

can accord them the large measure of autonomous responsibility which we proposed earlier, without requiring a common theological formulation of old or new credal professions as a precondition ^{/123/} for their coexistence in the one Church. Perhaps there is a real possibility, not only of moving from a unified profession of faith to a unified ~~✠~~ Church, but also of moving from a reunited Church to a unified credal profession or some other satisfactory verification of this unity."

p 123 "I offer these reflections, but I have no cure-all to prescribe for the credal differences between us. But we must ask ourselves this question: If genuine theological ~~✠~~ pluralism does exist in the Catholic Church, and has a right to exist, what implications does this have for our ecumenical efforts in quest for Church unity?"

Claude Geffré OP, "Recent Developments in Fundamental Theology:
An Interpretation"

pp 5f "According to Y. Congar, ~~✠~~..., one can consider fundamental theology as an integral part of theology (a treatise on the Word of God and its acceptance by man) or as a potential part (the defensive and justifying function)."

p 6 "... a third function... that of examining critically the nature and method of theology as a science, or in other words providing theology with an epistemology and methodology."

"The meaning of fundamental theology is therefore somewhat variable.... It is in this light that I would therefore like to try to interpret the recent history of fundamental theology."

p 7 "The idea of an 'apology of ~~✠~~ the faith' goes back to the origins of Christianity... 1 Pet 3, 15... But it was only in the context of the 18th century's interdenominational controversies that a science of apologetics was built up in order to create a methodical approach to this vindication of the Christian faith."

pp 7f "... it is very instructive to look at the ^vhistorical causes ^A/8/ of this apologetic inflation in ~~✠~~ Catholic theology during the last centuries. This bent for apologetics can only be understood in connection with the REformation, the rationalist triumph of the Enlightenment, and the cultural phenomenon of atheism."

p 8 "L^vutheran theology used to ~~✠~~ emphasize the subjective factors-- particularly the part played by the Spirit --... Catholic theology insisted on the objective factors: that the object of faith is

presented by the Church as its norm (norma normata) and that it is possible to prove rationally the fact of revelation... (against patristic and medieval tradition) Catholic theology began to yield to a very debatable distinction between the contents (the whole of unprovable truths) and the fact of revelation which, as such, could be proved. This tendency was encouraged by the Rationalists and Deists of the Enlightenment who tried to reduce the truths of faith to truths that reason can comprehend."

p 9 "by following a plan in three parts: (1) the existence of God and of religion (demonstratio religiosa); (2) the existence of the true religion (demonstratio christiana); (3) the existence of the true Church (demonstratio catholica)."

Foregoing from 18th century

".. it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that we see the appearance of treatises in which the position of apologetics ^{was} explained with regard to both philosophy and dogmatic theology. In this field two works were outstanding: P. Gardeil's La crédibilité et l'apologétique (1908) and R. Garrigou-Lagrange's De Revelatione (1930)."

"According to Gardeil, "Apologetics is the science of the rational credibility of divine revelation." Its object is the credibility of Catholic dogma: 'Credibility is the quality which Catholic dogma possesses because of ~~x~~ the divine witness.' For it is indeed ' a property of revelation to be demonstrable by natural reason.' By its formal object apologetics is therefore theological, while in its method it is strictly a rational and logical science. In the same way Garrigou-Lagrange maintained that the proper function of apologetics is to present the revealed religion 'in the light of the evidence for its credibility ...' It presupposes the faith but only appeals to rational arguments."

p 10 'One of the great weaknesses of apologetics as an objective science lay in ^kthinking that credibility was a characteristic that extended equally to all dogmas without having theologially and critically examined the key dogma of revelation itself.'

p 11 Notion of fundamental theology derived from fact that revelation is key dogma, foundation of the rest.

p 11 'Another shortcoming of apologetics as an objective science, and the direct result of its abstract notion of revelation, is that it takes as obvious the distinction between "what God reveals"

and the fact "that God reveals." This view leads to a dangerously extrinsic distinction between the judgement of credibility of the fact of revelation and the assent of faith to the contents of that revelation. It presupposes an intellectual notion of revelation as a "Communication of truths that cannot be proved" and it forgets that it is the very fact of revelation which is the object of the Good News of the Gospel.

p 12 '... the most serious deficiency of apologetics as an objective science and the major reason why it is criticized by modern apologists. The object is that the old apologetics proceeded with a rational credibility ~~xy~~ which nowhere joined up with the lived credibility of the believer.'

.. the deceptive character of those scientific manuals of apologetics which never convinced anyone yet

'Today we are more aware of the mistake of using an apologetic method derived from the religious controversies of the past and collecting external motives of credibility to explain how and why a definite concrete person should accept the faith.'

p 12 f In other words, when we are dealing with a value like religion, /13/ the judgement of credibility cannot be limited to mere reason. It depends on a free and existential option, or at least on some basic ethical judgement.... To vindicate the faith is a matter of showing the meaning of Christianity for the conscience of someone who is already ~~ε~~ involv^εd morally in an historical situation.'

p 13 ". . . And here Blondel's analysis of the ~~int~~ernal logic of human action has proved most fruitful. In this way, the object of such an apologetic approach is no longer the merely rational credibility but the human credibility /14/ of Christianity.'

p 14 '... the ^εdevelopment that has taken place in fundamental theology in the past thirty years, we realize that it fits in with the urge to overcome the intellectualist ~~xx~~ and objectivist way in which neo-Thomism saw the problems'

p 15 'If fundamental theology aims at "justifying" the faith in the eyes of both the ~~xx~~ believer and the unbeliever, it has to take into account the philosophical and cultural situation which conditions our mind. Therefore the best students of fundamental theology will take note of the changes that have affected human understanding since Kant; they will take human historicity much

more seriously, and they will not overlook the fact that today we have reached the age of criticism or, rather, of hermeneutics. This is the background of the "anthropocentric" concern which is evident in so much work in fundamental theology today.'

p 15 'One might define the program of fundamental theology by saying that it must deal with the anthropocentric dimension of the whole of theology. This consideration of the human viewpoint is something generally required for all dogmatic theology, but it is the specific function of fundamental theology to provide a critical vindication of dogmatic theology from the ~~XXXXXXXX~~ angle of a transcendental analysis of man.'

'Traditional theology (notably Aquinas) (BL) represents an admirable attempt to understand the eternal content of the mystery of God and the mysteries of faith. Modern theology is more concerned with bringing out the meaning of the Christian mystery as a whole for people today. It therefore wants to be more existential, more anthropocentric. This tendency, moreover, corresponds to the development of theological thought about revelation... Biblical revelation only speaks to us of God as he is in himself in so far as it is implied in his action for us; it is always a dispensation and functional -- that is, ~~XXXXX~~ "saving." On the other hand, one cannot separate thinking about the fulfilment of revelation in history from thinking about its fulfilment in the believer. In contrast with the extrinsic explanation of revelation as a communication of supernatural truths addressed to the human subject /16/ as a passive receptacle, we may say that the meaningful activity of God's people becomes a constitutive element in revelation itself. We may say therefore that revelation is already a tradition and even hermeneutical.'

'Finally, modern theology attempts to draw the consequences of Bultmann's basic intuition about the necessary preunderstanding which is involved whenever we try to read again the Christian message. It wants to provide all at once and inseparably an interpretation of the Word of God and of man's existence.

There is no revelation in the full sense if the gift of God's original word does not coincide with a revelation of man to himself. As Paul Ricoeur puts it: "Revelation as such is an opening up of existence, a possibility of existing." The

understanding of Christianity can therefore not be severed from ~~self~~ reflection upon man as a mysterious opening up, a looking for meaning and direction.'

p 16 Bouillard in this line, but G prefers to expound Rahner

"Transcendental" here means the a priori condition for the life of the spirit, that which makes it possible for anything to become the object of thought, will, or love. For Rahner, God is the a priori condition of all our spiritual activity. To adopt a transcendental reference (problématique) or to treat the whole of dogma as transcendental anthropology /17/ means to "investigate, in regard to any topic of a dogma, the conditions of its knowledge in the subject -- here, in the theologian; it will show that there are indeed a priori conditions for the knowledge of this topic or object, and that these conditions already imply something of this topic or object, and the way, the method, and the limits of its being known."

[BL: I find the foregoing misleading; Rahner's a priori conditions are in the subject; God is his a priori in the sense that grace is God communicating himself; see The Word in History, p 4].

p 17 'Karl Rahner... thinks that if we take the anthropological orientation of modern philosophy seriously, we must try to show the meaning of revelation as intelligible for our contemporaries on the basis of a profoundly "anthropocentric" understanding

'Clearly, the danger of such an approach is that it might take the meaning out of the gratuitousness of revelation as the history of salvation and that one might deduce by some strict and necessary logic all the theological propositions from this single experience of oneself as the source of their objectivity and their conceptual elaboration.' Rahner explicitly rejects this new kind of modernism. But the whole problem of a fundamental theology /18/ which thus makes use of the transcendental method is the delicate articulation of the relation between man's existence as the transcendental a priori condition of the faith and Christianity as the a posteriori historical condition. In fact, Rahner can only avoid the danger of a necessary deduction by using an anthropology which already owes much to the light of revelation. His concept of theology as transcendental anthropology is unintelligible if one does not know his bold thesis about the relation between grace and nature.... "nature" understood as spiritual, personal,

and transcendental, is an intrinsic, constitutive, and necessary element, not of grace as such, ~~as~~ seen in the abstract, but of the reality and the event in which grace can be effectively given."

→ p 19 'As Rahner suggests, we should have a far greater interpenetration of fundamental theology and dogma than we have at present [difficulties with faith are difficulties with content of dogmas)]. Without denying that the proper function of special dogmatic theology is to arrive at an understanding of the content of each mystery of faith, it would appear true to say that the more theology becomes a hermeneutical science [[BL communications], the more ~~the~~ distinction between fundamental theology and dogmatic theology will tend to get submerged.'

'Whereas Rahner speaks about the "anthropocentrism" of theology, one might just as well speak about its need to be hermeneutical, in the very broad sense that we cannot assert anything about God which does not imply some assertion about man. In other words, we need a theological knowledge concerned not only with knowing the objective truth of dogmatic statements but also with their meaning for man today.'

→ 'As Schillebeeckx said: "Understanding the faith and self-interpretation cannot be separated."'

p 20 'Today, therefore, we would define fundamental theology as the critical and hermeneutical function of all theology. It is "critical" in the sense that it analyzes the condition of historical possibility and the transcendental condition of the faith: on the one hand, the event of revelation and, on the other, man's existence as the a priori condition of the faith. Its proper and complex function is to let the a priori condition and the historical ~~condition~~ a posteriori condition illuminate each other. It is hermeneutical in the sense that it ~~x~~ tries to disentangle the lasting significance of the statements of faith in their scriptural, dogmatic, and theological form through man's understanding of himself and his relation to the world.'

p 21 'It would be precisely the task of this new kind of fundamental theology, advocated by Rahner, to provide a "vindication of the faith, lived before it is thought." [Schr VI 152] We should put together what, at the prescientific level, would justify the belief of an educated man today (because faith must be "reasonable").

'Yet it seems clear from the more recent and significant studies in this field that authors have already begun to see the limitations and dangers of this inflation of anthropology. There is a ~~x~~ fear that we may make man the measure of the Word of God. It is also said against the use of the transcendental dimension that it puts transcendental subjectivity before man as an historical and political being, and that it therefore overcomes idealism only in appearance.

'One could ~~XXXXXXXX~~ level the same reproach at both the anthropological intent of fundamental theology and ~~n~~ Bultmann's existential hermeneutics. Under the pretext that the language of revelation has become unintelligible for many people today, it has been so carefully adapted to their understanding that the very content of the message is in danger of losing all meaning. God has been reduced to the meaning he may have for man as he understands himself and his relation to others, and so man has become the measure of revelation.

' Hans Urs von Balthasar has sounded a serious warning against the dangers of anthropocentrism in theology. Without quoting Rahner directly, he sees in the use of the immanent or transcendental method the danger of a "hidden and sometimes explicit philosophizing whether the internal measure of the seeking spirit -- seen as empty, or simply vacant, or as the restless heart, or as a *potentia obedientialis* (a natural tendency to seek God) etc. -- is somehow turned into the measure of /22/ revelation " He thinks that this kind of tendency finds its extreme expression in modernism "where the objective facts of revelation become totally dependent on the subjective internal and dynamic relationship of revelation between God and the soul, and are only valid for the Christian in so far as they effectively support and foster this dynamic relationship."

p 22 'In contrast with this von Balthasar approaches the question from a contemplative angle, and tries to show the splendour of the figure of Christ... as the manifestation and celebration of absolute love -- that is, the love which reigns within the Trinity and God's love for mankind: "Only love is worthy of ~~such~~ belief." Christ is the concrete form of absolute love; ~~he~~ he finds his vindication in himself, whatever the subjective condition of man: "The figure we meet in history is convincing in itself because the light in which it manifests itself ~~and~~ radiates its own strength and clearly proves itself in its own radiation." [Herrlichkeit I 142, 446; L Malevez NRT 90 1968 799 794]

'.... One might well be inclined to say that von Balthasar has taken Heidegger's warning very seriously: "As long as the building of anthropological and sociological as well as existentialist concepts has not been overcome and abandoned, theology will never acquire the freedom to express what it has been entrusted with."

'... Following Malevez, I would /23/ simply point out that von Balthasar himself cannot wholly do without some kind of pre-understanding. I can only apprehend the beauty of the mystery of Christ if I already have within me some kind of norm of beauty, and it is because I perceive there is a certain affinity that I can come to credibility.' [Malevez ibid 797]

p 23 'Others object... A purely transcendental, personalist and existential theology becomes inadequate as soon as in this age of "secularization" the new understanding of the world requires a more penetrating reflection on the relations between the Christian faith and the world. In particular, it would be unable to treat the world as history with the seriousness it demands. The most lucid protagonists of this new tendency are the Protestant J. Moltmann and the Catholic J. B. Metz. They would prefer to say that the main theme of fundamental theology is no longer the relation between theory and practice. They want to concentrate on the social and political /24/ implications of the Christian faith. This is why fundamental theology will increasingly become the platform for the dialogue between faith and the human sciences, and not only between faith and philosophy as in the past.'

p 24 X 'According to these authors (Moltmann Metz), in the post-religious situation of our time, when the world is no longer an object of contemplation but an immense workshop and man is defined by his boundless capacity to build a world that is always new, it is the proper function of fundamental theology to spell out the "dimension of the future and the social--political orientation of Christianity. It ~~is~~ should ~~be~~ particularly show the biblical foundation (the OT is about the "promise") of this orientation toward the future which characterizes our modern culture and toward an understanding of the world as history which results ~~from~~ from it.

'In other words it is the dimension of the future which enables our thought to reach beyond the limitations of an anthropocentric theology too exclusively concerned with the value of the decision of faith for the present moment. With this dimension of the future, one can interpret "The world as history, history as the history of the end, faith as hope, and theology as eschatology." For J. B. Metz it is not enough that fundamental theology introduces the anthropocentric dimension into the whole of theology; our present spiritual situation urgently requires that we lay bare the "eschatological dimension" of all theology: "Eschatology is not just one discipline side by side with ~~the~~ other disciplines. It is the fundamental dimension which determines and shapes every theological development, particularly with regard to the world. The attempt to interpret the whole of theology on an existential or personalist basis is an important contribution to theology.... But this existential and anthropocentric theology can ~~be~~ easily ~~be~~ foreign to the world and to history if eschatology is not brought in as an essential ~~be~~ element. Only in the eschatological perspective of hope can the world appear as history. Only when we understand the world as history can our free action be given its rightful place in the center." [JB Metz L'Eglise et le monde, Théologie d'aujourd'hui et de demain, Paris 1967 pp 130 147-8]

p 25 'The world is nothing but an immense field of potentiality waiting for the free creativity of man striving toward the future with his whole being. In this age of secularization the only theology that can account for both the Christian hope and the hope of this earth simultaneously is neither a theology of the

remain / 0 /

cosmos nor a transcendental theology of man's existence, but a political theology -- i. e., a theology which takes the social and political dimension of man seriously, in the way that man understands himself today. According to J B Metz, the function of such a theology is twofold. On the one hand it will critically examine the individualistic tendency still current among contemporary theologians. No doubt, the private sector and the ineffable encounter between God and the individual man constitute the specific territory of existential hermeneutics and a kind of theological personalism. On the other hand, "The positive function of political theology tries to determine a new kind of relationship between religion and society, between the Church and the social reality of public life, between an eschatological faith and the practical reality of society." [Metz C 36 1968 6]

p 25 'But if the primary task of fundamental theology is to justify Christian hope in a given historical situation, it is there that we must sort out the relations between the Church and the world on /26/ on the lines of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. The theologian must not only bear witness to the permanent aspects of the Word of God, but he must also deal with the new human issues in their relation to the content of revelation. He must begin by sharing in man's understanding of himself, his world, and his future, so that he can judge the great issues that beset the Christian conscience with a genuine critical understanding in the light of faith. As Schillebeeckx said: "To ask about the inspiration of the Gospel as detached from the concrete content of our own existential experience is to ask a question without substance, and to this one can only give an unrelated and existentially meaningless answer." However, all too often both believers and unbelievers have the impression that the Christian Churches continue to confess a doctrine that is admirable but irrelevant to man's most urgent problems. It is not good enough to claim an admirable nature for Christianity and then to ignore the failures of Christianity in history. The ~~critical and liberating force of the Gospel~~ critical and liberating force of the Gospel must be manifested in thought and action. The answer of the Gospel will always be paradoxical. It disputes man's self-sufficiency, and it doubts excessively optimistic ideologies about man's future. But at the same time, precisely in virtue of its eschatological dimension, it sets man free and urges him on in

in his earthly expectations: the humanization of man, the socialization of mankind, and the building of an order of universal peace and justice.

p 26 'I c^ANNOT LIST HERE ALL THE BORDER PROBLEMS... But one may confidently assent that they will primarily concern the relations between faith and the new forms of atheism (The theology of unbelief), the Christian interpretation of ideological and religious pluralism (theology of non-Christian religions), the confrontation between faith and the political and social reality (theology of violence), and the reinterpretation of Christian life in the context of a secularized world (theology of the realities of this world).

'I^N conclusion, it seems right to say that the most active research in fundamental theology is trying to reach beyond the objectivism of neo-Scholastic theology as well as the anthropocentrism of existential theology. We are witnessing the birth of a new kind of fundamental theology which intends to embody man's new self-understanding, particularly his understanding of the future of this earth. As in the past it tries to make Christianity credible, but by stressing its social and eschatological dimension. And only those who have forgotten the unique destiny of the Church and the world in God's plan will be astonished to see fundamental theology so ardently pursue extra-theological problems.'

