School still exists, similar to other private schools with a long history and tradition, and it seems to be doing well. Today it calls itself a fully residential academic community that pursues the highest ideals of scholarship; approximately 500 students from all over the world are educated here. The school program explicitly communicates humanistic as well as Christian values: "We strive to challenge our students intellectually and morally – to nurture a love for learning and a commitment to engage as servant leaders in a complex world. Founded in the Episcopal tradition, St. Paul's School models and teaches a respect for self and others; for one's spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being; for the natural environment; and for service to a greater good."⁶

It is not possible here to discuss the relationship between private and public schools in the USA and the churches' commitment to them. Just as in Tillich's day, there are very different types of church schools now. Today, St. Paul's is a college preparatory school with a very stringent selection procedure. Furthermore, a high level of mentoring between teaching staff and students is emphasized. The school's educational mission

is to prepare students firstly for their personal well-being, secondly for respect for themselves and others, and thirdly for leadership positions within society in the service of the common good. The leitmotif "to engage as servant leaders in a complex world" is particularly prominent, because it conveys a well-known motif that is both enlightening and Christian. It is the ethos of leadership as a service to the community as was prominently embodied by the Prussian king and Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick the Great, the representative of so-called enlightened absolutism. He abolished torture and reformed education. But the motive of the servant leader can also be found in Christian ethics and in economic literature on organizational and leadership styles. Robert K. Greenleaves, for example, communicated the concept extensively at the beginning of the 1990s.⁷

St. Paul's is an ecclesiastical school that can certainly be regarded as an ambitious place of education for social elites even in Tillich's day - a place where educational processes concerning the relationship between religion and culture promise to be socially effective.

Another notable event highlighted on the homepage is that in 1971, SPS became one of the first boys' boarding schools to admit girls. So, when Paul Tillich arrived here, the school was a mono-educational institution for boys.

This concludes the short insights into concrete educational goals of church schools at Tillich's time as well as today.

1.2 Educational-historical classifications of Tillich's speech on a Theology of Education

The formulation Theology of Education suggests that the author attached great importance to the issue of education. On the other hand, he did not explain it in extensively. Tillich also lectured on the subject of education in, e.g., high schools and universities.⁸ Furthermore, in the context of other subjects, there are references to the topic of education, but the question remains as to why the text to be discussed here operates within the broader concept of a Theology of Culture with the title Theology of Education: a disproportionality that can nevertheless be ascertained.

In addition, the talk of a Theology of Education is still, even beyond Tillich, hardly used within the theologies; in the international theologies, reference is only

made to it in a few exceptions. These are mostly connected with clarifications as to why a Theology of Education leads to communicative misunderstandings.⁹ This motivates us to discuss the difficulty associated with this term at least briefly and exemplarily from the perspective of European educational history:

In many representations, Meister Eckhart is mentioned as the founder of educational theory in the Middle Ages. He used the human imagination to develop his spiritual understanding of education as an image of Christ in the soul of the individual human being.¹⁰ Martin Luther continued to follow this line of tradition, naming it explicitly, for example, within his Sermon of the Preparation of Dying; to this day this starting point remains important for Christian theology.¹¹ With the modern age, however, the understanding of education with the development of its own discipline of educational science and pedagogy has been purged of its Christian origins. Man is no longer seen elementarily as God's creature and in relation to the divine cosmos. Historically, this shift can be seen, for example, in the models of Immanuel Kant and Wilhelm von Humboldt. Kant conceives education in the context of autonomy and maturity. "Education stands for a view of the human being as an end in itself and for the unequivocal demand that the human being should not be misused as a mere tool. Being an end in itself still constitutes the foundation of a right to education (in the European context, I.N.) today".¹² With the group surrounding Wilhelm von Humboldt and the so-called New Humanism, education became interpretable as the destiny of man. "For Humboldt, it is an ongoing activity (*energeia*) which seeks to implement man's possibilities (*dynamis*), which are pushing for modernization."¹³ Tillich's understanding of education follows these models; he also calls for the recognition of the human self-purpose and his and her right to education. But Tillich continues to think of autonomy as a tense relationship to theonomy. In short, this is not a weakening of autonomy, but rather a radicalization of its understanding. For only when the God of theism has perished can faith, which anthropologically shows itself as the courage to be,¹⁴ be experienced at all.¹⁵ A Theology of Education, taking Tillich a step further, builds indispensably on an understanding of education that has been separated from ecclesiastical and theological guardianship. Religions can nevertheless remain at the same time a topic of educational processes, but they no longer have any regulative significance for the

understanding of education. For this reason, the concept of a Theology of Education is misleading in terms of educational history. This is the case where it is seen as a backlash in pre-modern conceptions of Christian education, the intention of which is to re-theologize modern, non-religious conceptions of education. The concept becomes meaningful where it is seen as a contribution to theology. The field of education requires theology to orient itself towards questions of humanism and, connected with it, towards existential themes. On the basis of these considerations, Tillich's patterns of argumentation, which are under this heading of a Theology of Education, will now be presented.

2. EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND THEIR RELATIONS

Tillich starts his essay by differentiating three educational aims: a technical, a humanistic, and an inducting one. He refers to his so-called technical dimension of learning as the acquisition of skills: "... special ones like crafts and arts, and general ones like reading, writing, and arithmetic"¹⁶. In the modern age, however, this was always associated with a humanistic goal. It is described by Tillich as follows: "Every human being (...) is a microcosm, a small universe in whom the large universe is mirrored. As a mirror of the universe and its divine ground, the individual is unique, incomparable, infinitely significant, able to develop in freedom his given endowment."¹⁷ He views every person as infinitely significant and free, as an end in itself, while at the same time maintaining a relation to the divine ground of the cosmos as a mirror of the human world. The mystically founded understanding of education, as indicated above for Meister Eckhart, shines through Tillich's humanist-oriented understanding of education; however, he also explicitly names the ambivalences of the inductive model:

"The humanistic ideal of education has arisen in contrast to the inducting education (...) The induction of children into their families, with the tradition, symbols, and demands of the family, is the basic form of inducting education. Its aim is not development of the potentialities of the individual, but induction into the actuality of a group, the life and spirit of community, family, tribe, town, nation, church."¹⁸ Tillich continued by commenting on the recent demand for more American history in schools. In his opinion, this did not have humanistic, but rather inducting educational reasons.¹⁹ In this sense, education sought to adjust students to a

specific political and cultural system. Tillich finally criticized church schools here for belonging predominantly, though not exclusively, to the inducting type of educational ideas.²⁰

Due to his methodological approach, he enfolded the interrelationship between the three educational aims or ideas by seeing them as embedded in a powerplay of historical movements. "One could say that each of the three ideas tried more or less successfully to subject the others to itself."²¹ Tillich underlines this argument with the historical fact that, in the beginning of the modern period, inducting education was almost uncontested in its power. Generation after generation had been inducted into the *Corpus Christianum*, which embraced religion, politics, and culture. "The soul of this body, namely, the spirit of medieval Christianity, was present and exercised educational functions on every level of man's individual and social life. Even the education for skills was permeated by the religious-cultural substance of the Christian body."²²

He proceeded with the modern development of the humanistic ideal by stating that it was an aristocratic movement which established the humanist idea. The aim of educating an outstanding individual belonged to the old feudal or the new high bourgeois classes. "For the others", Tillich claimed, "the training in basic and specialist skills became more and more urgent and was partly done by the foundation of public schools. The inducting element in these schools was the induction into the morals and beliefs of the bourgeois society."²³ Church schools were now challenged, according to Tillich, to adapt themselves to the demands for an enlarged technical as well as an intensified humanistic education.

Tillich further argued that with the emergence of industrialized societies, the technical aim of education became predominant. The cultural heritage and the religious institutions weren't rejected in his view, but instead subjected to the demands of the industrial society. "Education to good citizenship seemed to combine all three educational aims: induction into the spirit of the nation and its institutions, training in general and special skills, and mediation of the cultural goods of past and present."²⁴ Tillich himself referred to school boards and educational conferences which appeared to confirm the effectiveness of this ideal on a daily basis. He commented as follows: "The question, however, must be whether the induction into a national section of the industrial society fulfills the ideal of induction,

and whether the mediation of cultural goods fulfills the ideals of humanistic development."²⁵ This should have provoked some negative commentaries.

It is an interesting critique on the modern age with which Tillich continued his argumentation: "Induction of the Middle Ages was induction into a community with symbols in which the answers to the questions of human existence and its meaning were also already embodied. One can say that induction was initiation into the mystery of human existence."²⁶ Tillich valued inductive medieval education highly and criticized modern educational developments with it. In continuing his argumentation, however, he also idealized his school experiences in the German imperial empire: "The public school in eastern Germany around the turn of this century was, in all of its procedures, an institution to initiate the young into the Christian-Lutheran answer to the question of existence. The national element was strong but not decisive. In the secondary school, the national element prevailed over the religious, and at the universities neither the one nor the other was effective."²⁷ In the conclusion of his argument, Tillich's overall intention in mentioning his own biography takes on a specific meaning. He criticized the adoption of the inductual dimension of education by national interests and reclaimed its importance for churches: "The national ideal can in no way replace an induction which is initiation. This is the point on which the question of the Church-determined school must be raised."²⁸

Tillich continued by criticizing empty humanism which was ultimately unable to articulate anything meaningful, "nothing through which the mystery of being grasps us"²⁹. He indicated a twofold emptiness: the emptiness of adjustment to the demands of the industrial society, and the emptiness of cultural goods without ultimate gravity, both of which unsurprisingly lead to indifference, cynicism, despair, mental disturbances, early crimes, and disgust with life. He concluded this argument by drawing attention to a longing for symbols which demand unconditional surrender. With regard to Nazism in Germany, he assumed that young European people were longing for something of paramount importance: "They wanted something for which they could sacrifice themselves, even if it was a distorted religious-political aim."³⁰ In Tillich's opinion, it is the responsibility of the church schools to meet the existential needs of the youth so that political ro-

manticism can be eliminated. He assigns religion a fundamental task for democracy, specified here in the form of a critical Protestantism. If, he argued, people want and need something for which they can sacrifice themselves, he likely used arguments close to the strategies of populism of the past and similar to those of today. These arguments attempt to legitimize extremism based on the failures of democratic systems.³¹ This line of argumentation should be considered as false. Yet there are references which view traumatic events, such as wars, as leading people to feelings of emptiness or being challenged to sacrifice themselves to a greater good.³²

3. THE INDUCTING AND THE HUMANIST ELEMENT IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Tillich continued with two major problems which, in his opinion, church schools have to deal with. First, in contrast to the situation in the Middle Ages, contemporary church schools appeared to him to be dependent on a small section of religious life. "It does not represent the spirit of our society as a whole."³³ Second, a student "who is inducted into the reality and the symbols of a special denomination or confession through a community of the school (which in most cases is a continuation of the community of the family) normally comes to a point at which he doubts, or turns away from, or attacks the reality and the symbols into which he has been inducted."³⁴ Reflecting on this, Tillich again emphasized the tension between an inducting and a humanistic type of education. To overcome this tension, he saw religious educators faced with the problem that induction had always treated religious questions which never had been asked by a child. He recommended finding "the existentially important questions which are alive in the minds and hearts of the pupils"³⁵. It is Tillich's method of correlation which resurfaces here. He qualified it as a humanistic approach: "The humanistic question is radical; it goes to the roots and does not accept anything whatsoever as being beyond questioning."³⁶

He states that faith and the radical question with which humanism starts do not contradict each other if faith is seen as comprising itself and the doubt about itself. "Christianity includes humanism and the radical question of truth which is the first principle of humanism."³⁷ Consequently, religious education needs to be very sensitive in using religious language. By saying

this, Tillich focused on a critical use of the symbolic character of religious language, and also of the mythical form of all religious propositions. "The conquest of literalism without the loss of the symbols is the great task for religious education."³⁸

He concluded by classifying church schools as small laboratories for dealing with the problem of the relationship between Christianity and culture, and furthermore, specifically between Christianity and education.³⁹

4. COMMENTS ON THE IDEA OF A THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Within academic theology in German contexts, there is currently not just one theology of education⁴⁰, but rather many theories of religious education. Thus, the question of education has been limited to a specific field of organizing and reflecting didactics within formal, non-formal, and informal learning processes. Tillich, on the other hand, thematizes in the opposite direction the importance of education for theology. It has been addressed again and again within the history of church and theology, but nevertheless the insights about its meaning have hardly established themselves clearly enough within theologies and churches; the pastoral side - in short - still dominates in science and practice.

A theology of education understood in this way could, however, become of increasing importance, since within big issues such as globalization and migration, digitalization and transhumanism – which the education system in Europe and specifically in the German context is facing – increasingly farsighted orientations are demanded, which cannot be dealt with solely in the systematic subject of ethics.

Tillich's differentiation into a technical, an inductive, and a humanistic objective of education is also helpful when it comes to the analysis of their interdependencies. It offensively names power structures and dominance relationships belonging to them. This leads to hypotheses on current constellations. In the problem area of migration, it is certainly striking for the German education system that immigrant youths are primarily to be taught inductively. On the one hand, emphasis is placed on language skills, and on the other, either civic education or instruction in value orientation and ethics is demanded. Children and young people who immigrate to Germany are actually therefore

not taught primarily with a humanistic educational goal in mind, but with an inductive. Wherever a humanistic goal is nevertheless mentioned it is related to a western model of human rights. Both are offensively aimed at identifying with the German nation and its political system.

Tillich also focused on young people who, for many reasons, have to struggle with a feeling of emptiness. Various studies show that this also applies in Germany today. The mediation of totalitarian world views and their maximum immersive offers for their adaptation make young people and adults de facto susceptible to subjugating their own lives to a fundamentalist ideology. The education system fails here if it neglects the humanistic dimension of education. Secondly, it is striking that the theologian is aware of the need of having a technical education, and that he concurrently mentions an inductive aim and a humanistic aim which is to be connected with it. It is an undeniable task of formal education in schools that children and adolescents learn, for example, to deal with digital media, to discover their advantages and also to experience the limits of their use, for example in educational processes. This means that they not only learn how to use the media, but also reflect on the use and application of media. In short, it can be assumed that, for instance, in order to achieve media competence, it is not sufficient to offer computer science lessons. Media competence is always related to a scientific domain and can only be learned in relation to it. Which knowledge resources can best be introduced with which media? What significance does the use of which media have for the personal acquisition of religious knowledge? Particularly in the field of religions, far-reaching questions emerge here. If inductive education is favored, there is a danger that education, as Theodor W. Adorno expressed it, will become semi-education. Young people know that the ten commandments belong to Christianity and the five pillars to Islam. At the same time as Tillich's text *Theology of Education* appeared, Adorno's classic work, "Theory of Half-Education," which may have been familiar to Tillich, was published within the German-speaking educational sciences.⁴¹

Here, he is of the opinion that the concept of education has failed. Further, education has become half-

education. He associates this with a complex development that leads to an accumulation of skills and knowledge in order to train people for the capitalist labor market. Education becomes a commodity as vocational training.⁴² There are no direct references to Tillich's knowledge of Adorno's writing. But Adorno completed his habilitation thesis under the supervision of Tillich, and starting in 1933, together with Max Horkheimer, they shared the fate of the emigration to the USA.⁴³

Tillich's plea for a historically informed analysis of the relationship determinations of the Inductive, Technical and Humanistic Dimensions of Education counteracts the spread of further half-education. A formulation such as "servant leadership", which can be found in St. Paul's school program, is worth discussing: Is it even compatible with humanistic goals that can be justified today? Is it appropriate for a school program that inductive, technical, and humanistic competences are listed additively side by side, as if there were no constellations of dominance among them? Tillich's contribution still generates questions of existential importance that belong at the heart of an educational system committed to humanism.⁴⁴

¹ <https://www.sps.edu/> (24.06.2020).

² See 1.

³ Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Church School in Our Time*, St. Paul's School Centennial Publication. Concord,

New Hampshire, 1957. A critical comparison of both texts could not be made until now.

⁴ Robert C. Kimball, Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*. London/Oxford/New York 1959, 146-158, here: 156f.

⁵ Hans Schwarz, *The Potential for Dialogue with the Natural Sciences in Tillich's Method of Correlation*. In: Hummel, G. (Eds.), *Natural Theology Versus Theology of Nature? / Natürliche Theologie versus Theologie der Natur?*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter 1994, 88-98, here: 89.

⁶ <https://www.sps.edu/about/welcome> (24.06.2020)

⁷ Robert K. Greenleaf, *The power of servant-leadership*. Essays. Hg. v. Larry C. Spears, Sydney, RHYW, 1998.

⁸ Some texts are available at <https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/12/resources/1030>; the author currently works on a collection and comment on them.

⁹ It is an honour to cite J.M. Hulls article, who gives inside in some of the main misunderstandings of the term "theology of education" and states that theology of education is an under-developed interdisciplinary field. His position still applies today. Cf. John M. Hull, *What is Theology of Education?* In: *Scottish Journal of Theology (SJT)* 30 (1), 1997, S. 3–29.

¹⁰ See Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, edited and translated by Josef Quint, München, Hanser 1963, 48.

¹¹ Martin Luther (1519), *Ein Sermon von der Bereitung des Sterbens*, in: Dietrich Korsch (Hg.), *Martin Luther. Deutsch-Deutsche Studienausgabe Band 1*, Leipzig 2012, 45-74.

¹² Andreas Dörpinghaus, *Bildung*. In: Lederer, Bernd (Hg.) "Bildung": was sie war, ist, sein sollte. Zur Bestimmung eines strittigen Begriffs; Fortführung der Diskussion. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren GmbH 2013, 85-98, here 90.

¹³ Andreas Dörpinghaus, *Bildung [Education]*. In: Klinkhardt Lexikon der Erziehungswissenschaft Band 1 [Lexicon of Educational Science Volume 1], Bad Heilbrunn 2012, 154-156, here 155.

¹⁴ Paul Tillich, *A Theology of Education*, in: Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*. Edited by Robert C. Kimball, New York 1959, 147.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tillich, *Education*, 146.

¹⁷ Tillich, *Education*, 147.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See Tillich, *Education*, 148.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Tillich, *Education*, 149.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Tillich, *Education*, 150.

²⁶ Tillich, *Education*, 151. Italic type is used in the original.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Tillich, *Education* 151f.

³⁰ Tillich, *Education*, 152.

³¹ See Jan Werner Müller, *Populismus*. Frankfurt/Main Suhrkamp 2016.

³² Tillich, *Education*, 152.

³³ Tillich, *Education*, 153.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Tillich, *Education*, 154.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Tillich, *Education*, 155.

³⁸ Tillich, *Education*, 156.

³⁹ See Tillich, *Education*, 157.

⁴⁰ At the same time, we see a need for Theologizing the understanding of education, f.e. Thomas Schlag / Jasmine Suhner, *Theologie als Herausforderung religiöser Bildung*, Stuttgart Kohlhammer-Verlag 2017.

⁴¹ [Theodor W. Adorno](#), *Theorie der Halbbildung [Theory of Half Education]* (1959). In: *Gesammelte Schriften, Band 8: Soziologische Schriften 1 [Collected Publications, Volume 8: Sociological Publications 1]* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1972, p. 93–121.

⁴² Andreas Dörpinghaus, *Bildung*. In: Lederer, Bernd (Hg.), "Bildung": was sie war, ist, sein sollte. Zur Bestimmung eines strittigen Begriffs; Fortführung der Diskussion. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren GmbH 2013, 85-98, here 85-86.

⁴³ Bryan Wagoner, *Prophetic Interruptions. Critical Theory, Emancipation, and Religion in Paul Tillich, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer (1929-1944) (Mercer Tillich)*, Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press 2017.

⁴⁴ Thanks to Rahel Noormann, student assistant at the chair, for her support in completing the manuscript.

**NON-DUALISTIC (MACRO-) EVOLUTION:
AN EXERCISE IN MYSTICAL
IMMANENCE AND DIVINE INVOLVE-
MENT IN AN EVOLUTIONARY WORLD**

BRADFORD MCCALL

Introduction

Whether Ultimate Reality is to be conceived as a personal God or an impersonal principle somehow at work in the world is an issue which tends to divide major world religions into opposing camps. Furthermore, even within a given religion philosophers and theologians may differ on how God or Ultimate Reality is to be conceived. It is a commonplace that while Asian philosophy is non-dualistic, the West, because of its uncritical reliance on Greek-derived intellectual standards, is dualistic. Dualism is a deep-seated habit of thinking and acting in all spheres of life through the prism of binary opposites leads to paralyzing practical and theoretical difficulties. In general, Asian philosophy can provide assistance for the future a Christian nondualism, even though the West finds Asian philosophical nondualism, especially that of Mahayana Buddhism, nihilistic. However, postmodern thought may deliver us from the dualisms embedded and embodied in modernity.

The West already contains within one of its more marginalized roots, that of ancient Hebrew culture, a pre-philosophical form of nondualism which makes possible a new form of nondualism, one to which the West can subscribe. This new nondualism, directly inspired by Buddhism but not identical to it, is an epistemological, ontological, metaphysical, and praxical middle way¹ both for the West and also between East and West.² Many scholars, seemingly, think it to be true that the Western mindset is necessarily committed to dualism, and by extension, dualistic theism. But Paul Tillich demonstrates that the natural world can have no being itself without the underlying ground of being, that is, God (the Spirit). Indeed, the infinite is precisely the finite, for if it were not, it could not be infinite in truth. As Thatamanil says, the infinite is precisely what it is: not other than the finite.³

The definition of mysticism, as used in this essay, is based upon Ralph Inge's comments that it is "the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature."⁴ A critical component in this definition is the following: in order to know God, mankind must partake of the divine nature itself. If this definition is accepted, among many other feasible and possible ones—notes Julio Savi⁵—the goal of mysticism is the same as the purpose of human life described by Baha'u'llah: "to know [one's] Creator and to attain His Presence."⁶ I would like to expand this concept to the entirety of the natural world in what follows, particularly pneumatologically.

General Characteristics of Mysticism

The assumptions of mysticism, as described by Inge, and those of the Baha'i Faith, according to Julio Savi, are the same: human beings have a divine nature whose development through practicing the love of God allows their inner vision to become acuter, leading thereby to perceive the presence of God. This perception of the presence of God is usually referred to by mystics and students of mysticism as "mystical experience."⁷ The world religious literature is rich in descriptions of mystical experience. Based on these descriptions, scholars have listed a number of its characteristics as follows:⁸

A consciousness of the oneness of everything:

Walter Terence Stace describes this consciousness as arising from the exclusion of "all the multiplicity of sensuous or conceptual or other empirical content ... so that there remains only a void and empty unity."⁹

In this condition, the mystic "attains to complete communion with the Absolute Order, and submits to the inflow of its supernal vitality,"¹⁰ and thus experiences what Nicholas of Cusa called "*coincidentia oppositorum*"¹¹ or "coincidence of contradictions."¹²

Timelessness:

Frank C. Happold explains that, during a mystical experience, the relationships between events "are not capable of being adequately described in terms of past, present, and future, or earlier than, later than. These experiences have a timeless quality."¹³

Sense of objectivity or reality:

Happold writes that mystical experiences “are states of knowledge,”¹⁴ a knowledge characterized by a high degree of certitude.

Feelings of blessedness, joy, peace, happiness, etc.

A feeling that what is apprehended is holy, sacred or divine.

Ineffability:

Mystical experience resembles a feeling and “it is not possible to make a state of feeling clear to one who has not experienced it.”¹⁵

Paradoxicality:

Mystics frequently feel an urgent need to share their experience with others, and they try to overcome its ineffability through such “linguistic devices as simile, metaphor and paradox, however inadequate these may be for the task.”¹⁶

Transience:

Mystical experience, with its feeling of timelessness, is seldom prolonged.

And yet, some mystics are wholly immersed in their spiritual condition, so that their mystical experience “can become so frequent, so much a way of life, that, in the words of St. John of the Cross ... “the soul has it in its power to abandon itself, whenever it wills, to this sweet sleep of love’.”¹⁷

Passivity:

The mystics perceive themselves as the object of their own experience, as deprived of any will, as being seized by an outward power.

Nonreality of the ordinary self:

Usually there is a strict connection between the perception of the self, on the one hand, and sensory perception, awareness of time and the feeling of being willingly active, on the other.

In a mystical experience all of that disappears and, in the words of Rudolf Otto, the mystic perceives “the self... the personal ‘I’, as something not perfectly or essentially real, or even as mere nullity.”¹⁸

The perception of the self expands and brings the individual closer to her inner self, a reality that mystic Meister Eckhart calls “*scintilla animae*” (the spark of the soul).¹⁹

Side phenomena:

That is, “special altered states—visions, locutions, raptures and the like—which admittedly have played a large part in mysticism but which

many mystics have insisted do not constitute the essence of the encounter with God.”²⁰

Many scholars agree with Dom Cuthbert Butler—whose text on Western mysticism has been described as “a masterly exhibition of the religious and psychological normality of the Christian contemplative life, as developed by its noblest representatives”²¹—on the opinion that “Essential mysticism should not be identified with occasional accidental concomitants, as visions, revelations, raptures, or other psycho-physical phenomena’, and that ‘the title mystical’ should not be given ‘to curious experiences and manifestations bordering on those of Spiritism; to intimations, second sight, telepathy; or religious “queer stories.” For all such phenomena there is an accepted scientific term: they are “psychic” not “mystic’.”²² “True mysticism” seems here described as a state of communion between a believer and the soul of the Manifestation of God that conveys the Spirit of God unto him or her, bringing “such ecstasy of joy that life becomes nothing.” This communion is so important as to be identified with “the secret, inner meaning of life” and with “the core of religious faith.”²³ Through their studies of the descriptions of the mystics, scholars have inferred that many factors may contribute to bringing about mystical experience:²⁴

A personal predisposition, which may also be ignored by the subject.

An act of will on the part of the subject, which may express itself as an active search for God before her experience begins.

Specific stimuli, whose nature depends on the mystic’s personality, upbringing, and religious, social and cultural background. These stimuli are synthesized by Robert Andrew Gilbert as follows: aspects of nature (commonly water, trees, flowers and their scent, sunrise and sunset), music; poetry; creative work; sexual love; natural beauty; sacred places; prayer, meditation and worship; the visual arts; literature in various forms; and personal relationships.²⁵

Immanence, Transcendence, and Nonduality:

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in *What Is Philosophy?*, state: “Immanence can be said to be the burning issue of all philosophy because it takes on

all the dangers that philosophy must confront, all the condemnations, persecutions, and repudiations that it undergoes.”²⁶ Immanence and mysticism, seemingly, go hand-in-hand. Or, rather, nonduality and mysticism do. Or, perhaps, a decidedly *nondual* version of immanence and mysticism do. I will, for lack of better terminology, still hesitantly employ the term immanence in this essay, but let the reader understand that I am employing it reluctantly (1), and guardedly (2). This essay asserts that the processes of (macro-)evolution itself is a mystical experience, as they exhibit and manifest the profundity of (God) the Spirit’s creativity within the physical realm through my newly coined terminology of “divine involvement.”

I will, in the course of this essay, assert a radical pantheistic immanence, bordering upon pantheism. But it is not truly pantheism, for, as Tillich says, God is neither alongside things nor even “above” them; rather, he is nearer to them than they are to themselves; “He is their creative ground, here and now, always and everywhere.”²⁷ Tillich is an important conversation partner herein because his theology “amounts to a twentieth-century distillation of the history of Christian mystical theology.”²⁸ It is more accurate therefore to speak of the “reality of God,” which points to his true nature as being-itself. This insight, says Tillich, enables us to take a first step towards solving the problem of the transcendence and the immanence of God, for “as the power of being, God transcends both every being and also the totality of being. Being-itself infinitely transcends every finite being. There is no proportion or gradation between the finite and the infinite.”²⁹ Indeed, within Tillich’s corpus, one can discern the footprints (or shadow), or even voices, of such great historical mystics as Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa, who themselves propagated and “kept alive a radical sense of divine presence.”³⁰ Therefore, Tillich’s theology incorporates one of, if not the, most robust accounts of divine immanence on tap today.

I assert that *creatio ex deo*, creation out of God, can be made consistent with a nondual, pantheistic, perspective upon divine involvement in an evolutionary world. This *creatio ex deo* removes the stumbling block of the seemingly unbridgeable chasm between God and the world, particularly in and through the work of the Spirit. As a Process

theologian, I assert that this pantheistic concept of divine involvement in an evolutionary world envisions a God and natural world relationship that is not based upon duality. Thus, this essay avers that God’s Spirit is everywhere present and pervasive within the natural world, but also exceeds it, though this is no duality, for the reality of God’s Spirit is supraspatial (i.e., God’s Spirit is beyond spatiality) and supernatural (i.e., God’s Spirit is beyond naturality).³¹ As such, the natural world is not external to the divine reality, in any wise. Rather, God’s reality is determined by his [sic] relation to the natural world inasmuch as his involvement (or activity) therein is based upon being the very ground of creativity and *being* itself. And that itself *is* mystical. Tillich again is useful here, in part because he understands being-itself to be a “dynamic creative power” that “gives rise to what it grounds.”³² Giving rise to what it grounds, I submit, is an apt metaphor for how God “creates” (if I may use such a loaded word) through the processes of macroevolution and also permeates the natural world thereafter.

Tillichian Nonduality:

The focus of Christian nondualism is on bringing the human closer to God and realizing a “oneness” with the Divine.³³ According to David R. Loy, the concept of nonduality is usually associated with various kinds of absolute idealism, or mystical traditions in the East—and as a result, many modern philosophers are poorly informed on the topic. Increasingly, however, nonduality is finding its way into Western philosophical debates.³⁴ Loy in fact distinguishes five different conceptions of nonduality:³⁵

The negation of dualistic thinking in pairs of opposites. The Yin-Yang symbol of Taoism symbolizes the transcendence of this dualistic way of thinking.

Monism, the nonplurality of the world. Although the phenomenal world appears as a plurality of “things,” in reality they are “of a single cloth.”

Advaita, the nondifference of subject and object, or nonduality between subject and object.

Advaya, the identity of phenomena and the Absolute, the “nonduality of duality and nonduality.”

Mysticism, a mystical unity between God and

mankind.

John J. Thatamanil seizes upon Tillich's idea of ecstatic experience as the closest one gets to mending the gap between immanence and transcendence. An important characteristic of the ecstatic experience is that it is an "inbreaking" of the divine into existence: not vice-versa. Tillich's vision, dynamic in that it is, denies that ultimate reality is an unchanging absolute that resists change—nay, is incapable of it!—and leads one to an immanence that might itself be called "nondual."³⁶ A dualistic conception of God is at least problematic for, if not devastating to, twenty-first century theology because it "transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude."³⁷ What Tillich means by this is that using a dualistic notion of God subjects God to the categories of time and space, along with substance ontology.³⁸ Indeed, the God of dualism is an entity that has his "home" in heaven above, but nevertheless acts within time, interacts with other beings causally, and is merely one substance among others, which is a self-defeating proposition to the very idea itself, and amounts to much dastardly consequences. "Such a God is just one item in a universe that proves to be more encompassing than God is."³⁹ This is the unlaudable conclusion that pushes Tillich to claim that God is the creative ground of being. This anti-dualistic character of Tillich's thought is under-appreciated, to be sure.

So then, is naturalism the choice for Tillich, in view of such? Not in any manner! A strict naturalism merely "identifies God with the universe, with its essence or with special powers within it."⁴⁰ Although Tillich views naturalism as the preferable option over and above supernaturalism (what he terms *supra*-), it is nevertheless problematic in part because it "denies the infinite distance between the whole of finite things and their infinite ground, with the consequence that the term 'God' becomes interchangeable with the term 'universe' and therefore semantically superfluous."⁴¹ Tillich indicates that God's life is life as spirit. He notes that humanity in their theologizing have always distinguished between the abyss of the divine and the fullness of its content, that is, between divine depth and divine *logos*. The first of these, divine depth, has historically been applied to the Father, and the second of these—divine *logos*—is generally assumed

to be the Son. Indeed, the first principle makes God be "God," as it is the rudiment of his:

"majesty, the unapproachable intensity of his being, the inexhaustible ground of being in which everything has its origin... The classical term *logos* is most adequate for the second principle, that of meaning and structure... Without the second principle the first principle would be chaos, burning fire, but it would not be the creative ground... As the actualization of the other two principles, the Spirit is the third principle. Both power and meaning are contained in it and untied in it. It makes them creative."⁴²

I follow Thatamanil in his development of a thorough Christian nondualism by applying his insights from the human predicament, using Tillich, to the concepts of immanent creativity and macroevolution. Tillich is clear that the meaning of transcendence must be conceived differently in our modern era, since God does not inhabit a spatio-temporal realm that is different than the natural world in which we live. Indeed, I assert that the Spirit, who is manifest by immanent creativity in the macroevolutionary process, already participates in the natural world, all of the time, meaning there is not a time when the Spirit is not embedded and embodied within this natural world. In fact, for Thatamanil, the divine life necessarily includes human life inasmuch as God (the Spirit) is the creative ground of human life.⁴³ I agree with this sentiment, but would like to expand it to the entire temporal and natural world, not just human beings per se. As such, the Spirit is not alien to the natural world; rather, it is the very depth of the natural world, the depth to which the Spirit inhabits. Further, then, God as Spirit does not stand over against the natural world; rather, Tillich is quite explicit in stating that God is infinite because he has the finite... within himself united with his infinity."⁴⁴

So, therefore, the Spirit is never—ever!—separate from the finite natural world. Indeed, the infinite power of the creative Spirit is forever and always present to the natural world, driving it toward greater complexity in and through the processes of macroevolution. Thus, there is, within the natural world, an infinite drive toward self-transcendence, whether that "self" be electrons, atomic nuclei, atoms, elements, bacteria, cats, dogs, mushrooms, or

people (and so forth, as it were). Entities are never at rest; they are never content with being what they are for the present moment; instead, they forever “strive” to become more than they are through macroevolution, and this in and of itself testifies to both the presence and power of the infinite within the finite, whether that finite entity be atoms, or animal species. However, Tillich is not enough to flesh out my nondual interpretation of mystical immanence being expressed in macroevolutionary processes in and within the natural world, because Tillich himself retains a residual dualism. Thus, there is need to look elsewhere, for example, to the nonsubstantialist theological ontology of one Joseph Bracken in which ultimate reality is perceived to be an over-riding activity (or, in my language, “involvement”) versus being a substance. Tillich’s work has made the path easier to arrive at this mystically immanent, nondualistic macroevolution, for he has set forth the thesis of an internal relationship between being itself and other beings, and he appeals to Paul the apostle’s pneumatology.

In Romans 8:26, divine immanence is experienced as an immanently ecstatic event accomplished by the work of the Spirit that grasps and prays through us when we know not how to pray. I would like to extend this thought to “creation” in general and macroevolution in particular by claiming that it is the Spirit who is the immanent principle of creativity throughout the natural world. In Tillich’s theology of Spirit, God approaches humans when they are “grasped” by the power inherent in being-itself and thereafter driven beyond themselves into ecstatic union with divinity.⁴⁵ The result of this endeavor is the “mutual immanence” that Tillich so eloquently speaks of in his third volume of *Systematic Theology*.⁴⁶ I would like generalize this Tillichian idea and extrapolate it to all of reality.

Instead of the conceptual terms causality and substance, Tillich prefers “a more directly symbolic term, ‘the creative and abysmal ground of being.’” In this term both naturalistic pantheism, based on the category of substance, and rationalistic theism, based on the category of causality are overcome.⁴⁷ “Ground,” for Tillich, serves to incorporate the best elements of both causality and substance, but at the same time rejects their literal adequacy. In a sense, then, God can be imagined as a substance inasmuch as beings cannot exist without and apart

from God, just as brick mortar cannot exist apart from sand granules. But at the same time, God cannot literally be a substance, or the natural world (and other beings) would not be marked by freedom. Similarly, God can be imagined as a cause amongst other causes, since it is the activity or involvement of God that causes the natural world and hence other beings to be, but God cannot literally be thought a cause because of the freedom of the natural world and other beings. However, God (the Spirit) indeed is the ground of being as well as its depth of being. God (the Spirit’s) involvement as the ground of being is neither contingent or provisional, for—as Tillich himself states—“There is no divine nature which could be abstracted from his eternal creativity.”⁴⁸ Indeed, for Tillich, the ground is the very source from which everything emerges: “The ground of being has the character of self-manifestation; it has *logos* character. This is not something added to the divine life; it is the divine life itself.”⁴⁹ Tillich’s God, then, cannot be thought apart from the world.⁵⁰

As Bracken states, “the grounding activity is not an entity, and the entity is other than the grounding activity. At the same time, they are not two since only together, namely, as grounding activity and that which exists in virtue of the grounding activity, are they one concrete reality. This grounding activity, moreover, is infinite because it serves as the ontological ground for literally everything that exists... it transcends them all since it is their common ground or source of existence and activity. Whereas entities are inevitably limited or defined by their relations to one another, this grounding activity is strictly unlimited and therefore infinite.”⁵¹ Under Bracken’s thought, the being of being itself is *becoming* itself.⁵² Thatamanil suggest that the way forward, building on and perhaps correcting some of Tillich’s contentions, is to go the route proffered by Bracken: infinite reality must be understood as activity and not as a substance.⁵³ I agree with such a sentiment. In fact, Thatamanil argues along with Bracken that viewing being-itself as ontological creativity is a wise move, theologically.

This has direct implications for the immanence versus transcendence of God debate, for God cannot be transcendent if by that one means that there

is a separation between God and the world. Assuming this latter point, Tillich thus redefines the terminology of transcendence inasmuch as it is purged of its supranaturalistic overtones, which by using the term supranatural, Tillich seemingly means what I ordinarily attribute to the term supernatural. As such, there is no antagonism between God's transcendence and immanence, so God's immanence does not come at the price of his transcendence, nor vice-versa. William Placher rightly calls such a dynamic the "contrastive" account of the debate between transcendence and immanence, one that makes "divine transcendence and involvement in the world into a zero-sum game."⁵⁴ Placher analyzes the history of the transcendence versus immanence debate back to the fundamental error of thinking God to be one being among others. He contends that "If God were one of the things in the world—as implied by the contrastive account of transcendence—then it would be natural to ask where God is located—in the world or outside it?"⁵⁵ And, as Thatamanil notes, either answer militates the other. Tillich denies this sort of duality and the reified concept of divinity that it necessitates. It is my assertion that nondualistic macroevolution rejects the contrastive account of the transcendence versus immanence debate. Tillich's God does not need to intervene in nature or history to be present there, for in his theology, symbolically speaking, God *is* the power of being in everything and as such is "the source of all particular powers of being."⁵⁶ The volcano, the earthquake, the rogue nation, the nation championing justice, the sinner and the saint—all are ultimately empowered by the source of all being, which is God's creative power. It is in this sense that God can be spoken of as "Almighty."⁵⁷ Indeed, for Tillich all power, understood as "the eternal possibility of resisting non-being," ultimately comes from God. Therefore, "since God as *the* power of being is the source of all particular powers of being, power is divine in its essential nature."⁵⁸

Conclusion:

Tillich's theology of transitory dualism contains the proverbial seeds of a Christian nonduality. It is Thatamanil's contention that a Christian nondualism in which God is understood to be all in all,

a vision in which the correlate is that for God to be anything less than that is no god at all, is a potent vision for twenty-first century theology, especially with how it is applicable to a mystical understanding of macroevolution. Christian nondualism both asserts and achieves a deep coincidence between immanence and transcendence. Tillich contributes to this view of Christian nondualism by explicating how traditional theism yields impoverished and inadequate views of transcendence and immanence. In their stead, Tillich proffers a vision of God in which he is at once qualitatively transcendent in power, yet also—at the same time—radically immanent by being the ground of being itself.

Several Process-oriented thinkers, myself included, are quite content to think of God not as an entity but as a unifying activity immanent within the cosmic process. Bernard Meland, for example, refers to God not as a transcendent person but as "the Efficacy within relationships."⁵⁹ Similarly, Bernard Loomer identifies the world with God in the following passage:

The world is God because it is the source and preserver of meaning; because the creative advance of the world in its adventure is the supreme cause to be served; because even in our desecration of our space and time within it, the world is holy ground; and because it contains and yet enshrouds the ultimate mystery inherent within existence itself.⁶⁰

In a more recent publication Gordon Kaufman likewise refers to God not as a world transcendent entity but as a "serendipitous" creativity (i.e., that which I designate "activity" or "involvement") at work in our own lives and in the around us.⁶¹ Indeed, within *In Face of Mystery*, Kaufman proposes the concept of "serendipitous creativity" as a metaphor more appropriate for thinking of God today

than such traditional image/concepts as creator, lord, and father. In another essay,⁶² Kaufman more fully elaborates and more carefully nuances that concept. It is no longer possible, he argues, to connect today's scientific cosmological and evolutionary understandings of the origins of the universe and the emergence of life (including human life and history) with a conception of God constructed in the traditional anthropomorphic terms in an intelligible way. However, the metaphor of serendipitous creativity—directly implied in the

idea of evolution itself—has resources for constructing a religiously pertinent and meaningful modern/postmodern conception of God. Indeed, it is apropos for naming God because it preserves—and even indeed emphasizes—the ultimacy of the *mystery* that God is, even while it connects God directly with the coming into being-in-time-of the new and the novel. As brain scientist Terrence Deacon has observed in his book, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-Evolution of Language and the Brain*, “Evolution is *the* one kind of process able to produce something out of nothing... [A]n evolutionary process is an origination process... Evolution is the author of its spontaneous creations.”⁶³

In sum, affirming nonduality does *not* amount to eviscerating transcendence.⁶⁴ Indeed, Thatamanil states that is possible, in nonduality, to have

¹ Cf. Amos Yong, *Pneumatology and the Christian-Buddhist Dialogue: Does the Spirit Blow Through the Middle Way?* (Studies in Systematic Theology) (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic, 2012).

² Cf. Milton Scarborough, *Comparative Theories of Nonduality: The Search for a Middle Way* (New York: Continuum, 2011).

³ John J. Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 184.

⁴ William Ralph Inge, *Christian Mysticism* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2012), 5.

⁵ Julio Savi, “The Baha’i Faith and the Perennial Mystical Quest: A Western Perspective.” *Baha’i Studies Review* 14 (2007): 5.

⁶ Shoghi Effendi, trans. *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah* (Wilmette, IL: Baha’i Publishing Trust, 1952), 70.

⁷ Julio Savi, “The Baha’i Faith and the Perennial Mystical Quest: A Western Perspective.” *Baha’i Studies Review* 14 (2007): 7.

⁸ Note that I am indebted to Savi for this list, and I acknowledge such forthrightly, even though I have “massaged” it for my own purposes. See Julio Savi, “The Baha’i Faith and the Perennial Mystical Quest: A Western Perspective.” *Baha’i Studies Review* 14 (2007): 10–11.

⁹ Walter Terence Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 79.

¹⁰ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: The Preeminent Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (New York: Image Classics: 1990), 432–33.

immanence without forgoing transcendence. For me, God and the natural world are thoroughly interdependent as manifest in the processes of macroevolution. God *is* the (serendipitous) creativity everywhere expressed by and within the macroevolutionary process. Because God is the creativity of the macroevolutionary process, God is forever linked with entities, both inanimate and animate, while they advance in complexity. Bracken agrees in saying, “The One and the Many are fully interdependent. Only thus, as I see it, does one avoid the pitfalls of monism and dualism in thinking through what is meant by Ultimate Reality.”⁶⁵ In this Christian nonduality, God is both encountered and experienced through the processes of macroevolution. If this be not mysticism, what else could it be?

¹¹ Nicholas of Cusa, “Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae.” In *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia*, ed. Raymond Klibanski, 2 vols. (Leipzig/Hamburg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1932) 2:15.

¹² Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa’s Debate with John Wenk: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Ignota Litteratura and Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae*, 3rd edn. (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1988), 470.

¹³ Frank C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 47–48.

¹⁴ Happold, *Mysticism*, 45.

¹⁵ Happold, *Mysticism*, 45.

¹⁶ Robert Andrew Gilbert, *The Elements of Mysticism* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 89.

¹⁷ Happold, *Mysticism*, 55.

¹⁸ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 21.

¹⁹ Meister Eckhart, *Passion for Creation: The Earth-Honoring Spirituality of Meister Eckhart* (ed. Matthew Fox, Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2000), 277.

²⁰ Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), xvii–xviii.

²¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, xi.

²² Dom Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism: The Teaching of Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life*, 2nd edn. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), lxii.

²³ Julio Savi, “The Baha’i Faith and the Perennial

Mystical Quest: A Western Perspective.” *Baha’i Studies Review* 14 (2007): 16.

²⁴ Cf. Gilbert, *Elements of Mysticism*, 87–88.

²⁵ Gilbert, *Elements of Mysticism*, 87.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 45.

²⁷ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 2:7.

²⁸ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 9.

²⁹ Paul Tillich, *Ultimate Concern* (London, SCM, 1965), 263.

³⁰ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 9.

³¹ Note that whereas Tillich uses the term *supranatural* to refer to what is ordinarily called *supernaturalism*, I use the term as being referent to what is beyond nature, but not wholly outside of it. In fact, Tillich claims that the entire and “basic intention of my doctrine of God” is to go beyond the naturalism and *supranaturalism* (again note his distinctive meaning for *supra-*) in his second volume of *Systematic Theology*, 5. Indeed, according to Tillich, whatever conception of divinity that portrays God as intervening from the outside into causal networks within the world is “*supranatural*” (cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2:5). This *supernaturalism*, as I refer to it (but *supra-* according to Tillich) is problematic because it is not only *contra science*, but also because it pictures God as regularly disrupting the “inviolability of the created structures of the finite” (Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2:6).

³² Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 11.

³³³ James Charlton, *Non-dualism in Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Traherne: A Theopoetic Reflection* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 2

³⁴ David R. Loy, *Nonduality: In Buddhism and Beyond* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom, 2019), 6.

³⁵ David R. Loy, *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 17–25.

³⁶ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 23.

³⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2:6.

³⁸ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 19.

³⁹ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 19.

⁴⁰ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2:6.

⁴¹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2:7.

⁴² Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 1:250–51.

⁴³ What Thatamanil here applies to God generically, I would like to—as indicated by my parenthetical

addition—apply to the Spirit specifically. Cf. Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 147.

⁴⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 1:252.

⁴⁵ Cf. Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 11.

⁴⁶ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 3:114.

⁴⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 1:238.

⁴⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2:147.

⁴⁹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 1:157–58.

⁵⁰ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 145.

⁵¹ Joseph A. Bracken, “Infinity and the Logic of Non-Dualism.” *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 11 (1998): 41.

⁵² Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 188.

⁵³ Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*, 188.

⁵⁴ William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking About God Went Wrong* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 111.

⁵⁵ Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 112.

⁵⁶ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3:385.

⁵⁷ Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice* (London, Oxford University Press, 1954), 110–11

⁵⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 3:385.

⁵⁹ Bernard Meland, *Fallible Forms and Symbols: Discourses on Method in a Theology of Culture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 152.

⁶⁰ Bernard M. Loomer, “The Size of God.” In *The Size of God: The Theology of Bernard Loomer in Context*, eds.

William Dean and Larry E. Axel (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 42.

⁶¹ Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 390–401.

⁶² Gordon D. Kaufman, “On Thinking of God as Serendipitous Creativity.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, no. 2 (2001): 409–425, especially 410.

⁶³ Terrence Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain* (New York: W. W. Norton), 458. Emphasis added.

⁶⁴ John J. Thatamanil, “Ecstasy and Nonduality: On Comparing Varieties of Immanence.” *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 22 (2009): 19–24, cf. 21.

⁶⁵ Joseph A. Bracken, “Non-duality and the Concept of Ultimate Reality.” *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 19, no. 2 (1996): 146.

THE NEW BEING IN PURE LAND BUDDHISM

KIRK R. MACGREGOR

Pure Land, or Shin, Buddhism claims that Amida Buddha, while still a bodhisattva named Dharmākara (or Hōzō), made forty-eight vows to create a Pure Land paradise and then fulfilled these vows in order to achieve Buddhahood. The tradition's leading teachers, Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262), emphasized the depravity of all human beings and their consequent inability to acquire sufficient merit to enter the Pure Land. Shinran thus mourned, "I am false and untrue, and without the least purity of mind... Since greed, anger, evil, and deceit are frequent, we are filled with naught but flattery. With our evil natures hard to subdue, our minds are like asps and scorpions."¹ Indeed, as Tillich put it, there was an unbridgeable gap between each person's essential being (what that person can and should be) and existential being (what that person actually is).² For both Pure Land Buddhism and Tillich, we suffer estrangement from our essential nature. What must overcome this gap is New Being, a reality where essential being is manifested under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them.³ This piece will argue that, in Pure Land Buddhism, the bearer of the New Being is Dharmākara or whatever historical figure stands behind the legend of Dharmākara. Continuing along this path, Tillich's proclamation of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is paralleled by the Pure Land proclamation, using Tillichian language, of the New Being in Amida as the Buddha. When the Pure Land adherent accepts that s/he is accepted by Amida exactly as s/he is by reciting the *nembutsu* ("I pay homage to Amida Buddha") in faith and embarks in compassionate service to all sentient beings, s/he participates in New Being.

Dharmākara (or His Historical Referent) as Bearer of the New Being

It is historically doubtful that a bodhisattva named Dharmākara actually lived. However, it is equally clear that Pure Land Buddhists experience and participate in what Tillich called New Being. According to Shinran, everyone possessing true

faith has "attained the adamant true mind," transcends "the five destinies" (*i.e.*, birth in a hell, as a hungry ghost, animal, human being, or god), transcends "the eight difficulties" (*i.e.*, eight hindrances to seeing a Buddha), and attains "assuredly in this life ten blessings," including "the protection of spiritual power," "possession of highest virtue," "transforming evil into good," being "always protected by the light of the mind," "always having a joyous mind," "requiting virtue," "always practicing great mercy," and "entrance into the company of the truly assured."⁴ This forms an excellent description of the "unlimited power of self-transcendence" that New Being facilitates.⁵ As Tillich emphasized while lamenting the alleged failure of the quest for the historical Jesus, faith in New Being ensures its own foundation, "namely, the appearance of that reality which has created the faith."⁶ Participation therefore secures the reality of the event upon which Pure Land Buddhism is based, namely, "a personal life in which the New Being has conquered the old being" regardless of that person's name or historical particulars.⁷ Tillich therefore maintained that even if Jesus of Nazareth never existed, there would still be some person underlying the Jesus myth who definitively transformed reality. Reasoning analogously, Pure Land Buddhism then presents us with a person, whether Dharmākara or the individual whose life inspired his legend, in whom New Being found actualization.

As interpreted by Hōnen and Shinran, Dharmākara's Eighteenth Vow guaranteed that faithful recitation of the *nembutsu* ensures one's rebirth into the Pure Land, regardless of one's previous deeds. As Hōnen wrote, "there is power enough in the Nembutsu, even if pronounced but once, to destroy all the sins whose effects have persisted through eighty billions of kalpas. And so you ought to bear in mind that Amida has the power to come forth to welcome to his land those oppressed by the very worst *karma*, and you ought to believe that by simply calling upon his name you will be born there, quite irrespective of whether you have merit inherited from former lives or not, and no matter whether your sins be light or heavy."⁸ During the interim between reciting the *nembutsu* and being reborn in the Pure Land, the believer "remains in the state of non-retrogression" and abides

“in the rank of the company of the truly assured.”⁹ In Tillich’s view, Hōnen depicted the bridging of the gap—even for the persons whose gap is largest—between existential being and essential being through faith in Amida. Shinran emphasized that, in Tillich’s words, such faith “is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern.”¹⁰ Shinran declared, “Needless to say, our Buddha Amida grasps beings with his Name.”¹¹ Faith occurs “when we encounter the profound Vow of the gift of Amida’s Other Power and our minds which rejoice at being given true faith are assured.”¹² Notice for Shinran that the believer is seized by Amida; the believer does not conjure up faith through self-power (*ji-riki*), but the other-power (*tariki*) of Ultimate Reality generates faith in the believer without in any way opposing the believer’s will. The relationship between the Pure Land devotee and the Amida of faith proves analogous to that between the Christian devotee and the Christ of faith.

The New Being in Amida as the Buddha

At this juncture we need to ask: what is the Pure Land Buddhist equivalent to New Being? The answer is Buddha nature, namely, “the inherent nature that exists in all beings” which is “identical with transcendental reality.”¹³ This quotation reveals that Buddha nature simultaneously participates in both existence and essence. As I have argued elsewhere, Hōnen maintained that Buddha nature did not eternally exist in the past. Rather, Buddha nature emerged when Amida, by becoming the avatar Dharmākara and, over long eons, fulfilling his forty-eight monastic vows to create the Pure Land, produced in his own person a divine-human reality or Buddha nature.¹⁴ What Tillich said of Christ is thus equally true of Amida: “the eternal God-Man unity has appeared under the conditions of existence.”¹⁵ Similar to the accounts of Jesus in the Gospels, the *Muryōjūkyō*, *Amidakyō*, and *Kam-muryōjūkyō*—the three prominent scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism—contain no hint of estrangement between Dharmākara and the ground of his being. Dharmākara shows the depth of his reliance on the ground of being, and so the ground of everything personal, by making his own supreme enlightenment contingent on the benefits he would bestow upon all persons. The Eleventh Vow in the

Muryōjūkyō asserts that Dharmākara will not attain greatest enlightenment if those who believe in him fail to gain psychological wholeness, namely, not being “definitively settled in the group of the faithful before their entrance into Nirvana.”¹⁶ The Twelfth Vow states that Dharmākara will not receive the highest enlightenment if “my light should be limited and not be able to illumine hundreds of thousands of kotis (an enormous number).”¹⁷ Such a vow guarantees the universal accessibility of his Buddha nature.

As a free gift, Amida accordingly implanted this quality of his own being within the nature of all humanity, thus rendering it universal. However, this universal Buddha-nature is not self-actualizing but remains a mere potency until humans freely choose to avail themselves of it. Since one cannot access a gift without first acknowledging the giver, faith in Amida becomes the true path through which individuals tap into their indwelling Buddha nature and so realize the same level of transcendence as Amida.¹⁸ At the pivotal moment when one is led to faith, Amida “saves the believer suddenly and in a crosswise action.”¹⁹ This action is crosswise because the individual, moving in the horizontal or created plane from fruitless path to fruitless path and from reincarnation to reincarnation, is saved by the unilateral action of Amida, who from the vertical or divine plane snatches the person out of the estrangement that enslaved her or him and so instantaneously liberates her or him.²⁰ Because faith is the means by which individuals gain contact with the Buddha nature, Shinran equated faith with Buddha nature: “Buddha nature is denominated great faith...All beings will truly attain great faith eventually. So it is taught that all beings possess Buddha nature. Great faith is itself Buddha nature.”²¹ This notion resonates perfectly with Tillich’s three elements of faith, which essentially delineate participation in New Being. As Tillich wrote, faith’s first element is “being opened up by the Spiritual Presence”; its second element is “accepting it in spite of the infinite gap between the divine Spirit and the human spirit”; and its third element is “expecting final participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.”²² By experiencing liberation from estrangement, the Pure Land Buddhist is opened up by the Spiritual Presence. By placing faith in Amida, the Pure Land

Buddhist accepts Spiritual Presence despite the infinite gap separating one from essential being. By possessing full confidence that one will be reborn in the Pure Land, the Pure Land Buddhist expects final participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.

Pure Land Buddhist Participation in New Being

Pure Land participation in New Being is functionally equivalent to what Tillich described as justification. The way of life displayed by Pure Land Buddhists is often termed “naturalism,” and the phrases describing it are *kono mama* (just as I am) and *somo mama* (just as you are). Resembling ideas from Christian hymnody, the Pure Land Buddhist accepts that s/he is accepted by Amida just as s/he is. Alfred Bloom explains that, as a result, “one can take life just as it is, as one finds it, and in the midst of this life find the ultimate reality.”²³ Such acceptance furnishes the necessary empathy to work for justice and transformation in the world. On Tillich’s reckoning, to be justified a person “must accept that he is accepted; he must accept acceptance.”²⁴ While for Tillich this occurs through Christ, for the Pure Land Buddhist this occurs through Amida. Tillich held that the Christian life that follows justification takes the persons and affairs of this life—“both the individual Christian and the church, both the religious and the secular realm”—and in them finds absolute significance through the sanctifying work of the divine Spirit.²⁵

The life of Pure Land Buddhists is one of compassion (*karuna*), derived from their attitude to accept everything as it is not so that it can stay as it is

but so that it can participate in Buddha nature, overcoming its existential estrangement. With their eternal destiny secure, Pure Land Buddhists are free to work selflessly and unimpeded for the liberation of all beings. When one stands in the company of the truly assured, “compassion becomes the essence of one’s existence and not a means to an end.”²⁶ The Tillich analogue to such compassion is *agapē*, which is universal in scope, excludes no one, and “affirms the other unconditionally, that is, apart from higher or lower, pleasant or unpleasant qualities.”²⁷ As Tillich continues, “*Agapē* accepts the other in spite of resistance. It suffers and forgives. It seeks the personal fulfilment of the other.”²⁸ Consequently, the altruistic Pure Land *karuna* and Tillichian *agapē* seemingly amount to interchangeable concepts.

Conclusion

Although Tillich never investigated the Pure Land modality of Mahayana Buddhism in *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*, I submit that if he had, he would have been pleasantly surprised if not overtly enthusiastic at the cross-cultural applicability of his theological ideas. Tillich hints at such a possibility concerning what he knew of Mahayana, namely, “that in Mahayana Buddhism the Buddha-Spirit appears in many manifestations of a personal character, making a nonmystical, often very primitive relation to a divine figure possible.”²⁹ Indeed Tillich would have found that, for Pure Land Buddhism, this is a remarkable understatement. Far from primitive, the Pure Land relation between Amida Buddha and his devotees is extremely sophisticated and evinces the essential facets of a valid manifestation and presentation of New Being.

¹ Quoted in Alfred Bloom, *Shinran’s Gospel of Pure Grace* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1965), 29.

² Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. in 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 2:21-2.

³ *Ibid.*, 2:118-9.

⁴ Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 67.

⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 2:120.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:114.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 22.

⁹ Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 62, 61.

¹⁰ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3:130.

¹¹ Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, trans. Dennis Hirota, Hisao Inagaki, Michio Tokunaga, and Ryushin Uryuzu (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1987), 1.128.

¹² Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 61-2.

¹³ Hsing Yun, *Being Good: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life*, trans. Tom Graham (New York: Weatherhill), 152-3.

¹⁴ Kirk R. MacGregor, *A Comparative Study of Adjustments to Social Catastrophes in Christianity and Buddhism: The Black Death in Europe and the Kamakura Takeover in Japan as Causes of Religious Reform* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2011), 170.

¹⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 2:169.

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- ¹⁶ Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 3.
¹⁷ Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 2.
¹⁸ MacGregor, *Comparative Study*, 170-1.
¹⁹ Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, 2.250.
²⁰ MacGregor, *Comparative Study*, 269.
²¹ Quoted in Bloom, *Gospel*, 40.
²² Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3:133.
²³ Bloom, *Gospel*, 43.
²⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 2:179.

- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:180.
²⁶ Bloom, *Gospel*, 84.
²⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:280.
²⁸ *Ibid.*
²⁹ Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*, rep. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 67.

POST-TRUTH POLITICS AND POST-TILlichIAN PERSPECTIVE: ENGAGING THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON WITH THE LEGACY OF PAUL TILlich

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Abstract

“Post-truth” was selected by Oxford Dictionaries as 2016’s international word of the year. A related term, “fake news” was named Collins Dictionary’s Word of the Year 2017. We live in an era flooded with information and news, and sensible discernments may be more required than ever before. This essay discusses this hot topic, the post-truth phenomenon, and delineates its essential features. Additionally, four ways through which the post-truth politics works have been elucidated. The argument of this paper is that the legacy of Paul Tillich, an eminent Protestant theologian of the last century, is an abundant resource to produce fruitful discussions with the post-truth phenomenon. This can be understood in three senses: his legacy explanations, which itself is enriched by essential features of the phenomenon; Tillich’s ideas of justice and ultimate truth can be considered as criteria for ethical discernments; finally, two of Tillich’s theological symbols, “the Spiritual Presence” and “the Spiritual Community,” can be vitalized to encounter post-truth challenges. This paper concludes by suggesting a “beyond-truth ethics” in a post-truth time.

Introduction

Oxford Dictionaries defines “post-truth” as an adjective “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” The results of the Brexit referendum and 2016 United States presidential election are two contexts that exemplify the meaning of the word and explain why the word becomes popular in recent years. In the first part of this paper, I have delineated two

basic characteristics of the post-truth phenomenon: “appeals to emotion and personal belief.” This delineation is presented along with my elaboration of the four ways through which the post-truth politics works. These four ways are the spread of fake news, employment of allegedly fake news to counter dissonance, making use of facts for propaganda, and correlating facts to other truth-claims.

The explication of the post-truth phenomenon paves way to my argument of this essay: I have demonstrated, with mainly Trump’s sayings and the recent protests in Hong Kong as examples, how the engagement of Tillich’s legacy with the post-truth phenomenon is able to provide fruitful outcomes through discussions of Tillich’s three notions: his understanding of emotion and reason in human cognition, his idea of justice, and his concept of the ultimate truth. The first one *explains* an essential feature of the post-truth phenomenon, which is, at the same time, itself *enriched* by the feature; I have then demonstrated how the latter two notions can be considered as (though not the only) *criterion for ethical discernment* for the phenomenon. Furthermore, as a Protestant theologian, Tillich includes these three notions into his theological ideas. In the last part of the essay, I have demonstrated how Tillich does so in his two theological symbols, “the Spiritual Presence” and “the Spiritual Community.” This demonstration aims at vitalizing the symbols so that they can be considered as Christian ethical guidance for the post-truth phenomenon. Finally, referring to Tillich’s style of thinking, a “*beyond-truth ethics*” has been proposed to encounter the present post-truth challenges.

Spread of Fake News and Allegedly Fake News: Factors of Emotion and Personal Belief

There are several ways through which post-truth politics influences the public. The first way is shocking but real: factual truth is twisted or ruined; nevertheless, it is strongly engaged or even permanently or momentarily accepted by the crowd. One example is a saying that Pope Francis endorsed Donald Trump for President in the 2016 election. According to a BuzzFeed News analysis, this rumor ranked the top fake election stories in Facebook three months before the election. It has almost one million engagements, which refer to the total number of shares, reactions, and comment.^{csbhi}

This fake news is obviously ridiculous, yet we need to ask why it was highly engaged by the public. One reason is that social media has now become an important platform for many people to get news. Its openness and low degree of monitoring helps the fast and wide spread of information. Nonetheless, after deducting certain amount of fake and fraudulent accounts, eventually it is the real user who shares and comments posts in social media. It is then reasonable to ask: what causes them to engage with and disseminate absurd news?

Post-truth phenomenon informs us that the answer lies in people's emotions, for example, fear, hopelessness, anger, and inconceivableness. McIntyre rightly says, "in the prefix 'post' is meant to indicate not so much the idea that we are 'past' truth in a temporal sense (as in 'postwar') but in the sense that truth has been eclipsed—that it is irrelevant." Additionally, people's emotional feeling is relevant here. For some people, fact check is less vocal than instant anguish, excitement, fury, etc. The latter is more appealing and evokes (re)actions, for example, shares and comments in social media. It is unexpected to many, but the reality is that an eclipsed truth is accepted by certain groups of people not because reason does not exist in humans, but because it is seldom used by people, as Daniel Kahneman says.² In their case, emotion takes over rationality and becomes overwhelming; it is prior to factual truth. Feelings of fear help to spread fake news because people may hope that sharing these news with others will help them rescue themselves from seeming disasters; angry feeling helps the dissemination of make-up news because people may want to share their anger and find resonance from friends; hopelessness causes the wide-spread of fake news because one may want to get sympathy from people to relieve their despairs. In short, what matters is not how people think about truth-claims, but how they *feel* about it.

Fake news may be spread by innocent emotional informers. Furthermore, it may be disseminated and originated by deliberate leaders. In addition to being an emotional factor, personal belief or stance likewise causes the emergence and distribution of fake news. A recent fact-check project by Facebook and AFP illustrates that there is a huge amount of fake news flowing within the pro-Beijing government camp during the still on-going protest in Hong Kong.³ However, we should not forget that the term "fake news" is frequently uttered by some political leaders, such as by Donald Trump, who notoriously uses it to attack opposing but objective voices, for example, some fair journalist reports by credible news companies. One well-known example is that of White House Press Secretary Sean

Spicer, who accused media of deliberately underestimating the attendance number of Trump's inauguration ceremony in 2017, but data and photographic evidences show that Spicer's claim is false.⁴ Kellyanne Conway, who is the Counselor of the President, later defended Spicer, saying that he had intended to present "alternative facts." A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center shows that Republicans are three times more likely than Democrats to blame journalists for fake news.⁵ *Newsweek* says, "Since being elected, President Donald Trump has ramped up his attacks on the press and deeming reporters as the 'enemy of the people'. He often derides new coverage he dislikes as false and routinely singles out specific outlets and reporters."⁶ Thus, we should distinguish *allegedly* fake news from real fake news. Similar to emotion, a strong personal belief can determine for a person what is true and what is false. The term "fake news" can simply be employed by certain politicians as a weapon to fight against dissenters or opponents. Additionally, people seek what they desire to listen, and thus, their existing stances are solidified or enforced, while the dissenting opinions are further excluded.

Making Use of Facts for Propaganda and Correlation with Truth-claims

The above explication revolves around a discussion of factual truth. However, the post-truth phenomenon is more sophisticated than lying or believing a lie. Fact check can be performed, and evidences can be demonstrated to convince the public sooner or later. Lies, after all, can most likely be falsified through these endeavors. What makes the post-truth phenomenon most perplexing is that various claims may be factually true, and this is the third way in which the post-truth politics operates.

The still on-going protest in Hong Kong provides many examples regarding this third way the post-truth politics works. For instance, protestors accused many policemen of their abuse of power to beat and even shoot at them; on the other hand, the police say that they were attacked by protestors and faced life-threatening dangers, and thus, they hit back for self-defense. Two camps show their own photos and videos as evidences, and these are all real. Some people attempt to offer a kind of "balancing" view: both sides are wrong, and both need to be condemned. However, Hector Macdonald's definition of "competing truth" often appears:⁷ The Hong Kong and the Beijing governments and other pro-government citizens grasp and demonstrate those facts which favor them to blame protestors and repress demonstrations; the protestors, on the

other hand, spread their evidences via social media to draw others to their side. Both make use of facts for propaganda or solidification of their respective stances. Eventually, war of public opinion happens, and those holding “balancing” opinion are less likely to stand on midpoint. They are targeted to be pushed toward either camp.

Partial and fragmentary facts are not only used to reinforce existing beliefs; they can be further employed to construct other truth-claims, and this is the fourth way the post-truth politics works. Sometimes, these claims can be verified or falsified, but sometimes they cannot. For example, at the end of August this year, Trump said: “Because of what I’m doing with trade that’s really keeping down the temperature...If it weren’t for the trade talks Hong Kong would be in much more trouble.”¹⁰ Whether Trump really did or said something to the Chinese government in the trade war to “rescue” Hong Kong from more chaotic situation is hard to be verified—Trump might have really done so for the benefit of his side, or he said so just because he wanted to get the support of the people of Hong Kong and also those in other countries, so that he would have a card in hand in the “poker game” with China. Here, we see that politicians attempt to correlate certain facts (in the above example, Trump’s bargaining in the trade talk) with another claim (Hong Kong not in a much worse situation). Lawrence Douglas rightly points out:

“In Trumpspeak, truth is not factual, it’s imagistic...Truthful statements do not necessarily offer an accurate account of events in the world. They provide an approximation or exaggeration of something that might, in theory, have occurred...Close and maybe are good enough...Trumpspeak confuses prophecy with honesty...Finally, Trumpspeak is transactional. It places no independent value on truth. The value of speech is to be measured exclusively in terms of its effects. If a statement gets me closer to my goal, then it is valuable; if it does not, it is worthless. Valuable statements, then, are true by virtue of the fact that they advance my interests. Statements that fail to do so are worthless and thus false.”¹¹

However, this type of correlation is not only uttered by politicians, but also present in ordinary citizens’ reasonable suspicious minds. For instance, a number of cases of missing persons have been reported, and an unusual number of young corpses has been found in various mountains and seas in the past two months in Hong Kong. It is said that the police either intentionally or unintentionally killed some young protestors after arresting them, and in order to cover their crimes, they threw the corpses in the mountains and seas, destroying

evidences or giving the public an impression that these youngsters committed suicide. While some view this kind of sayings as rumors, some cases do contain reasonable doubts.¹² Whether the police murdered these young protestors needs further investigations. However, what I want to point out is that, in reality, many people do link the fact (the death of many young people in Hong Kong recently) to their belief (the Hong Kong police murders young protestors). This correlation is realized by the fact that people organized a ceremony of remembrance for one recently found dead fifteen-year-old girl, Yin-lam Chan.¹³ A significant number of people gathered in that ceremony, and some left messages such as “strive for justice for you” and “revenge for you” to the girl. The emotions of the public have overflowed in this case. The expression of feelings comes before and becomes prior to the verification of factual truth. This is a post-truth phenomenon, which “is not about reality; it is about the way that humans *react* to reality.”¹⁴

Hector Macdonald’s classification of the three types of communicators helps to summarize my above elucidation:

“*Advocates*: selecting competing truths that create a reasonably accurate impression of reality in order to achieve a constructive goal.

Misinformers: innocently propagating competing truths that unintentionally distort reality.

Misleaders: deliberately deploying competing truths to create an impression of reality that they know is not true.”¹⁵

Misinformers appear often because emotion overrides reason. Some personal beliefs are good, humane, and constructive, but some are selfish, malicious, and destructive. The former may make misleaders; nevertheless, my view is that the opinion of this kind of misleaders often cannot stand long, because most people believe in means not justifying the end. Additionally, although advocates “create a reasonably accurate impression of reality to achieve a constructive goal”, some of them may neglect other significant considerations, and thereby they are not able to give positive and constructive transformations of the reality. I have elaborated on this point in the following section.

In any case, how can one theologically reflect on the post-truth phenomenon? What does this phenomenon inform Christians and theologians, and what responses can they possibly give? Are there any resources one can use for a theological engagement with post-truth politics? In the following section, I have discussed the legacy of Paul Tillich and argued that some aspects of it are competent to produce fruitful discussions.

Critical Examination of Tillich's Understandings of Emotion and Reason

“But man is fully rational only on the foundation of, and in interdependence with, nonrational factors.”¹⁴

Tillich most probably didn't hear about the term “post-truth” in his time, but I have argued that he did address and discuss some key aspects that are essential features of the post-truth phenomenon. The first aspect is the role of emotion in human cognition. Tillich divides two types of knowledge: one he calls “controlling knowledge” and another “receiving knowledge.” The former objectifies the known object and makes the knowing subject stand out from the known target. According to Tillich, the technical reason that “transforms the object into a completely conditioned and calculable ‘thing’” is one example of controlling knowledge.¹⁵ On the other hand, receiving knowledge “takes the object into itself, into union with the subject.” Tillich especially mentions that receiving knowledge

“includes the emotional element, from which controlling knowledge tries to detach itself as much as possible. Emotion is the vehicle for receiving cognition. But the vehicle is far from making the content itself emotional. The content is rational, something to be verified, to be looked at with critical caution. Nevertheless, nothing can be received cognitively without emotion. No union of subject and object is possible without emotional participation.”¹⁶

We can see from this passage that in Tillich's understanding, emotion plays a significant role in cognition. Emotion is a cognitive force that drives us toward the truth and unites with it. In fact, emotion itself is not irrational.¹⁷ However, Tillich does not mean that emotion is prior to reason, as “(i)t would not be called ‘true’, however, if it were not true for someone, namely, for the mind which in the power of the rational word, the *logos*, grasps the level of reality in which the really real ‘dwells.’”¹⁸ Merely depending on emotion in acquiring knowledge may produce devastating consequences: for Tillich, this explains why controlling knowledge had movement of resisting romanticism in history;¹⁹ furthermore, this informs why people supported the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazi, and he diagnosed many German people falling into the trap of romanticism and being manipulated by the myth of “blood and soil.”²⁰ Emotion without rational structure becomes irrationalism: “It is still reason, but irrationally promoted reason, and therefore blind and fanatical. It has all the qualities of the demonic, whether it is expressed in religious or secular terms.”²¹ In short, according to Tillich, controlling

knowledge and receiving knowledge should go “hand in hand” for acquiring knowledge,²² and only through this way, truth fragmentarily manifests itself.²³

Tillich's explication of the relationship between two types of knowledge explains why he says one is “fully rational only on the foundation of, and in interdependence with, nonrational factors”²⁴ because emotion is, in reality and from the very beginning, essential in human cognition, and the post-truth phenomenon merely reveals the salient role of emotion. However, Tillich reminds us that emotion should not overwhelm reason in getting close to truth. I have discussed more on how Tillich thinks about truth later in this paper, but here I have addressed one aspect of the post-truth phenomenon, which Tillich seldom, if not never, discusses about human cognition in his writings: it is true that Tillich affirms the role of emotion in human cognition, but he only mentions that emotion *drives* one to unite with a known object. However, as I have explained, the post-truth phenomenon informs us that emotion *directs* one to cherry-pick particular sides of a known object to unite with or believe in. Tillich stresses on a cognitive *propelling* power, while the post-truth phenomenon reveals us a cognitive *selecting* power. Additionally, as I have discussed before, some people correlate certain facts to various truth-claims. Thus, emotion in this way even *creates* truth-claims or *illuminates* the real truth. Tillich might have never thought of or discussed this impact of emotion in his writings. Therefore, in certain sense, the post-truth phenomenon enriches Tillich's understanding of human cognition by displaying more facets of its operating mechanism of emotion.

Justice as Criterion for Ethical Discernment: Engaging Tillich's Concept of Justice

According to Hector Macdonald, advocates select competing truth to achieve their constructive goals, and, as I have mentioned before, one perplexing aspect of the post-truth phenomenon is that opposing advocates demonstrate their respective factual truth, and it causes some people to have difficulties in deciding their minds and stances. Some may eventually choose a “balancing” or “middle” position. Identification of an advocate may therefore do little help for one to decide which opinions or sides she/he should accept or take.

Truth is definitely one criterion for the ethical discernment for the post-truth phenomenon, but it is *not the only one*. Another significant principle for the ethical judgment is justice. Justice is a significant notion in Tillich's social and political discussion, and I have argued that several points in Tillich's discussion of justice are inspirational for us to discern ethically when we face the

post-truth phenomenon. For Tillich, one principle of justice is “the adequacy of the form to the content.”²⁵ Tillich uses law as an example: law in the past may become obsolete and inappropriate in the present. The past form of an ordinance may not correspond to the content of present situations. This discrepancy may be due to “the fact that the forms which once expressed the power of being, have a tendency towards self-continuation beyond the point of their adequacy.” Conservatism may guarantee safety to certain groups of people, but “the price paid for the safety in the old form is paid in terms of injustice. And injustice in terms of the inadequacy of the form ultimately undermines safety, so that the price was paid in vain.”²⁶ Furthermore, the synchronization of the form with the present content is important.

The second principle of justice for Tillich is equality. This principle “is implicit in very law, in so far as the law is equally valid for the equals.”²⁷ However, Tillich admits that there is an ambiguity of justice because “equality of what is essentially unequal is as unjust as inequality of what is essentially equal.”²⁸ For example, one cannot employ equal standard to evaluate the intelligences of an ordinary person and inborn mentally ill patient. Certain people in a society do need special care. Nevertheless, there is one unambiguity in Tillich’s discussion of justice: “every person is equal to every other, in so far as he is a person.”²⁹ This is the third principle of justice, which Tillich calls the “principle of personality”: “(t)he content of this principle is the demand to treat every person as a person. Justice is always violated if men are dealt with as if they were things.”³⁰ In other words, treating a person as an object is unacceptable; ruining an object and hurting a person is completely incomparable.

In addition, Tillich discusses various forms of justice in reality, for example, tributive or proportional justice, which is “about the tribute a thing or a person ought to receive according to his special powers of being.”³¹ Another form of justice that Tillich mentions is the idea of democracy. He does express certain criticism on democratic system, constitution, and institution;³² however, in terms of principle, he thinks democracy can lower the chance of the emergence of tyranny because democratic concept requires the ruling group or ruler “to sacrifice their subjectivity in part by becoming objects of their own rule along with all other objects and by transferring the sacrificed part of their subjectivity to the ruled.”³³

Additionally, I have gone back to the example of the current situation of Hong Kong and examined whether and in what sense convincing ethical judgments regarding the post-truth phenomenon can be

made through Tillich’s idea of justice. First, it is factually true that many protestors undergo illegal assemblies and demonstrations, and violate the Public Order Ordinance of Hong Kong as they are accused to have done by the police. However, as many barristers and pan-democratic legislative council members say, the Public Order Ordinance was originally aimed at the Hong Kong 1967 leftist riot, and after more than fifty years, this law is outdated.³⁴ In Tillich’s words, the form of this law is inadequate with respect to the content of the present situation of Hong Kong, because first, Hong Kong is no longer a British colony, and second, the law breaches Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.³⁵

Another factual truth is that some radical protestors do attack the police. Nevertheless, in Tillich’s mind, if citizens’ right is trespassed against and the principle of personality is violated, it is not totally unjustifiable to react with considerable physical force. Tillich, in several occasions, expresses his despisement to pacifism because in a certain sense, it encourages injustice,³⁶ and it sacrifices the embodiment of love.³⁷ Additionally, radical protestors use umbrella and rods to attack the cops, but the former receives disproportionate retributions from the police. It very often enrages the public when the police targets and shoots at people without any life-threatening reason.³⁸ This is obviously against Tillich’s understanding of proportional justice and principle of personality.

Finally, it is factually true that protestors have ruined facilities of train stations and targeted shops, but another fact is that the police and the Hong Kong and the Beijing governments have overwhelming social and political powers, and Hong Kong currently has no effective system of checks and balances against them. There is no balance of power, and a true democratic form of justice does not exist in Hong Kong.

My elucidation and interpretation of Tillich’s idea of justice illustrate how justice can and should be considered as a criterion for ethical discernments for the post-truth politics. There is, however, another criterion for this discernment: Tillich’s concept of ultimate truth.

Proclaiming Truth and Being Truth: The Ultimate Truth for Tillich

What is the meaning of truth, after all, for Tillich? In one sermon, “What is Truth?” Tillich expresses his thought about “liberating truth”—not truth concerning scholarly work but freedom, love, and the ultimate meaning of life. He cites the Gospel of John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’” to arouse the audience and reader to rethink:

“(f)or us, statements are true or false; people may *have* truth or not; but how can they *be* truth, even *the* truth?” Tillich subsequently gives his answer: “Jesus is not the truth because His teachings are true. But His teachings are true because they express the truth which He Himself is. He is more than His words. And He is more than any word said about Him.”³⁹

Tillich reminds that one should seek more than proclaiming truth—*being* truth. The latter concerns one’s thought, character, virtue, and, in short, a holistic person and her/his whole life. This ultimate truth is expressed as “doing”, as well as “saying”: “Doing the truth means living out of the reality which is He who is the truth, making His being the being of ourselves and of our world.”⁴⁰ However, how do we know whether we are making Jesus’ being the being of ourselves? Are there any marks informing one she/he is doing so? Tillich mentions two of these marks in the sermon, one is a seriously and humbly asking mentality: “If you *seriously* ask the question, ‘Am I of the truth?’ you are of the truth. If you do not ask it seriously, you do not really want, and you do not deserve, and you cannot get, an answer... These all are of the truth and on their road to the truth.”⁴¹ Another mark is love: “...be certain that you are of the truth and that the truth has taken hold of you only when love has taken hold of you and has started to make you free from yourselves.”⁴²

The cited biblical verse and Tillich’s interpretation of it are refreshing, because they remind that one should also consider a whole person as well as what she/he utters in order to make ethical judgments when encountering the post-truth phenomenon. What she/he says is factually truth, but it does not necessarily imply any ultimate truth. A reasonable and highly possible argument may be given from an arrogant person; a factually true statement can be full of ruthlessness. Without humility and love, any claim or statement is ultimately feeble and unpersuasive. Furthermore, a politician’s practice, political agenda, consistency on certain issues, and her/his own holistic life speak louder and more authentic than her/his voice.

Christian Ethical Guiding Symbols: Rethink “the Spiritual Presence” and “the Spiritual Community” in a Post-truth Time

“Theological ethics is an element of systematic theology, present in each of its parts.”⁴³

For Tillich, life and the world are full of ambiguities, and this is the central message of the beginning part of his volume three of *Systematic Theology*.⁴⁴ The ambiguities revealed in the post-truth phenomenon perhaps best render a contemporary ground to Tillich’s claim.

Many seemingly right yet hardly verified statements, the complexity of various incidents, people’s difficulties in judging what is true or false, the intricate relationship between emotion and reason in ethical discernments, etc., may be barely touched and not fully discussed by Tillich, but he rightly articulates their nature: it is the *existential* reality. However, different from all other creatures, a human being is always conscious of the quest for unambiguity.⁴⁵ “Spiritual Presence” and “Spiritual Community” are two related theological symbols in Tillich’s writings, which represent these fragmentarily present unambiguities. My previous discussions of Tillich’s understanding of the relationship of emotion and reason, his idea of justice, and his interpretation of the ultimate truth led to the delineation of some attributes of these two symbols in the following. In this section, I have elaborated on Tillich’s discussions of these three aspects, particularly demonstrating how these three are theologically corporate into his pneumatological ideas, which can then be considered as Christian ethical guidance in a post-truth time.

As I have explicated in the beginning of this essay, personal belief plays a significant role in post-truth cognition. This may not surprise Tillich if he were alive because, for him, cognitive acceptance of truth is “not of true statements about objects in time and space but of the truth about our relation to that which concerns us ultimately and the symbols expressing it,” and this underlines his understanding of faith. Though we use the term personal “belief,” for Tillich, there is no such thing called “will to believe” because no person has no faith, and faith means one is *grasped* by, what Tillich calls, “ultimate concern”—something unconditional and makes one ready to sacrifice for it.⁴⁶ The Spiritual Presence manifests itself as faith, and faith is one of the marks of the Spiritual Community.⁴⁷ There is one thing that Tillich often stresses about in these two theological ideas: “Certainly, faith as an expression of the whole person includes emotional elements, but it does not consist solely of them.”⁴⁸ Tillich asserts that the Spiritual Presence does not destroy the rationality of a person.⁴⁹ In other words, one is grasped by the Spirit, but her/his rationality remains intact, and this is a quality of the ideal suggested by Tillich, which he calls “theonomy.”⁵⁰ One is capable of making reasonable judgments if the Spirit is present in him/her. This is a good reminder for every Christian (if the Spirit does present in them) when they face the post-truth phenomenon and need to make any ethical judgments.

However, not all having faith implies a manifestation of the Spiritual Presence, because faith is only one of the marks of the Spiritual Community. Another mark is love.⁵¹ There are several interrelated qualities of love

in Tillich's mind,³² however, essentially, "(l)ove is the drive toward the reunion of the separated."³³ Additionally, this reunion does not destroy individuality but affirms it: "Justice is that side of love which affirms the independent *right* of object and subject within the love relation. Love does not destroy the *freedom* of the beloved and does not violate the structures of the beloved's individual and social existence."³⁴ Here, we see again that right and freedom of a person are strongly affirmed by Tillich. It follows that the Spiritual Community, with the mark of love, should be within itself just, and it should outreach itself to seek justice in this world, because for Tillich love is the principle of justice, and justice is an embodiment of love in reality.³⁵ Tillich asserts: "There is no pure Spiritual Presence where there is no humanity and justice."³⁶ Due to love, the Spiritual Community strives for justice. However, when we encounter the post-truth phenomenon, our consideration of justice no longer remains on military, the international, or group levels on which Tillich, in his time, focuses. The discussion of justice should be extended to the level of discernment of truth-claims, as I have demonstrated and exemplified before. The Spiritual Presence and the Spiritual Community, with the mark of love and its practical form of justice, can be considered as two theological symbols informing us how to make ethical judgments for a post-truth phenomenon.

As Tillich says in his sermon, "What is truth?" it should be noted that the ultimate truth unites with love.³⁷ The manifestation of love, which is a mark of the Spiritual Community, implies the manifestation of the ultimate truth, though the latter is—in term of what Tillich often says—fragmentary. The church should not think itself as "exclusive endorsement" of the ultimate truth, because as Tillich suggests in his sermon, one deemed as possessing the truth is the major obstacle to get close to the truth. Indeed, Tillich classifies "manifest church" and "latent church," and the Spiritual Presence can be in both or either of them. This freedom of the Spiritual Presence reminds us two things: First, whatever community bears the marks of the Spiritual Community implies the Spiritual Presence, and this may provide clues, which are helpful for our ethical judgments; second, Christian communities should be aware that whether the Spiritual Presence is still in them, because a community can hardly make any judgment concerning various truth-claims if the ultimate truth is not present in them—this is true no matter if we face the post-truth phenomenon or any other ethical dilemmas, because we recognize falsehood only when we have ever experienced truth. However, "the human spirit is unable to compel the divine Spirit to enter the human spirit."³⁸ What Christian can do—appropriating what Tillich says

in his sermon—perhaps is to keep on seriously asking a question: "Am I of the Spiritual Community?", and then she/he may be of the Spiritual Community.

Conclusion: Beyond-truth Ethics for Post-truth Phenomenon

In this paper, I have argued and demonstrated how several aspects of the legacy of Tillich can be used to engage with the post-truth phenomenon to produce fruitful outcomes—Tillich's explication of the relationship of emotion and reason in human cognition and his concept of faith explain two essential features of the post-truth phenomenon, namely the influential roles of emotion and personal belief. However, I have also argued that the impact of emotion enriches Tillich's understanding of emotion in human cognition. Furthermore, a considerable part of this essay argues how Tillich's concepts of justice and ultimate truth can be considered as criteria for ethical discernment regarding post-truth phenomenon. I have further explained how Tillich's discussions of these three aspects are incorporated into two of his theological symbols, the Spiritual Presence and the Spiritual Community, and thus, they can be considered as Christian ethical guidance in a post-truth time.

What would Tillich think about the post-truth phenomenon if he were alive today? Most probably, he would remind us to look deep into the phenomenon, as he very often did in his time: He expresses certain sympathetic understanding to various social phenomena, for instance, German people desiring to restore their national power after the First World War. However, Tillich never evaluates social phenomena without critiques, as he did, for example to nationalism, capitalism, and democratic system. His broad range of consideration, in-depth and radical (ontological) reflection, and strong ethical impulse entail his writings to still be vivid for our age. If the post-truth phenomenon means that truth is not relevant anymore, from a post-Tillichian perspective, what we need is a "beyond-truth ethics" to engage with this phenomenon—echoing Tillich's mentality and style of thinking, *viz.*, thinking broadly, looking deeply, deciding determinately, and acting courageously, we need to consider and grasp more than an ordinary understanding of truth—not to forsake seeking factual truth, but thoroughly think and ethically act *beyond* it.

¹McIntyre Lee, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2018), 5.

²Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

³Examples can be found in the website of AFP Fact Check: <https://factcheck.afp.com/afp-hong-kong> (retrieved on October 19, 2019).

⁴Examples of evidences and relevant reports: Brian Stelter, “White House press secretary attacks media for accurately reporting inauguration crowds”, CNN Business, CNN Company, January 21, 2017, retrieved on October 19, 2019

<https://money.cnn.com/2017/01/21/media/sean-spicer-press-secretary-statement/>, and Tim Wallace, Karen Yourish and Troy Griggs, “Trump’s Inauguration vs. Obama’s: Comparing the Crowds”, The New York Times, The New York Times Company, January 20, 2017, retrieved on October 19, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/20/us/politics/trump-inauguration-crowd.html>

⁵Amy Mitchell, Jeffrey Gottfried, Galen Stocking, Mason Walker, and Sophia Fedeli, “Many Americans Say Made-Up News Is a Critical Problem That Needs To Be Fixed”, Pew Research Center: Journalism & Media, Pew Research Center, June 5, 2019, retrieved on October 19, 2019, <https://www.journalism.org/2019/06/05/many-americans-say-made-up-news-is-a-critical-problem-that-needs-to-be-fixed/>

⁶Alexandra Hutzler, “Republicans are Three Times More Likely than Democrats to Blame Journalists for Fake News: Survey”, Newsweek, Newsweek Company, June 6, 2019, retrieved on October 19, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/republicans-are-three-times-more-likely-democrats-blame-journalists-fake-news-survey-1442549>

⁷Hector Macdonald, *Truth: How the Many Sides to Every Story Shape Our Reality* (London: Bantam Press, 2018), 19–22.

⁸RTHK, “Trump: HK in ‘More Trouble’ Without Trade Pressure”, RTHK.HK, RTHK, August 31, 2019, retrieved on October 19, 2019, *Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.* <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1477912-20190831.htm?spTabChangeable=0>

⁹Lawrence Douglas, “Donald Trump’s Dizzying Time Magazine Interview Was ‘Trumpspeak’ on Display”, The Guardian, Guardian News & Media Limited, March 24, 2017, retrieved on October 19, 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2017/mar/24/donald-trumps-dizzying-time-magazine-interview-trumpspeak>

¹⁰Apple Daily, “Apple Daily20191010”, HK Real-News, October 10, 2019, 2:53,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhcIUiBK5A> (retrieved on October 19, 2019)

¹¹Some footage of the ceremony can be watched here: Eyepress News, 「數百名市民悼念疑『被自殺』示威學生陳彥霖」, Eyepress TV, October 11, 2019, 1:49,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iougPnstUu0> (retrieved on Oct. 19, 2019)

¹²McIntyre Lee, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2018), 172.

¹³Hector Macdonald, *Truth: How the Many Sides to Every Story Shape Our Reality* (London: Bantam Press, 2018), 16.

¹⁴Paul Tillich, “The World Situation” in *Theology of Peace*, ed. Ronald Stone (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 122.

¹⁵Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 97.

¹⁶Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 98.

¹⁷Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 72.

¹⁸Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 101.

¹⁹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 99.

²⁰Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1977), 13–44.

²¹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 93.

²²Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 105.

²³Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 64.

²⁴Paul Tillich, “The World Situation” in *Theology of Peace*, ed. Ronald Stone (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 122.

²⁵Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 57.

²⁶Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 57–8.

²⁷Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 58.

²⁸Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 262.

²⁹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 80–1.

³⁰Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954.), 60.

³¹Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 63–4.

³²Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 347; and Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 95–103.

³³Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 264.

³⁴Hong Kong Watch, “Drop Outdated Rioting Charges and Call Independent Inquiry: New Report”, Hong Kong Watch, Hong Kong Watch, July 10, 2019, retrieved on October 19, 2019,

<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2019/7/10/drop-outdated-rioting-charges-and-call-independent-inquiry-new-report>

³⁵Article 21 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx> (retrieved on October 19, 2019).

³⁶Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 386–8.

³⁷Paul Tillich, *Political Expectation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 120.

³⁸The abuse of power of the cop in America in recent years, and the shooting incident in Hong Kong on October 1, 2019 are examples. For the case of Hong Kong, see TIME staff, “Teen Shot by Police to Face Rioting Charges as Hong Kong Considers Emergency Regulations”, TIME, TIME USA, LLC, October 2, 2019, retrieved on October 19, 2019,

<https://time.com/5691579/hong-kong-teenager-shot-police-charges-tsang-chi-lin/>

³⁹Paul Tillich, *New Being* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 69-70.

⁴⁰Paul Tillich, *New Being* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 71.

⁴¹Paul Tillich, *New Being* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 72.

⁴²Paul Tillich, *New Being* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 74.

⁴³Paul Tillich, *Morality and Beyond* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 13.

⁴⁴Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 11–110.

⁴⁵Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 107–110.

⁴⁶Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 130–2.

⁴⁷Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 130–4, 155–7.

⁴⁸Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 132.

⁴⁹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 112.

⁵⁰Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 251.

⁵¹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 134–8.

⁵²Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 28–34; and Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 280–2.

⁵³Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 134.

⁵⁴Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 282. Italic by me.

⁵⁵Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 57.

⁵⁶Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 144.

⁵⁷Paul Tillich, *New Being* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 74.

⁵⁸Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 112.

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