

## The Challenge of Integration: What Role Social Science and Art Criticism?

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The problem of integration across disciplines of inquiry is certainly not new to Christian thinkers, it has been with us since the New Testament. But this particular conversation, I take it, is being pursued on the assumption that new resources and possibilities have become available lately that might help Christians, especially missiologists and evangelists, do their work more effectively. I agree with this assessment, though it may turn out for different reasons than other partners in the discussion. But I am grateful to be a part of the conversation because I too have struggled to understand how the disciplines of art history and criticism, and more recently, the social sciences, can be used by Christian thinkers. And I wholeheartedly support the underlying missiological thrust of the conversation, since I have approached my work on theology and culture from the perspective of one whose first teaching experience was on the mission field—though I understand this work in its broadest sense, that of bringing all to the feet of Jesus and doing all to the glory of God.

My own contribution here will be divided into three parts. First I want to make some historical observations about the traditional approach to integration, which has been shaped, almost exclusively, by discussions between philosophy and theology. I want to argue that our problem has been largely created by the shape these conversations have taken—a shape primarily determined by their rootage in the Greek philosophical heritage. Secondly I want to signal the important shift in emphasis that is represented by the contribution of non-western theology in the last generation, especially Liberation Theology, which I believe suggests a new way of thinking about these things. Finally I will make some constructive suggestions about the implications of this which appear particularly relevant to Christian witness in the post-modern context.

I

Let me begin by briefly making a methodological point. Often discussions of this kind speak as if the basic issue was: “How do we reconcile different sources of truth, or different methods of determining truth?” Now it is true that for us, since the epistemological turn of the enlightenment, this is a very important question. But I do not believe it is the most important question for most of Christian history, nor, incidentally for most people outside the West today. In fact I believe if we had put the question in this way to the Apostle Paul he would have been puzzled. Though it is hard to put this in a transhistorical and transcultural way, I think earlier thinkers were far more interested in conflicting notions about what is the final goal (or good) that one seeks in life. To use Charles Taylor’s phrase they sought that for which one will literally live or die?<sup>[1]</sup> And the struggle over what we are calling integration was between conflicting notions of this goal.

Already in the New Testament Paul called attention to the problem of differing understandings of the goal of life. Jews, he wrote, demand signs, presumably of the coming messianic kingdom; Greeks desire wisdom; but we announce Christ crucified (I Cor. 1:22). While the Jews long for the coming messianic rule and seek to live their lives in anticipation of this rule, Greeks find their end in a particular kind of wisdom, and in living a life controlled by this wisdom. Christians meanwhile find their life all wrapped up in an historical figure, Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected. Notice that these divisions are not in the first instance over different notions of truth, but over different conceptions about what is really important, and how one should go about living life in the light of this. Notice further that both Jews and Christians interpreted this as having to do with events; it was the Greeks who spoke of particular knowledge as the goal of life.

Very soon however, as Christianity moved out into the larger intellectual world, the issues came to be defined exclusively in terms of a Hellenic world view. Rather than seeing faith in Christ--what Paul called the wisdom of God, and Greek wisdom as competing notions, the question became how one could be understood in terms of the other: how the event of Christ could be understood in Greek terms. While a wide variety of positions have been taken on this question, looked at from one point of view, not much has changed from these first conversations about the relationships between faith and reason or, later, between theology and philosophy. Justin Martyr for example believed that these domains could be understood together, that everything that is good and beautiful in the world is ultimately due to the logos, the basic spiritual reality he identified with God, that pervades all things (*I Apology*, I, 58-60). Tertullian by contrast insisted there was a sharp break between these worlds. In his *Prescriptions Against Heretics*, he asserted that truth is uniquely to be found in the Creeds and Confessions of the Church and therefore we have no need to seek after it as philosophers do. Interestingly both Justin and Tertullian felt that the strongest argument for Christianity was to be found in their corporate life in the world, but when it came to debate they already accepted the reigning dichotomy--though they did not yet call it faith and reason. One felt these realms were ultimately united, the other insisted that Athens and Jerusalem have nothing to do with one another. Both agreed, however, that these were different realities, and this agreement shaped their discourse.

This picture received its clearest expression in the thought of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1275). Thomas of course carried this distinction to the point of insisting they implied two different "sciences" or as we would say, ways of knowing. The one depended on principles received as revelation, the other involved reflection by the natural light of reason. Of the two of course, revelation is the superior because it alone allows the person to reach his or her highest end, which is the vision of God in heaven. But the lower way is by no means to be despised. In fact Thomas seems to ground even the knowledge of revelation in the natural knowledge that is available by the light of reason. The reason for this, at least on the reading of Frederick Copleston, is that

[2] knowledge begins with the awareness of understanding of corporal things. Arguments for the existence of God must be made a posteriori, that is on the basis of experience. The great advance of Thomas, as for Aristotle on whom he is so dependent, was to allow for the possibility of real knowledge on the basis of our [3] life in the world.

Though this knowledge allows a person to reach what Thomas called their natural end, it was not sufficient by itself. Besides the fact that most people mix this knowledge with a great deal of error, or that they may simply be incapable of pursuing complex arguments, Thomas believed it is only through the knowledge of revelation, which is believed finally on the authority of the church, that a person is enabled to reach their transcendent end of seeing (and thus perfectly knowing) God. But what is important for our purposes is to note the radical, and unquestioned, distinction between these ways of knowing. Though Thomas took an important step toward affirming the value of both ways, the scales were inevitably tipped toward the supernatural knowledge that is gained through revelation. Only in this way is one allowed to reach the end for which they were created: the vision of God in heaven. The best that philosophy can offer is an approach and support for this knowledge, which functions "ancilla Domini", as the handmaiden of the Lord.

[4] The allowance by Thomas that some people simply cannot follow a complicated argument, recalls an ancient charge made by Galen against Christianity. Galen, you will recall, argued that Christians resorted to "parables", as he called them, because they were unable to follow a complicated argument. In his mind only this kind of argument led the person into the knowledge that mattered. For Thomas the light of reason, whatever its merits, simply cannot discover the truth that can only be found in revelation. But this discussion recalls still another much later philosopher who discussed the relation between the knowledge obtained by revelation and that by reason. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke argued that revelation helps those unable to reason for themselves to know something of the truth. But, in a critical reverse of Thomas, this knowledge received on authority lacks the clarity and precision that human reason is

able to give it. Revelation here has become a kind of lesser knowledge suitable to those unable to grasp truth by their own reasoning. Inevitably knowledge that revelation brings must then be at least interpreted and finally judged by the natural knowledge of things.<sup>[5]</sup> Though Locke did not have this intention, Immanuel Kant took a further step in arguing that our logical processes cannot give us any real knowledge of God at all. Having found revelation discredited in the previous generation, now Christians lose their final means to argue for God: human reason. As Michael Buckley put it in his important discussion of these things: “The theologians who had deposited all their coin with [these philosophers] found themselves bankrupt.”<sup>[6]</sup>

This reversal might appear to justify Tertullian’s warning. Once one allows philosophy a role in the process of organizing our world, sooner or later, it will begin to take over: the handmaiden will become the tyrant. But my argument is somewhat different. The problem is not that philosophy has been given a positive role, but that the world picture in which philosophy was allowed to function was fundamentally flawed. The world was understood in terms of an overriding dualism, and the struggle between these two defined the conversation that we now call “integration”. The background world picture was so strong that, to use Colin Gunton’s expression, though Christians believe all creation is very good, “some things are more so than others”.<sup>[7]</sup> As a result, while Christians were holding to the superiority of revelation, they found its connection with this world problematic. In some of the spiritualist traditions, for example, it seemed that revelation had severed all real connection with this world altogether. Little by little Christian thinking was, so to speak, painting itself into a corner, holding to the far side of the divide where we believed God’s truth had been revealed once and for all. Meanwhile people of good will, many of them Christian, began to discover on their own the goodness and order of this world. They opted for this side of the great cosmic divide as the place where they would work out their salvation. Little by little, as Francis Schaeffer used to say, nature began to eat up grace. But notice what a great reversal had taken place. Remember it was the Greek picture that gave ultimate value to the far side of things, the realm of ideas and reasoning, while Christianity, in the beginning, insisted that the focus of everything was connected somehow with the death of a man on a cross sometime around A. D. 33, a cross clearly planted firmly on this side of the divide. Perhaps the current crisis of integration, if we may call it that, may give us occasion to rethink the picture we have inherited and to retrieve our biblical heritage.

Here I have been greatly helped by Ellen Charry who recently pointed out that Kant’s antinomies may not be the disaster for Christianity that they have been made out to be. “For [this] permits theology,” she writes, “to turn its attention from strong rational proofs, on the model of basic science, to a softer rationality that views transcendent knowledge as reliable though mutable.”<sup>[8]</sup> It is to the exploration of this softer rationality, growing out of a fundamentally different picture of the world, to which I now turn.

## II

Not surprisingly voices from parts of the world that have not been shaped by western civilization have sometimes been the means of forcing us to think differently about what we are calling integration. For many of these, deprived as they are of Plato’s instruction, life is perceived in terms of a single whole, the spiritual and the material are interrelated, or even indistinguishable. For them our quest to integrate parts of our lives seems strange. They start with the reality of the spirit world and work toward a proper understanding of what we call science. They start with the community and work toward an appropriate appreciation of the individual. Above all they begin their search for salvation, to give our quest for integration its proper name, in the midst of cultural and historical circumstances that demand a response, often literally, with life or death consequences.

In one of the most impressive contributions to modern theology, Japanese theologian Kazoh Kitamori, writing out of the horror of the devastation of World War II, in the midst of a personal struggle with tuberculosis,

wrote *A Theology of the Pain of God*.<sup>[9]</sup> Contrary to what Schleiermacher and liberal theology has taught, Kitamori argues, God cannot embrace us immediately, for we are sinners. He must love us through his pain. “The pain of God reflects his will to love the object of his wrath”(21). So that the suffering of Jesus is inevitably implied in God’s relationship with the world, if it is true that God deeply loves the world. Jesus death becomes then in one sense an act within God, who can finally be understood only by the “word of his cross” (47). Here is an attempt to develop an interpretation about what is important for a people who have suffered such an incredible loss, by understanding how God suffers while embracing his creation. It is an attempt to follow Paul’s insistence that our faith, our attempt to make sense of our lives and live them well, has radically to do with Christ and him crucified. Notice his natural assumption that meaning is to be found in God’s presence (and suffering) in this world, it is not to be sought beyond the world. God has come to us and suffered in a redemptive fashion, we do not need to ascend to him. The influence of this on the subsequent development of theology in the West, I think, has yet to be explored.<sup>[10]</sup>

But for our purposes an even better example is to be seen in the rise of Liberation Theology in Latin America. There a decisive shift has taken place in theological method, and, I think, in our approach to questions of integration. From the beginning this theology has embodied a fundamental critique not only of western theological method, but more importantly, of the world picture that we have sketched. Enrique Dussel, for example, the best known historian of the movement, points out that western history has been shaped by Greek thinking which was not only foreign to Latin America, but even, he argues, to biblical thinking. For the Greeks, he notes, reality lay in the idea outside of history, so they were never able to get beyond the anecdotal in history—recall Galen’s sneer about Christians’ “parables”. This was institutionalized, Dussel argued, in Constantinian Christianity, in which “Christendom” was the earthly shadow of the heavenly form.

In both cases “mankind is not seen as dependent on historical happenings”.<sup>[11]</sup> For the biblical writers, by contrast, the meaning of what was happening was to be found in history and only in history—recall the OT insistence on remembering what God had done. So for Latin American theologians, Dussel concluded, the meaning of their painful and oppressive history must be sought within history and the obedience that is required must somehow respond to that history.

This means that theology as it had been done in the West would not meet the needs of this situation. As the best known protestant theologian of the movement, Jose Miguez Bonino put it, the concreteness of the problems posed served as an implicit critique of the abstract character of western theology—for its sweet tooth for the far side of the divide. They wanted to assure themselves that the questions posed represented “a real problem, the solution of which was demanded by a concrete and active engagement.”<sup>[12]</sup> But what tools were available to them to assess and interpret their concrete situation? Traditional theological method with its philosophical bias was not felt to be useful. Meanwhile Christians from many different backgrounds were becoming active in the many movements for liberation that proliferated during the 1960’s. As Miguez Bonino describes the process, it was this movement on the part of many people toward political involvement that proved to be the starting point of a new theological reflection.

How could they make sense of the situation in which they found themselves? Miguez Bonino notes that theologians began to turn to the social sciences for help in understanding their situation. “The new sociological categories provided the scientific structure necessary to grasp, analyze, and carry forward a phenomenon for which theologians had no categories: the revolutionary practice of a growing number of Christians” (69). Of course critics soon pointed out the dangers inherent in this move. First in starting with the historical situation, do we not risk making this situation in some way normative? What is left of the authority of Scripture as God’s word from outside of my situation? Second, these Latin theologians seemed to be saying: theology made use of philosophy in the past, this does not provide the help that we need therefore we will replace philosophy with the social sciences—history, sociology, anthropology, as the handmaidens of

theology. But is it not naïve simply to replace philosophy with social science method? Does not the latter itself rests on certain philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality? These are valid questions, but my response is to ask another question: are these limitations inherent in empirical methods of analyzing and describing social reality, or are they reflections of the philosophical milieu in which these methods have developed? We will want to argue that the limits of social science method in fact reflect the rationalism and elitism of enlightenment philosophy, which in turn are reflective of the defective world picture we have sketched, rather than something fundamentally defective about social analysis.

I will say more in a moment about the limitations of social science method, but here I want to call attention to the radical shift that is implied by the claims of liberation theology. One of their major critiques is against the “dualism” that is implicit in traditional theology, and that we have described above. Gustavo Gutierrez critiques those who would question whether he is confounding social and personal sin with humanization as an historical process, by pointing out that he is seeking to assert a fundamental unity of these realms—God is interested **both** in forgiving human sin and in delivering people from unjust social structures (discussed in 70). But the more important claim for our purposes is the assertion that history is the inevitable context for theological reflection. “The only point of departure is the concrete situation,” claims Miguez Bonino. “It is therefore very urgent to...assume the historical character of theology. We do theology ‘beginning from concreteness,’ from ‘particular realities’”. (72). This seems to me to be a simple statement of fact, but one with great theological implications, especially for our discussion of integration. How is it possible for us ever reflect theologically outside of some particular historical situation? And if God’s purposes embrace the whole of his creation, why is it not possible to develop this line of thinking in a biblically responsible way? And if this is true, moreover, how can we avoid making better use of the social sciences in our work? This questions leads us naturally to consider how positively this discussion may contribute to our problem of integration.

### III

My argument is that Liberation Theology, with all of its flaws, has pointed us in a fundamentally sound direction: to understand theology as rooted in our life in this world and fundamentally involving a practical response to this situation. In seeking instruments to help them make progress they grabbed onto what, initially at least, appeared helpful, a somewhat radical reading of sociology. But what choice did they have here? Not much, it turns out. For it has now become clear that the social sciences as they have been traditionally practiced were fundamentally flawed by the world picture in which they were born, which had opted for this side of the cosmic divide as the locus of truth and meaning. God of course had been left stranded at the other side. This has led Stan Gaede to propose that only a naturalist can operate with full integrity in this world

view: “All others are condemned to live a life of philosophical schizophrenia—or to convert”<sup>[13]</sup>

One tactic used by some Christians and championed by Peter Berger, himself a Christian sociologist, is what is called “functional atheism”. That is while describing the social reality one describes it *as if* God did not exist, even though we might actually believe that he does—one has to suspend those values while she/he does

sociology.<sup>[14]</sup> It appears that orthodox social scientists do not want God mucking about in this order of things challenging the order they seek. But what if there is no way of properly understanding the vicissitudes of this order, especially its widely influential religious dimensions, without acknowledging the active presence of God? What if in fact it is God’s appearance in Christ, who the NT calls the mediator of creation, that gives this order its value in the first place? This has been well argued by Gregory Baum. He refers to Clifford Geertz’ well known definition of religion: “A system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations in men, by formulating conceptions with such an aura of factuality

that the moods and motivation seem uniquely realistic.”<sup>[15]</sup> On the face of it this seems like a promising definition, until one realizes, as Baum points out, that it excludes religious experience and even the presence of the sacred. It focuses on the *function* not the *reality* of religion. To this Baum responds: “It seems to me unlikely that faith in the substance of the great religions should make no difference at all in the sociological

investigations of these religions.” On the contrary, he argues: “The faith of sociologists that a religious tradition expresses something of the divine creates a special sensitivity to this religion, a greater awareness of its hidden meanings, and above all a sense of its forward movement.”<sup>[16]</sup>

But these problems of social science methodology, important as they are, do not get at the central thrust of my argument. In the rise of the social sciences themselves, especially one might note, in the recent explosion of work in sociology and anthropology of religion, something critical is taking place. As Gregory Baum points out, in spite of their many disagreements, social scientists fundamental work from a common premise: society affects our consciousness. “Thought...is socially grounded.”<sup>[17]</sup> Though we do not have time to pursue this here, philosophy in our century has taken a similar turn in its emphasis on practice and philosophy of

language, a turn that Christian philosophers have found extremely useful.<sup>[18]</sup> In all these movements we have what we might call a critical turning to the concrete. Reality is given its own integrity which is in some way revelatory of truth, even if for the Christian it is only God’s action and presence in that order which finally provides the key.

To illustrate the importance of these developments let me refer to my own field of study that of the visual arts. In assessing a work of art the classic mistake is to privilege the idea over the material form in which that idea appears. Poets and painters then are asked to “explain” their work. But this is just what they are unable to do. The work must in some sense explain itself, “make sense” to our eyes or ears. Not that intellectual elements are excluded, they are present as a part of the processes both of creating and experiencing art. But the idea, if it is successful, is incarnated in the material—it finds its reality precisely in its embodied shape.

Now the best art has always pointed beyond itself to some larger meaning, or better, it has embraced a larger whole as when Dante sketched out the whole of human history in his Divine Comedy or Michelangelo captured something essential about God’s relation with humanity in God’s finger reaching out to Adam. One of the more interesting developments of our own century is the move toward a minimalist portrayal of reality, as in Donald Judd’s set of cement squares or Mark Rothko’s black canvases. But even here artist’s make a claim about the nature of things. Indeed they have become allied with important schools of philosophy and their turn toward the concrete. Arthur Dante in fact claimed recently that the artists’ pushing of the boundaries of acceptable materials beginning in the 1970’s indicates that “art had turned into philosophy.”<sup>[19]</sup> What, they are asking, is the limits of our experience and investment in the concrete world?

My point is that these developments are full of promise for the Christian thinker and teacher, especially for the evangelist and missionary. This turning toward the concrete is, in my view, a turning in a decisively Christian direction. Our faith, remember, rests not on certain timeless ideas, but on critical events: creation, the invasion of reality in Jesus Christ and the waiting on tiptoes of creation for his return in what Scriptures call “glory”. Perhaps this material turning will push us in a direction that allows us to recapture our birthright.

To lay out briefly my argument, let me close by making a number of theses statements which I can only briefly elaborate, but which have great implications for what we call integration. First our work across disciplines must **start from distinctly Christian premises**. I do not mean to dismiss the entire history of integration as fatally compromised. To the contrary I believe much of it represented important efforts toward contextualizing the Christian message for those inhabiting other world views (some of Thomas’ most important work for example was in the form of a handbook for missionaries to Islam). But the constructive advances that were made were built on distinctly biblical premises—one thinks of the doctrine of creation in the early church, the role of the incarnation in the Eastern tradition, or the idea of Grace and the priesthood of all believers in the Reformation. This Christian particularism was the point Paul was making to the

Corinthians (in I Corinthians 1), and it must be our starting point today. On the other hand, we could point to moments in our history where the presentation of Christian truth was compromised by adopting world

[20] pictures ultimately incompatible with the Gospel. We must start with the triune God who made the world to display his glory, became part of it in the redemptive life and work of Jesus Christ and who works in it by the Holy Spirit to bring all creation to its final end of glorifying God through Christ.

But the second thesis I want to make is that these Christian premises are never made in isolation from the concrete circumstances in which we live. **Christian life and practice must be explained in particular historical and cultural terms.** In each case, the constructive advances made in the history of the church responded to particular historical situations which called forth this Christian response. But note that we do not make this claim for strategic reasons—because this is the way to get people to listen to us. We do it for theological reasons. Because God himself has created this order, redeemed it in Christ and works in it by his Spirit to bring about his purposes. We take this order seriously because God does! He has opted for this side of the divide! Here is where our theological practice has, I think, been most deficient. For theological education and theology more generally has clearly privileged the “idea”, to the extent of making Scripture itself into a set of ideas. One might say that Scripture is not so much a timeless truth as it is a description of God’s project in which he is engaged and which he invites, even calls, us to join.

My third thesis follows from the second. **What is called for today is a theology of the concrete** that reflects on and challenges our century’s turn toward the concrete. We have argued that our theology, since the NT, reflects on and seeks to explain certain events in history in which God has acted creatively and redemptively, which are faithfully described and explained in Scripture. Our discussion of these events are important, but at the end of the day they are only pointers to these events—indeed the multiplicity of Scriptural imagery itself indicates the inexhaustibility of God’s work. The events always do more than we can say. As Paul says of the decisive return of Christ, toward which all reality tends, “What no eye has seen nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those that love him—these things God has revealed through his spirit” (I Cor 2:9). Again John says it does not yet appear what we shall be but “when he is revealed, we will be like him for we will see him as he is” (I Jn. 3:2).

But this speechlessness does not imply passivity. Flowing from these events, and consistent with them, are certain sets of practices which they are meant to entail. Christian truth in the form of ideas are important but these are always subordinated to the embodiment of this truth in our lives and our communities, just as God himself became flesh and blood in Jesus Christ. Here Bonhoeffer saw clearly the direction that theology (and ethics) needed to go. The Church, he noted in his *Ethics*, has failed to master the social, economic, political and educational problems.

The dogmatically correct delivery of the Christian proclamation is not enough; nor are general ethical principles; what is needed is concrete instruction in the concrete situation. The spiritual forces which sustain the Church are not yet exhausted. The Christians of the world have come closer to one another than ever

[21] before. They must join together in performing the tasks of speaking the word of the Church.

Now it may be argued that I appear to argue for an immanent form of truth which denies transcendence. This is not the case. What I deny is what Colin Gunton calls a false transcendence which stresses distance rather

[22] than difference. The ultimate dualism is between God and his creation, not between God’s world and our world. God has committed himself irrevocably to this order and calls his people to participate with God, in a transcendence of difference not of distance. By faith in Christ and through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are rooted in God at the same time as we are also rooted in this created order. It is this earth which God wills to cover with his glory as the waters cover the sea. This suggests that practices that embody God’s purposes for this order “transcend” the naturalism that pervades modern culture, they say more than our words about

what God is up to. But this also means that it is our artists and musicians who might have the last word, as they have so frequently in Christian history (and in Scripture!). For these are able to gather up the thinking, feeling and experiencing of our world in a kind of aesthetic wisdom, that is actually a way of knowing and not simply an ornament.<sup>[23]</sup>

So we find allies among those foraging through this world order in search of something solid, that for which they will live or die. If it cannot be found here, it cannot be found at all. In this we concur, and we have much to learn from their work, more perhaps than at any time in recent memory. But our practices can transcend the world—as Paul says, wood, hay and stubble will be burnt up, the precious stones will endure, because ultimately they reflect the presence and actions of God. Here we part company with our naturalist friends. This is because this concrete order of things has been decisively transformed by the coming of Jesus Christ and finds its final meaning in that visible return to which Scripture points.

But we make one proviso to this alliance, that relates to our starting with distinctly Christian premises. Gregory Baum in the discussion to which I referred above notes that the larger definition of religion

espoused by Geertz and others at least makes it “easy to be in dialogue with them.”<sup>[24]</sup> The danger is that we might be so relieved that they take religion seriously that we overlook the defects of the world picture they carry with them: remember for these “scientists” there is nothing on the other side of the divide, indeed there is no divide at all. One can find many illustrations of this danger today. In many places around the country sociologists of religion are studying the positive role that religion plays in the recovery of community and the development of what they call “civic culture”. John Delulio and others are showing with great skill the critical role that faith communities play in our decaying cities and the need to empower believers to do better what they do naturally. Government money is now being made available for these groups to carry out their social mission, something unheard of even a few years ago.

There is indeed much here to celebrate in this new appreciation of Christian communities, but there are caution flags as well. At the end of the day many of these researchers (and the foundations that fund them) are not interested in the religious motivation or the faith of these groups at all, but merely in their social function. But this view in the end patronizes religion, and belittles the faith of believers. For we say, quite apart from all the undoubted social good that results from lives reflecting God’s presence, the most important practice of all is the moment when that small store front church gathers to hear the word and respond in prayer and praise. Like the art work, or the events of Scripture, those practices do more than we can say. Indeed this event, which we call worship, in some critical sense is that central point of integration toward which all our work and witness tends, anticipating as it does the eternal chorus of praise that surrounds the throne of God.

## Notes

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<sup>[1]</sup> In *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Harvard, 1989), p. 21. Moral frameworks, he says, are shaped for people by “qualitative distinctions, in relation to which they will literally live or die.”

<sup>[2]</sup> “The immediate and proper object of the human intellect in this life is the essence of material things.” *A History of Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Image Books, 1962), Volume II, Part 2, p. 44. He acknowledges he differs from many modern interpreters of Thomas, who, influenced by philosophy since Kant, begin their exposition with Thomas’s theory of knowledge. This is not, Father Copleston believes, where Thomas would want us to begin. For him philosophy begins with our experience of the world.

<sup>[3]</sup> Note that Aquinas grounds this quest in the fact that reality is dependent on God, a view Colin Gunton believes, represents a kind of platonic drag. He does not seek to ground it more appropriately in Christ as the mediator of creation. See *The Triune Creator: An Historical and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 101. He goes on to say: “The outcome being that a dualism is built into the doctrine of creation.”

- [4] “Even as regards those truths about God which human reason can investigate, it was necessary that man be taught by a divine revelation. For the truth about God, such as reason can know it, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors.” ST.1,1. In Anton C. Pegis, ed. *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas* (N.Y.: Modern Library 1945), p. 4.
- [5] “For the knowledge we have that this revelation came at first from God can never be so sure as the knowledge we have from the clear and distinct perception of the agreement or disagreement of our own ideas.” *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ch 18. 4. (London: Collins, 1960). A. D. Woozley ed.
- [6] *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale, 1987), p. 358.
- [7] Colin E. Gunton. *Op.cit.*, p. 47.
- [8] *By the Renewing of your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (Oxford Univ Press, 1997), p. 10.
- [9] Original Japanese edition 1946, ET 1946 Richmond: John Knox. Page numbers in the text
- [10] The influence for example on Jurgen Moltmann is clear as can be seen by the references to this work at critical points of his book *The Crucified God* (1974).
- [11] *History and the Theology of Liberation: A Latin American Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1976), p. 19,20.
- [12] *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. xxiii., and subsequent pages in the text.
- [13] *Where Gods May Dwell: On Understanding the Human Condition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), p. 57. He notes the schizophrenia sometimes characterizes the naturalist as well in the event God shows up in this order, while meanwhile the convert banishes God to the other realm. One is condemned then to bad science or bad theology! P. 87.
- [14] See especially *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Discipline* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962) and *The Sacred Canopy* (N. Y. Doubleday: 1967).
- [15] “Religion as a Cultural System” in *Interpretation of Religions* (1974) in Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation: A Theological Reading of Sociology* (N.Y.: Paulist, 1975), p. 254.
- [16] *Ibid.*, p. 263. This leads him to suggest that theology then can provide a “critical prolongation of sociological concepts.” 264.
- [17] *Ibid.*, p. 1. Interestingly about the time Liberation Theologians were making their discovery, Baum took off two years to study sociology. His study surprised him: “I found that the sociological tradition contains basic truth absent from philosophical and theological thought, truth that actually modifies the very meaning of philosophy and theology.” *Ibid.*
- [18] See for example the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin and Mark Johnson and the Christian philosophers represented in Alvin Plantinga, et al. in *Faith and Rationality* (Notre Dame, 1983). Nicholas Wolterstorff for example in that book describes truth about being a father or mother as being “situated”, so that gradually hierarchies of forcefulness emerge. In understanding these realities, he argues, “these facts of our nature are the end of the matter. Deeper we cannot go”, 174.
- [19] In “Museums: Making it new”, A. L. Huxtable, *New York Review*, April 22, 1999, p. 15.
- [20] This is the point of Michael Buckley’s *At the Origin of Modern Atheism*. *Op.cit.*
- [21] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: MacMillan, 1965), edited by Eberhard Bethge, p. 354.
- [22] *Op.cit.* pp. 39, 62.
- [23] This was John Ciardi’s argument 25 years ago about the role of Shakespeare and Dante, in *Saturday Review*, April 8, 1972, p. 22.
- [24] *Op.cit.*, p. 257.

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