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There remain a few remarks to be made about systematics. We were discussing the fact that in doctrines and in systematics there occur both truth and understanding, but in doctrines the emphasis is on the truth and a truth attainable by all the faithful. In understanding the emphasis is on intelligibility, arriving at some understanding. What is understood has the truth of faith, but the understanding itself has probability. It is a probable opinion, usually, in theology.

There are a number of objections commonly raised against any systematic theology. It will be well to consider them briefly. First, it is objected that it is merely speculative. Now, German idealism makes it clear that a theology can be highly speculative. But the systematics that we are talking about is a very homely affair. It is an understanding of the truths of faith, a *Glaubensverständnis*. And the truths of faith are church confessions.

It is objected, again, that systematic theology can be very irreligious. This, of course, is true, and it is especially true when the emphasis of the theology is not on conversion but on proof, or when it is motivated by individual or corporate pride. But when the emphasis is on conversion, and when it is conversion that gives the name 'God' its primary and fundamental meaning, when systematic theology does not believe it can exhaust that primary and fundamental meaning, then it is constructed to be in harmony with its religious origins and aims.

Again, it can be objected that systematic theology is fruitless, and it is true that it has a fruitless aspect. It can systematize not only understanding but also misunderstanding. One can't get rid of the fact of dialectic. It is also true that it is more easy to make a misunderstanding popular and widely held than an understanding. But at least if one acknowledges the fact of Dialectic, and knows

how to deal with it in an appropriate fashion, one is not simply at the mercy of misunderstanding.

It can be objected, again, that systematic theology is elitist. It is true that it is difficult, but a lot of other things too are difficult: mathematics is difficult, science is difficult, art is difficult. The difficulty is one that is worth meeting. If one does not attain the understanding that is possible on the level of one's own age and time and place, then one will be at the mercy of the reductionist psychologies and sociologies, and so on, that will tell you what a religious person really is, if he isn't what he thinks he is, and try to rid religious people of what they think are illusions.

Finally, it is objected that systematic theology is irrelevant. That charge is valid if it does not lead on to the eighth functional specialty, communications. But if you are going to communicate, you have to understand what you are communicating. If you don't understand it you are just mouthing formulae. Mouthing formulae is not a means of communication; it is a means of killing a doctrine or a religion.

Finally, with regard to systematics there are the three factors of continuity, development, and revision.

There are four factors making for the continuity of systematic theology. First of all, there is the normative structure of our conscious and intentional acts. That is one of the foundations of our method. Secondly, there is God's gift of his love. It is given in various measures, but it is fundamentally the same thing. Thirdly, there is the permanence of dogma. While understanding does develop, still it is *in eodem dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia*.

Finally, there is the occurrence in the past of genuine theological achievements. I've done two studies of Aquinas, one on grace and freedom, and the other on *Verbum*. My own thinking involves variations from that, transpositions, and so on. But they remain permanent achievements on Aquinas's

part, with regard to Trinity, and with regard to grace, and theology is impoverished if they are simply ignored.

So there are four factors making for continuity: transcendental method, God's gift of his grace, the permanence of dogma, and the permanence of high achievements, even though new situations demand developments and modifications.

Development: there is a very genuine development when the gospel is preached effectively in a different culture. It is not as conspicuous as development, say, in systematic theology, but it is very real. Again, development can result either mainly from the differentiation of consciousness or, again, from the fact that truths are denied. Truths are often discovered by the fact that, first of all, they are denied.

Finally, there are revisions. The principal revision that is our concern at the present time is, of course, the revision that is demanded by modern science, modern scholarship, and modern philosophy.

However, even though fundamentally current theological revision is an adaptation to cultural change, there remains the possibility that these adaptations will, in turn, imply still further revisions. The shift from a predominantly logical to a basically methodical viewpoint may involve a revision of the view that doctrinal developments are implicitly revealed. Again, just as the Alexandrian school refused to take literally the anthropomorphisms of the bible to bring about a philosophically based demythologization, so it may be asked whether modern scholarship, history, and exegesis may not bring about further demythologizations on exegetical or historical grounds. That question, of course, is an entirely theological question and does not pertain to the methodologist.

There remains our final, eighth functional specialty, communications.

[Communications]

Theology we have conceived as reflection on religion and method as reflection on theology. In the final stage of theology it is returning back to religion. It is there that theology bears fruit, that theology is given the task of communicating, of developing the communication of the religion. A specimen of what is meant by communications is had in a five-volume work edited by Arnold, Klostermann, Rahner, Schurr, and Weber, *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie*. It is conceiving pastoral theology not as thematizing the tasks of the individual pastor but thematizing the work of the church in the situation in which it finds itself in the world, on the international, national, regional, diocesan, local levels, and the coordination of all these tasks. In the five volumes there are about 2,650 pages. So it is not an unknown, uncharted field that we are talking about.

Our topics will be: meaning and ontology; common meaning and community; thirdly, society, state, and church; fourthly, the Christian community and its contemporary situation; and, fifthly, the church and the churches.

[Meaning and Ontology]

We have spoken of the four functions of meaning. Each of the four functions has its ontological aspect. In the cognitive function of meaning, what is meant is real. In the constitutive function of meaning, meaning is part of the reality that is constituted. In the effective function of meaning, meaning persuades, controls, directs. And, finally, in the communicative function of meaning, it induces the hearer to share in the cognitive, constitutive, and effective meanings of another.

These ontological aspects of meaning are found in all aspects and parts of meaning: in all the carriers, in all the stages, in the cultural [word not clear: phase?] differentiations of consciousness, the presence or absence of conversions: these four ontological aspects of meaning are to be found.

[Common meaning and community]

Secondly, common meaning and community. In a community the material constituent may be a frontier or a building or a domain or something like that, but the formal constituent lies in common meaning. This common meaning rests on a common field of experience, and without that common field people are out of touch; common ways of understanding, and without that common understanding, people misunderstand one another, suspect, become suspicious, afraid, terrified, violent; common judgments, otherwise people are living in different worlds; and finally, common values, or they are working at cross-purposes. This common meaning is doubly constitutive. It is in each individual, it is constitutive of the individual as a member of the community, and in the group it is constitutive of the community as a community.

The genesis of common meaning is through communication, where by communication people come to share the same cognitive, constitutive, and effective meanings. The spontaneous basis of this communication is intersubjectivity. George Herbert Mead: I discover the meaning of my gesture in the other person's reaction to it, so that this common meaning emerges not in the individual but in intercommunication. As common meaning unites a community and constitutes it as a community, so divergent meaning divides a community. Divergent meaning leads to a division in the culture, to a stratification of individuals, those that share in different meanings. The serious division, of course, is the presence or absence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, because the lack of conversion is the lack of self-transcendence; it is the negation of community, and it gives rise to alienation. The basic form of alienation is the self-justification of the refusal of self-transcendence. You are divided against what it is to be a man. And when you have the divided community, when you have

opposed meanings informing the community, then the situation becomes increasingly absurd. It is the product not of intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility, but of their opposites.

[Society, State, and Church]

The traditional notion of society is the organized collaboration of individuals for the pursuit of a common aim. And with that notion of society one goes on to conceive the two perfect societies, the church and the state. That is not the notion of society that is entertained by sociologists at the present time. Society is the togetherness of human beings, and anything is social that considers that togetherness in any fashion. On that notion society is something that is worldwide at the present time, and states and churches are particular organizations within society.

The ideal basis of society is of course community: common meaning, common understanding, or complementary understanding, common judgments, and co-responsibility. It is sometimes urged that society destroys one's sense of responsibility, but it increases one's co-responsibility, one's being responsibility with others.

This ideal basis of society stands upon a moral principle, individual and collective responsibility as a basis for universal dialogue; a religious principle, God's gift of his love, the basis of dialogue between all religions; and, finally, on a Christian principle, the inner gift of God's love and its outer manifestation in Christ Jesus. And that is the basis of Christian ecumenism.

However, human community is imperfect. There is human ignorance, human incompetence, alienation, ideology, egoism, to distort the social process. And to cope with this problem of imperfect community, society develops procedures and

agencies. There are in contemporary society a large number of self-governing bodies that aim at persuading people towards the three conversions. Among them is the Christian community in its contemporary situation.

[The Christian Community and Its Contemporary Situation]

Christian community results from the outer communication of Christ's message and from the inner gift of God's love. Since God does bestow his grace – a common doctrine of theologians, God gives sufficient grace to all men – practical theology is concerned with the effective communication of Christ's message.

The meaning of the message is cognitive, what Christians are to believe. It is constitutive, what they are to become, crystallizing the inner gift of love into overt fellowship. And it is effective, what they are to do, their service to human society to bring about God's kingdom.

To communicate the Christian message has its presuppositions. The cognitive presupposition is that they know the message. And for this there is at their service the seven previous functional specialties. It is constitutive; they must live the message, for without living it one does not possess it, and one cannot lead another to share what one does not possess oneself. The effective meaning: one must practice it, for action speaks louder than words. To communicate the message to all nations, preachers and teachers must enlarge their horizons to include accurate and intimate understanding of the culture and the language of the people they address. They must grasp the virtual resources of that culture so that the message will be not disruptive of the culture or superimposed upon it, but in a line of development proper to the culture itself.

This demands a basic distinction between preaching the gospel and preaching the gospel as it has been developed in one's own culture. If one does the

latter, one preaches one's own culture along with the gospel, so that in accepting the gospel the audience must renounce their own culture to some extent.

For the classicist, this procedure was legitimate, because he assumed that there was just one culture, that culture is something that ought to be, and that he had what ought to be. The modern concept of culture, which is empirical, as the meanings and values constitutive of a way of life, calls for a fuller communication, a fuller attention to those one addresses. Through communication community is constituted and, inversely, community constitutes itself and perfects itself through communication.

So the Christian community is conceived in the *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie* as a *Selbstvollzug*, an ongoing process of self-realization. The substance of the process is the Christian message conjoined with the inner gift of grace, resulting in Christian fellowship, Christian witness, and Christian service: *koinonia*, *martyria*, *diaconia*.

This process is structured. The church trains personnel, distinguishes roles and assigns tasks, develops modes of cooperation, promotes the good of order in which Christian needs are met, facilitates spiritual and cultural development of its members, transforms by charity their personal and group relations, rejoices in the terminal values that flow from their lives.

Secondly, it is an outgoing process. The church exists not just for itself but for mankind. Its aim is the realization of the kingdom of God not only within itself and in the afterlife but also within human society in this life, as is stressed in Vatican II.

It is a redemptive process. The Christian message incarnate in Christ suffering, dead, and risen tells not only of God's love but also of man's sin. Sin is alienation from man's authentic being, and sin justifies itself in ideology; it is destructive of community. The redemptive process has to be exercised in the church and in society as wholes and in each of their parts. In each case priorities

have to be selected and determined, resources surveyed and, when inadequate, plans for their increase made. Conditions must be studied under which resources are to be deployed for attaining ends, plans drawn up for optimal deployment, and several plans in several areas have to be coordinated.

That is, more or less, the sort of thing that these five volumes are talking about. The first hundred pages are introductory. There are about two or three-hundred pages on *Grundlegung* and the rest is on execution, carrying out this *Pastoraltheologie*.

In the foregoing fashion the Christian church will become not only a process of self-constitution but also a fully conscious process of self-constitution. This calls for a recognition that theology is not a full science of man. If the church is to become a fully conscious process of self-constitution, theology must unite itself with all other relevant branches of human studies. The possibility of such integration is a method parallel to the method in theology.

The functional specialties of research, interpretation, and history, of data, understanding, and facts, become a single science, and they are applicable to any sphere of human living to obtain classical or statistical or genetic laws. Secondly, there is the fact of dialectic. As in other studies, so too theologians do not always agree. Here, then, there is a place for dialectic that assembles differences, classifies them, goes to their roots, pushes them to their extremes by developing alleged positions while reversing alleged counterpositions. Theological foundations, which objectify the horizon implicit in the three conversions, may be invoked to decide which are positions and which are counterpositions. And in this way one filters out ideology. Just as one filters out ideologies in theology, so one can do so in human studies through the use of dialectic and foundations.

The use of dialectic is twofold. Besides that dealing with human studies or religious studies, it can also be a technique for studying the situation, for the social

historian to filter out the elements of ideology in a contemporary mentality, the social scientist who traces the effects of that ideology, the policy maker who devises remedies.

The advantage of this second use of dialectic is that the work of the historian and scientist leads to policy, and this policy sees the elimination of alienation and ideology to promote the good of society. Both uses are necessary, the one to understand society, the other to filter ideology out of human sciences or religious studies.

Corresponding to doctrines, systematics, and communications, practical theology would distinguish policy making, planning, and the execution of the plans. Policy making is concerned with attitudes and ends. Planning works out the optimal use of existing resources for attaining ends under given conditions. Execution generates feedback. Because you carry out the plans you produce a new situation, and the new situation can become the object of social surveys and draw attention to the policy makers regarding what is adequate and what is inadequate in their planning.

We have been indicating a method, parallel to the method of theology, for integrating theology with scholarly and scientific human studies. The aim of such integration is to generate well-informed and continuously revised policies and plans for promoting the good and undoing evil both in the church and in human society generally. Such studies will have to occur on many levels. The principle of subsidiarity is to be observed. The problems on the local level often have solutions on the local level, and when that can be so let it be done there. When the solution requires a higher level, then the higher level of organization has to deal with the problem.

I have been speaking mainly of the redemptive action of the church in the modern world. But no less important is its constructive action. The two are

inseparable. For one cannot undo evil without bringing about the good. The constructive side of Christian action is larger than policies, planning, and execution. There is the arduous task of effecting an advance in scientific knowledge, of persuading eminent and influential people to consider the advance thoroughly and fairly and of having them persuade and influence practical policy makers and planners.

Max Planck once asked, what is it that makes a new doctrine in physics generally accepted? Is it the clarity of the hypothesis, the rigor with which all its presuppositions and implications are worked out, the thoroughness of the process of experimentation and verification? He said, no. It is when the older professors retire from their chairs. That is not limited to physics; it goes right across the line. There is needed this advance of science, but also there is needed the communication of the advance to convince people that there is something still to be learnt by them and that new things can be extremely significant.

So this business of communications and an ongoing process of devising policy and so on will bring together the scientists and the planners and facilitate communications.

[The Church and the Churches]

I have been speaking vaguely of the church. In fact, the church is divided. Different confessions of faith exist. But there is a real and an ideal unity. The real unity is the response to the one Lord in the one Spirit. The ideal unity is the fruit of Christ's prayer that they all may be one. At the present time that fruit is ecumenism.

Insofar as ecumenism is a dialogue between theologians, our chapters on Dialectic and on Doctrines indicate the methodical notions that have occurred to

us. But ecumenism also is a dialogue between churches and then largely it operates within the framework of the World Council of Churches and under the directives of particular churches. Illustrative of such directives is the decree on ecumenism issued by the Second Vatican Council.

While the existence of division and the slowness in recovering unity are deeply to be lamented, it is not to be forgotten that division resides mainly in the cognitive meaning of the Christian message. The constitutive meaning and the effective meaning are matters on which most Christians very largely agree. Such agreement, however, needs expression, and while we await common cognitive agreement, the possible expression is collaboration in fulfilling the redemptive and constructive roles of the Christian church in human society.

I thank you very much.