

Modern Christian Thought
Volume 2: The Twentieth Century
A Study Guide by Beth Wright

Chapter One
The Legacy of Modernity and the New Challenges of Historical Theology

Overview

A central concern of nineteenth-century Christianity was the historical development of Church doctrine and the search for an unchanging, unifying essence of Christianity. Related to this was the question of differences among Christian sects, all claiming the mantle of orthodoxy—such a complex reality is directly connected to the modern problem of religious pluralism. Another major theme was the tension between God as transcendent and God as immanent, with the spectrum of analysis represented by two extremes, Deism and Pantheism.

This chapter describes the challenges raised by historical theology, which arose from new developments in the historical study of Christianity, particularly influenced by archaeological discoveries and new critical methodologies shaped by social sciences. A key figure was Friedrich Max Müller, who criticized theologians for their prejudiced treatment of other religions.

Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* was the landmark work that ended the previous era of historical Jesus research, marked by scholars' efforts to justify their modern views in their portrayals of Jesus. By contrast, Schweitzer insisted on placing Jesus in his historical context, one completely foreign to our modern world.

Another important development of this period was form criticism, which analyzed the biblical text using literary forms as the framework. Martin Dibelius specifically identified five forms, or pericopes: paradigm, tale, legend, *parenthesis*, and myth. One of form critics' major contributions to theology and biblical studies was the evidence they gave that the Gospels were edited and redacted for the purposes of the early Church, not primarily to portray Jesus in a historically accurate way.

The chapter ends with a look at the important theologian Ernst Troeltsch, known for his emphasis on historicism, or radical historical contextualization. He identified the first task of theology to be the establishment of Christianity as the supreme faith, the standard for all others. He further acknowledged only a few great religions to be worthy of comparison with Christianity and of study for their religious values. He also insisted that the survival of Christianity as a community and cult is an open question, because of the cultural limitations on every religion. Since the Christian conception of God is inextricably bound to the figure of Jesus through a "Christ-mysticism," and Jesus is therefore central to Christian faith, Troeltsch emphasized the significance of the historical Jesus and the need for research in that area. At the same time, he believed Christians depend on the cumulative power of the Christian tradition to interpret Christ, and that therefore over time these interpretations result in many Christs. Finally, according to Troeltsch's historicism, Jesus cannot be claimed as the decisive or final revelation of God—a position for which he is been strongly criticized by other theologians.

Key names, titles, and terms

kenosis

panentheism

Friedrich Max Müller (1833–1900)

a priori

Religionswissenschaft (history of religions)

Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965)

The Quest of the Historical Jesus

Religionsgeschichtliche Schule

form criticism

Martin Dibelius (1883–1947)

Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923)

historicism

Review Questions

1. Describe the main tenets of Princeton Theology. How did its response to the problem of authority compare to that of Catholic Traditionalists and Ultramontanists?
2. Schleiermacher, Newman, and Möhler all worked to identify the essence of Christianity. What similarities and differences can you describe in their ideas?
3. Explain the significance of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* and Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* for biblical studies and for theology. How do these two works help to define the field of historical Jesus research?
4. Describe Bultmann's understanding of the role of *kerygma* in the New Testament and its importance for faith.
5. Outline the key features of Troeltsch's theological method of historicism. What are the implications of his method for interpreting biblical texts? for understanding the source of Christian faith? for comparative religion?
6. What are some of the criticisms of Troeltsch's work? Why do you think his ideas have come back into discussion more recently, after a period of relative obscurity?

Related Websites

1. Albert Schweitzer: Biography—on the Nobel Prize website (he won a Nobel Prize for peace in 1952 for his work as a medical missionary in Africa; includes photo and brief bibliography
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1952/schweitzer-bio.html
2. The Albert Schweitzer Page—a collection of review essays, quotations from Schweitzer's writings, and other resources by an anthropologist and admirer of Schweitzer
<http://home.pcisys.net/~jnf/>
3. David L. Dungan, "Reconsidering Albert Schweitzer," *Christian Century*, October 8, 1975, 874–77
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1864>
4. Marcus Borg, "David Friedrich Strauss: Miracle and Myth," *The Fourth R*, 4, no. 3 (May/June 1991)—an article by one of the leading Jesus Seminar scholars
http://www.westarinstitute.org/Periodicals/4R_Articles/Strauss/strauss.html
5. Julian Gotobed, "Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923)," Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Modern Western Theology
http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/WeirdWildWeb/courses/mwt/dictionary/mwt_themes_705_troeltsch.htm
6. *Kerygma and Myth* by Rudolf Bultmann and Five Critics—the full text of Bultmann's book broken into sections, with brief summaries
<http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=431>

Chapter Two

American Empirical and Naturalistic Theology

Overview

American Liberal and Modernist theological movements, while diverse, shared an emphasis on empiricism and a belief in the power of reason and the scientific method.

William James, a leading pragmatist, argued that faith is key to understanding human behavior from a scientific perspective. He explored the power of human will to influence lived reality—faith in a fact can help create a fact. He also rejected the idea of a single spiritual essence or a unique religious *a priori* present in all humans but not detectable using scientific methods. His psychological analysis led him to identify many religious conversion experiences as subliminal urges rushing to emerge in the conscious minds of what he called “sick souls” (as opposed to “healthy-minded” individuals).

D. C. Macintosh used empirical, critical realism to reinterpret Christian theology, which he divided into two types: conservative and radical. He advocated an empirical theology that begins with religious experience that emphasizes knowledge of God, the existence of whom he asserted was a presupposition. In addition, he recognized normative theology, which is based in subjective beliefs about the nature of God. His goal was to claim a positive Christianity, one that is verified through the scientific method and justified through the power of human reason.

Henry Nelson Wieman emphasized the absolute priority of God, freed from religious tradition and known through the scientific method. He believed that the development of religious habits and the use of critical analysis could lead to knowledge of God. Believing in the Christ event as the ultimate end of revelation means that humans can have hope that good will win over evil; at the same time, Wieman argued, Christ cannot be definitely identified as the unique redeemer, but only the savior of those in the Christian world. Wieman’s thought points out a direction for contemporary theologians to explore—Christianity’s potential to learn from the natural and social sciences, an empirical theology emerging once again.

Key names, titles, and terms

Chicago School

William James (1842–1910)

The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902)

D. C. Macintosh (1877–1948)

normative theology

John Dewey

Shailer Mathews

Henry Nelson Wieman (1884–1975)

Review Questions

1. What would you identify as Darwinian about the religious theories of William James? What other major themes would you list as key features of his thought?
2. James opposed reductionists’ efforts to reduce spiritual experience to physiological causes. How did he avoid such a reduction in his analysis of the conversion experience?
3. How did Macintosh’s theological method differ from that of the Ritschlians? What were his points of agreement and disagreement with evangelical liberals?

4. How would you evaluate Wieman's ideas in terms of their historical context? What made him a "radical modernist"?
5. Describe Wieman's concept of God as the creative event. Wieman argued that this view was not religious humanism. Do you find his argument convincing? Why or why not?

Related Websites

1. William James—a comprehensive list of links to Williams's essays, books, letters, and so forth, along with criticism, online discussion groups, and other resources
<http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/james.html>
2. C. Robert Mesle, "Added on Like Dome and Spire: Wieman's Later Critique of Whitehead," *Process Studies* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1991): 37–53
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2808>
3. A Bibliography of the Works of Henry Nelson Wieman through 1961
http://www.ubfellowship.org/sources/wieman_bibliography.htm
4. William Dean, "Empirical Theology: A Revisable Tradition," *Process Studies* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 85–102
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2791>
5. Martin Luther King Jr., "Wieman's Conception of God," chapter 4 of "A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1955
http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/papers/vol2/550415-Dissertation_Chapter_4.htm

Chapter Three

The Dialectical Theology: Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Friedrich Gogarten

Overview

This chapter describes the movement led by the eminent theologian Karl Barth, called variously “Dialectical theology,” “Theology of Crisis,” and “Theology of the Word of God.” While the actual movement did not last long before its various proponents went their separate ways, it had a significant impact on Christian theology in the twentieth century.

In particular, Barth’s critique of Liberal theology inspired many to rethink its assumptions. Influenced by Kierkegaard, he emphasized the “wholly otherness” of God. Rudolf Bultmann found Barth’s criticism of Liberals’ reliance on historical Jesus research an effective basis to show how faith doesn’t need and shouldn’t rely on scientific proofs. Ultimately Barth believed that the quest of the historical Jesus was a sign of unbelief, that Christians should accept revelation as a mystery.

Emil Brunner, another dialectical theologian, developed a theological anthropology influenced by Martin Buber’s I-Thou concept. He believed that Christianity needed to connect with other faiths and ideologies, and he was an ecumenical activist involved in the predecessor to the World Council of Churches. He argued for a new kind of Christian apologetics, less “defense” than an “attack” on non-Christian ideologies such as scientific positivism.

Finally, Friedrich Gogarten is known for his advocacy of a secular theology, which saw human beings as being free from the world and simultaneously responsible for it as God’s creation. His analysis of the *kerygma*, or proclamation, in the New Testament is key to his concept of God’s relationship to history.

Key names, titles, and terms

Karl Barth (1886–1968)

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976)

Emil Brunner (1889–1966)

Zwischen den Zeiten (*Between the Times*)

Dialectical theology

Barth’s commentary on Romans, *Der Römerbrief* (1918)

“wholly otherness”

theological anthropology

Martin Buber’s *I and Thou* (1923)

eristics

Friedrich Gogarten (1887–1967)

secular theology

German Idealism

theology of crisis

Review Questions

1. Dialectical theology is also called a “theology of crisis.” What would you identify as this crisis? What was the response of Barth and Brunner, as dialectical theologians, to this crisis?
2. Explain Harnack’s critique of Barth’s interpretation of the Bible. What was Barth’s response? Do you find Harnack’s critique or Barth’s analysis more convincing? Why or why not?

3. Describe Brunner's concept of natural theology. How did he view the role of the individual in his or her relationship to God? What is the role of sin in this relationship? How did Brunner's theology constitute a "third way" between liberalism and orthodoxy?
4. What was Brunner's view of the Bible as an authority? Compare his view to Barth's and Gogarten's. Can you identify underlying assumptions or similarities? What seem to be the irreconcilable differences?
5. According to Gogarten, what is the difference between secularization and secularism? How did he believe a faithful Christian could avoid secularism?

Related Websites

1. Ronald Goetz, "The Karl Barth Centennial: An Appreciative Critique," *Christian Century*, May 7, 1986, 458
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1037>
2. "Harnack, Adolf von," *Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia on Modern Western Theology*—three articles on Harnack
<http://tinyurl.com/342pot>
3. "Excerpt from *I and Thou*"—a brief excerpt from Buber's most famous work; part of a website devoted to the Jewish theologian's life and thought
http://buber.de/en/i_thou
4. I. John Hesselink, "Emil Brunner: A Centennial Perspective," *Christian Century*, December 13, 1989, 1171
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=915>

Chapter Four

The Theologies of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Overview

Karl Barth is well-known for the Barmen Declaration, a theological and political declaration of resistance to National Socialism in Germany and independence of the church from the state. The document provides evidence of Barth's Christian social ethics, which rested on a view of God as ultimate authority over human endeavor and human obligation to obey God's Word.

Also explored in this chapter are Barth's advocacy of a "third way" for the Church in the postwar era, between Western materialistic individualism and Communist ideology; his views on the power of God's grace related to election and salvation; and the major themes in critiques of his theology.

Bonhoeffer was a hero in the resistance to the Nazi regime—a Confessing Church leader and a participant in an attempted assassination on Hitler. His theological works were equally important in shaping twentieth-century Christian political theology and social ethics. *The Cost of Discipleship* named "cheap grace" as the great enemy of Christianity—that is, believing that no sacrifice, no admission of sin, no repentance is necessary to receive God's abundant grace. He called on Christians to refocus on their obligations as disciples of Christ. The call to "life for others" was the resounding theme in his profound reflections on human freedom and responsibility.

Key names, titles, and terms

Karl Barth (1886–1968)

Barth's *Church Dogmatics*

Anselm

Confessing Church

Barmen Declaration

apokatastasis

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–45)

The Cost of Discipleship (1937)

"cheap grace"

religionless Christianity

secret discipline

Review Questions

1. Describe the influence of Anselm and Luther on Barth. How did Gogarten differ in his use of Lutheran ideas?
2. What are the key features of Barth's social ethics? How do they relate to the themes of the Barmen Declaration?
3. How would you characterize Barth's Christology in the *Church Dogmatics*? Include Barth's views on sin, God's revelation, and the existence of evil in your analysis.
4. What was Bonhoeffer's view of God's revelation in relationship to the Church? Explain his critique of Barth in the context of this issue.
5. What are the major themes in Bonhoeffer's Christology? What did he believe about the historical Jesus?

6. How would you define Bonhoeffer's concept of "religiousless Christianity"? How did this relate to the "secret discipline"?
7. What would you identify as the most important of Bonhoeffer's contributions to Christian theology?

Related Websites

1. "The Theological Declaration of Barmen"—the full text of the Barmen Declaration in English
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/barmen.htm>
2. "Karl Barth Declares War," *Time*, September 8, 1941—the magazine reports on Barth's public support of the war against Germany and the Nazis
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,849472,00.html>
3. "John Cox on Bonhoeffer"—a review of a documentary on Bonhoeffer contains an overview of themes in Bonhoeffer's life and thought
<http://www.h-net.org/mmreviews/showrev.cgi?path=711>
4. Paulose M. Paulose, "Encounter in Humanization: Insights for Christian-Marxist Dialogue and Cooperation"—an essay by a Princeton scholar and bishop comparing ideas from Marx and Bonhoeffer
<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1572&C=1505>
5. "Ethics and the Will of God: The Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer"—a collection of links to articles, exhibits, films, and so forth from the National Public Radio program *Speaking of Faith*
<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/bonhoeffer/links.shtml>

Chapter Five

Christian Existentialism

Overview

After an overview of the major concepts of existentialism as defined by Jean-Paul Sartre, Søren Kierkegaard, and others, this chapter looks at the work of theologians who applied these ideas to Christian theology.

Gabriel Marcel began with the assumption of existence as the metaphysical grounds of his theology. He went on to define authenticity as being formed by participation, or “being with,” and he provided insights through his discussion of the role of hope and fidelity.

Paul Tillich, a major American figure in mid-twentieth-century theological developments, defined religion as the human being’s “ultimate concern.” He connected this fundamental idea to the existential character of religious experience. Another of his important contributions to Christian thought was his exploration of the idea of Being, in which he argued that God must be identified as “being-itself,” but that one cannot say, “God exists.” God as being-itself always triumphs over nonbeing—that is, all that threatens God’s creation.

Rudolf Bultmann also explored the potential of existentialism to shed light on Christian theology. He saw God’s action as always existential and only visible to the eye of faith. His program to demythologize the Bible is an enduring legacy to biblical interpreters: he saw myths as objectifying human self-understanding and thus needing to be interpreted existentially, and he argued that exegesis, or interpretation of the biblical text, is never without a background of assumptions on the part of the interpreter. He therefore identified the need to determine correct, or appropriate, presuppositions to bring to the text.

The chapter ends with a brief discussion of responses to and criticisms of existential thought in Christian theology.

Key names, titles, and terms

Simone Weil (1909–43)

Martin Buber (1878–1965)

Gabriel Marcel

Paul Tillich (1886–1965)

ultimate concern

method of correlation

estrangement

being-itself

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976)

Christocentrism

demythologization

Review Questions

1. Briefly define existentialism. What are its key themes that relate to theological explorations?
2. According to Marcel, what are the roles of hope and fidelity in human life? How do they fit into an existential schema?
3. Why did Tillich believe that all humans are “polytheists” and “idolaters”? In his view, is it possible for a faithful Christian to avoid idolatry?

4. Explain how Tillich differentiated between “estrangement” and “sin.” How does estrangement relate to the potential for salvation?
5. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of Tillich’s method of correlation?
6. What did Bultmann believe about the Resurrection in terms of its historical role and its role in faith? How did his views fit into his demythologization of the Bible?

Related Websites

1. The Existential Primer—thorough overview of existentialism, with comparisons among major thinkers and works
<http://www.tameri.com/csw/exist/exist.html>
2. Thinking God: A Bilingual Simone Weil Reader—links to texts in French and English by the French existentialist Christian philosopher Simone Weil
<http://simone.weil.free.fr>
3. “Gabriel-(Honoré) Marcel,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy—biographical sketch and essay on his works and thought
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marcel/>
4. Paul Tillich’s *The Shaking of the Foundations*—the full text of the book broken into sections with a brief summary of each
<http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=378>
5. Paul Tillich, “Existentialist Aspects of Modern Art”—a chapter from the book *Christianity and the Existentialists*
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1568>

Chapter Six

Christian Realism: A Post-Liberal American Theology

Overview

The Niebuhr brothers, Reinhold and H. Richard, together are responsible for significant contributions to Christian thought through their theological responses to the problems of Liberal Protestantism and Barthianism. Their American realism challenged the uncritical biblicism of Fundamentalism and the weakness of Liberalism in the face of social realities.

H. Richard Niebuhr attempted to mediate between Troeltsch and Barth in his work on the question of how knowledge of God is communicated and validated. Kantian in his approach to epistemology, he emphasized the limitations to human knowledge and human language to understand and express the mystery that is God's revelation. To deal with the problem of historical relativity, he developed the concept of an "inner history" of the self and an "outer history" of the world and its objects.

Reinhold Niebuhr tackled the practical applications of theology through his responses to social issues of his day, including economic inequities and social injustices. His magisterial *Nature and Destiny of Man* had tremendous influence on the course of theology after his work was completed; as an apologist he demonstrated how Christianity could illuminate the contemporary human situation and the reality of modern life, combining a critique of rationalism with a dialectical approach. For Reinhold, the peak of moral life is *agape*, that perfect love exemplified by Christ on the Cross, and the challenge to the Christian is to use power in the service of good rather than evil.

Key names, titles, and terms

American Realistic theology

H. Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962)

H. R. Niebuhr's "Religious Realism in the Twentieth Century"

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971)

Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932)

inner history versus outer history

dialectical

"hard" and "soft" utopianism

agape

Review Questions

1. Compare the thought of Paul Tillich (see chapter 5) and H. Richard Niebuhr on the subject of human worship defined as "polytheism." Are their assumptions about this issue the same? Do they bring any differences in emphasis or application to their views?
2. How does H. Richard Niebuhr view the Christ event in history? What are its effects on humans' relationship to revelation, history itself, other human beings?
3. Describe how Reinhold Niebuhr attempts to balance his critique of rationalism with his acknowledgment of the danger of irrationality in Christian faith. Do you think he is successful in mediating the two?
4. According to Reinhold Niebuhr, what is the Christian view of the self? What role does sin play in human life?

5. Reinhold Niebuhr identifies two forms of utopianism, “hard” and “soft.” In our contemporary context, can you provide an example of a public movement or popular ideology that exemplifies each of these?
6. Summarize the criticisms of Reinhold Niebuhr from feminists and African American theologians. What, if anything, do you see in his thought that might be reclaimed (perhaps with some revision) by these groups as particularly relevant to their concerns?

Related Websites

1. Charles Bellinger, “Lecture on H. Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962)”—brief overview of his life and work, with commentary on his major publications
http://libnt4.lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/60003/lecture_on_hrn.htm
2. H. Richard Niebuhr, “Theological Unitarianisms,” *Theology Today* 40, no. 2 (July 1983): 150–57—a slightly revised version of an article originally published in 1946
<http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jul1983/v40-2-article3.htm>
3. The Niebuhr Society—website of an academic society dedicated to studying Reinhold Niebuhr’s work and legacy; includes information about academic events, other online resources, and a discussion group
<http://www.niebuhrsociety.org/>
4. John D. Barbour, “Niebuhr versus Niebuhr: The Tragic Nature of History,” *Christian Century*, November 21, 1984, 1096–99
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=99>

Chapter Seven

The New Theology and Transcendental Thomism

Overview

Three major streams of thought influenced the development of transcendental Thomism: Neo-Scholasticism, the Catholic theology proposed by Joseph Maréchal and Pierre Rousselot, and *nouvelle théologie* (New Theology). Particularly important themes from these movements include an emphasis on the rational nature of belief, distinct formulations of doctrine, and the pure actuality of God.

Henri de Lubac's treatise on the supernatural was a landmark in the development of *nouvelle théologie*. He critiqued Neo-Scholasticism for insisting on a rigid division between the natural and the supernatural, which he believed led to a separation of grace from life. He identified an underlying spirit in Creation as desiring and moving toward God.

Karl Rahner, the most influential Catholic theologian of the twentieth century, emphasized the human capacity for transcendental experience and yet also acknowledged that humans are determined by their historicity. He sees God's creation as entailing God's self-communication, which reaches its highest point in Jesus Christ.

Bernard Lonergan worked to overcome the Neo-Scholastic interpretation of Thomas Aquinas in order to promote a conception of divine transcendence and activity as well as human freedom. He explored the role of the "horizon" of questioning in determining human knowledge—the defined world of meaning and its need to be interpreted—and thus created a new ideal of knowledge.

Edward Schillebeeckx is known for his sacramental theology, which used the category of encounter to explore what happens in the sacraments. In his historical reconstruction of early Christian creeds, he emphasized the role of Jesus as eschatological prophet. He ultimately courted controversy in his work addressing the role of the laity in the Catholic Church.

Key names, titles, and terms

Neo-Scholasticism

nouvelle théologie

Pierre Rousselot (1878–1915)

Joseph Maréchal (1878–1944)

Henri de Lubac (1896–1991)

Karl Rahner (1904–84)

Concilium

anonymous Christian

Bernard Lonergan (1904–84)

horizon

functional specialties

Edward Schillebeeckx

sacramental theology

Maranatha or Parousia creed

Easter creed

analogy of proportion

analogy of attribution

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

discipleship of equals

Review Questions

1. Briefly describe the concept of human nature and human relationship to God as developed in de Lubac's *Le Surnaturel*. What did he cite from Thomas Aquinas for his views on these issues?
2. What elements of Heidegger's philosophy did Rahner appropriate?
3. Explain the origin and meaning of the term "anonymous Christian." What is helpful about this term? What is problematic?
4. Describe Rahner's concept of the "real symbol." How does it relate to Rahner's ideas about the Trinity?
5. Summarize the role of the functional specialties in Lonergan's theology. What are the main criticisms of this concept from other theologians such as Rahner?
6. Define Schillebeeckx's method of correlation. How does he use this method to show the relation between the early Christian creeds and the modern Church?
7. How did Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's concept of a "discipleship of equals" play a role in Schillebeeckx's view of ministry in early Christianity? What was controversial about his perspective on the role of the layperson in worship services? Does Schillebeeckx appear to you to be going outside of the Catholic tradition with his views on the laity and ministry? Why or why not?

Related Websites

1. Biography and Online Writings of Cardinal Henri de Lubac
http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_author/131/Henri_de_Lubac.html
2. Karl Rahner Society—biographical information, bibliography of primary and secondary sources, information on the society's events and research, links to databases, etc.
<http://www.krs.stjohnsem.edu/>
3. Edward Schillebeeckx—includes biography, links to works by and about Schillebeeckx, and other resources
<http://www.ru.nl/schillebeeckx/default.asp?t=en>
4. "Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984)," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/l/lonergan.htm>
5. Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto—biographical sketch, essay on Lonergan's importance, newsletter articles, links to other online resources, and so forth
<http://www.lonergan-lri.ca/index1.shtml>

Chapter Eight

Vatican II and the *Aggiornamento* of Roman Catholic Theology

Overview

Vatican II cannot be overstated as a momentous event in the history of the Catholic Church. The changes and controversies it caused are still part of life in the Church today and will be for the foreseeable future. Progressives and conservatives, laity and clergy, Westerners and Third World Catholics can all point to documents from Vatican II for support of their concerns, from fundamental beliefs to everyday religious practice.

As Neo-Scholasticism began to fade in importance in Catholic thought, a call for *ressourcement*, or a return to historical and biblical sources of faith, predominated in Catholic theological circles. Yves Congar was one voice for *ressourcement* while also promoting a renewed emphasis on laity's role in the church. Vatican II itself produced documents that emphasize the community, or *communio* (community with God through participation in the Eucharist), and the "royal priesthood" of the faithful. Among its pronouncements on the role of the Church in the world, it declared the proper mission of the Church to include the promotion of human rights as part of what must constitute the Kingdom of God.

Hans Küng, influenced by Barth's concept of transcendence, argued for a view of Catholic theology that saw the love of God embodied in justification as being on the side of faith, not works. This view brought him into ecumenical circles, since it agreed with the traditional Protestant view of justification. His work also stands out from his fellow Catholic theologians for favoring a biblicist methodology over a reliance on the dogmatic tradition.

Hans Urs von Balthasar represents the critical response to Vatican II; he viewed Liberal Catholicism as lacking Christian authenticity and being too close to Liberal Protestantism. His major contribution to Catholic thought is his theological aesthetics.

The influence of Vatican II may well begin to wane now that one of its major critics has ascended to the papacy. Pope Benedict XVI, formerly Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, is known for his criticisms of Liberation Theology and his strong anti-Marxist stance. More recently he has emphasized the dangers of relativism.

Key names, titles, and terms

Yves Marie-Joseph Congar (1904–94)

ressourcement

communio

Pope John XXIII (1881–1963)

Mater et Magistra (1961)

Pacem in Terris (1963)

Vatican II (1962–65)

Gaudium et Spes

Hans Küng (1928–)

infallibility versus indefectibility

John Courtney Murray (1904–67)

Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88)

Theo-dramatics

analogy of charity versus analogy of being

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (1927–); as of April 19, 2005: Pope Benedict XVI

Review Questions

1. Describe the major themes of *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*. How do these relate to the goals of Vatican II?
2. Describe how Vatican II defined the relationship of the Church with other world religions, including its view on the role of mission and its claim to religious truth.
3. In reviewing the major statements from Vatican II as described in the text or from your own research, what strikes you as a particularly significant development or concept in the context of the Church's history and identity? What, if anything, seems likely to be revised by a future council?
4. Explain the distinction Hans Küng has drawn between infallibility and indefectibility. How does this relate to his view of doctrine and truth?
5. Describe John Courtney Murray's theological justification for religious freedom. How does it relate natural law?

Related Websites

1. Documents of the Second Vatican Council—organized by category, in multiple languages
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm
2. Diana L. Hayes, "Doorway to Conversion and Theology," *National Catholic Reporter*, October 4, 2002—an essay by an African American Catholic theologian about the impact of Vatican II on her life and career
http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2002d/100402/100402h.htm
3. "Nun Who Played Role at Second Vatican Council Dies," Catholic News Service, August 29, 2006—includes comments during the council from Sister Mary Luke Tobin, the only American woman invited to Vatican II
http://www.catholic.org/national/national_story.php?id=21051
4. Fr. John Courtney Murray—features Murray's writings as well as others' commentary on his work
<http://johncourtneymurray.blogspot.com/>
5. Laura Sheahan, "Towards a 'Continual Reform of the Church': An Interview with Hans Küng"
http://www.beliefnet.com/story/142/story_14204_1.html

Chapter Nine

Political Theology and Latin American Liberation Theologies

Overview

The political theology that developed after World War II was marked by the effort to retrieve biblical eschatology and also encourage the churches to engage in social and political criticism. Ernst Käsemann was a major figure in this movement; he identified the New Testament role of Christ as Cosmocrator—having dominion over the world beyond what existentialist thought typically recognized.

Johann Metz's thought developed over time from a positive view of secularization to the belief that it was the privatization of religion, which ultimately becomes a commodity. Metz argued for political theology as fundamental theology with a focus on the human subject in the context of social and political praxis.

Jürgen Moltmann in some ways established his theological credentials with his *Theology of Hope*, published in 1964. Its focus on biblical eschatology leads to a view of revelation as promise and history as mission. His later work on Christology advocated a view of the Cross as emblematic of God's suffering in solidarity with the world.

Gustavo Gutiérrez is one of the most well-known Latin American Liberation theologians. His seminal work, *A Theology of Liberation*, puts forth the concept of God's "preferential option for the poor," seen by some as the heart of Liberation theology. He also promotes a role for the Church that focuses on striving to be the presence of love and justice embodied in God's Kingdom.

Juan Luis Segundo, responding to the crisis he saw in Western culture, argued for a social understanding of God implied in the Trinity as a model for society. His theological method of the hermeneutical circle emphasized a reading of the biblical text in the context of the experience of the poor and oppressed.

Leonardo Boff critiqued the Catholic Church for its hierarchical structure that has eclipsed its tradition of respecting the sense of the faithful to determine theological truth. He appealed to Vatican II's concept of the Church as the people of God and to the Spirit as a counterbalance to traditional power structures in the institutional Church.

See the additional bibliography below for works by feminist political and liberation theologians.

Key names, titles, and terms

Johann B. Metz (1928–)

Jürgen Moltmann (1926–)

eschatology

Ernst Bloch (1885–1977)

"God is dead"

category of interruption

Narrative theology

Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1974)

Dorothee Sölle (1929–2003)

Liberation theology

Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Gustavo Gutiérrez (1928–)

Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* (1971)

Juan Luis Segundo (1925–97)

hermeneutical circle

Leonardo Boff (1938–)

base communities

Jon Sobrino's *Christology at the Crossroads*

kenosis Christology

Additional Bibliography

Gebara, Ivone. *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*. Translated by David Molineaux. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

———. *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation*. Translated by Ann Patrick Ware. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

Soelle, Dorothee. *Political Theology*. Translated by John Shelley. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

———. *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*. Translated by Barbara and Martin Rumscheidt. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Tamez, Elsa. *The Amnesty of Grace: Justification by Faith from a Latin American Perspective*. Translated by Sharon H. Ringe. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

———, ed. *Through Her Eyes: Women's Theology from Latin America*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989.

Review Questions

1. How do Metz and Moltmann respond to the slogan “God is dead” and the problem of the reification of religion?
2. Describe Metz's concept of the human as “subject” and its role in political theology. How does he apply this idea to his ideas for transforming Christianity (doing away with the “bourgeois church”)?
3. What is Moltmann's view on the economic and immanent Trinities? How does he relate this view to his ideas about God and suffering?
4. Explain how Gutiérrez views the role of the Church in the world. Do you see any connections between his ideas about the Church and those of other theologians you've read about in this book or elsewhere? Elaborate.
5. What is the “hermeneutical circle” according to Segundo? How does it inform the method of liberation theology?
6. Describe Boff's view of the Church and its structure. Why is it controversial? Do you see his ideas as having any continuity with other Catholic thinkers you have studied?

Related Websites

1. Carlos A. Valle, “Communities of Faith and Radical Discipleship: An Interview with Jürgen Moltmann,” *Christian Century*, March 16, 1983, 246

<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1689>

2. In Kee Kim, “A Dilemma Facing The Immigrant Church: A Case of Korean-Canadian Experience”—in discussing the challenges faced by Korean-Canadian Christians, the author turns to the political theology of Metz and Moltmann

http://www.icasinc.org/lectures/kim_ik1.html

3. Richard Gillingham, "Praxis and the Content of Theology in Gustavo Gutiérrez's Theological Methodology: A Comparative Critique," *Quodlibet: Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (April 2005)
<http://www.quodlibet.net/gillingham-gutierrez.shtml>
4. 20th Century Theology: Gustavo Gutiérrez—bibliographies of liberation theologians, Black theologians, and feminist theologians compiled by William Harmless, Creighton University
http://moses.creighton.edu/harmless/bibliographies_for_theology/Vatican_II_9.htm
5. Robert McAfee Brown, "Leonardo Boff: Theologian for All Christians," *Christian Century*, July 2–9, 1986, 615
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1045>
6. María Teresa Davila, "Book Review: *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* by Ivone Gebara," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, April 26, 2006
<http://www.latinotheology.org/node/14>
7. Elsa Tamez, "Liberation Theologies in Latin America Today"—text of her presentation at the Call to Action conference in Chicago, November 2–4, 2001
<http://www.cta-usa.org/conf2001talks.html#tamez>

Chapter Ten

Process Theology

Overview

Process theology has its source in German Romantic philosophy and the response to the Darwinian revolution; it is based on the view that process and change are constitutive of reality.

Teilhard de Chardin's study of geology and paleontology complemented his theological work in developing an evolutionary theology that attempted to unify science and religion. In his vision humanity is the peak of the evolutionary process, and it is humanity that promotes a new direction for creation, toward the Omega, the arrival of the reign of *agape*.

Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead are also noted theologians in this school of thought. While Bergson saw God as evolution itself, Whitehead elaborated a view of the dipolar nature of God, which involves both primordial and consequent aspects. Meanwhile, Charles Hartshorne promoted a panentheistic view of God's being in the world, seeing God and the world as interdependent.

Schubert Ogden has combined elements of Heidegger's existentialism with Hartshorne's dipolar theism. He argues for an analogical relationship between God and the human person that allows us to speak directly of God's actions in history. He also advocates, instead of a search for the historical Jesus, a focus on the earliest Christian witness of Jesus' significance to understand Christ as representative of God.

John B. Cobb Jr. is a process theologian who is also known for his ecotheology. His contribution to the concept of God in process theology is to see God as a special kind of "energy-event," from the perspective of subjective human experience. He states that "God is everywhere, but he is not everything." And he sees Christ's presence in the world wherever creative transformation occurs.

Key names, titles, and terms

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955)

noosphere

Henri Bergson

Alfred North Whitehead

Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (1929)

God as dipolar

God's primordial nature

Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000)

panentheism

Schubert Ogden (1928–)

John B. Cobb Jr. (1925–)

energy-event

objective immortality

Logos

ecological theology

Review Questions

1. Describe Teilhard's concepts of the "noosphere" and the Omega. What roles do they play in his concept of the evolution of creation?

2. Explain the concept of a “dipolar” entity, and, based on the work of one of the theologians discussed in the chapter, give an example of how God can be seen as dipolar.
3. Describe Hartshorne’s panentheism and how he relates it to the Christian concept of God’s love. How does he use this idea to critique traditional theism?
4. Ogden states, “God is not located in a particular space and time,” and “God is not the timeless Absolute.” How does his dipolar theism resolve this tension—or do you believe that it fails to resolve it? Explain.
5. Compare Cobb’s panentheistic view to Hartshorne’s. Can you identify any significant differences?
6. What would you identify as the central themes in Cobb’s ecological theology? Do you see any connection to other philosophical themes or theological ideas (outside of Process theology) discussed in this book or in your other reading?

Related Websites

1. Process Theology, Process Theism—a brief overview of process theology and discussion of major figures like Hartshorne
<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txn/process.htm>
2. Jee Ho Kim et al., “John B. Cobb Jr. (1925–),” Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Modern Western Theology—biographical sketch, essays on Cobb’s thought with reference lists, glossary of terms
<http://tinyurl.com/22fb3m>
3. *Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne*, edited by John B. Cobb, Jr. and Franklin I. Gamwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)—the text of the entire book, broken into sections with brief summaries
<http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=2072>
4. Schubert M. Ogden, “Faith and Freedom,” *Christian Century*, December 17, 1980, 1241–44
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1748>
5. The Center for Process Studies: Media Files—digital audio files of lectures by John Cobb, Schubert Ogden, Charles Hartshorne, Mary Elizabeth Moore, and others
<http://www.ctr4process.org/media/>
6. Process & Faith: Resources—links to curricula, articles and interviews (downloadable PDFs), worship materials, and other resources related to process theology
<http://www.processandfaith.org/resources/>

Chapter Eleven

History and Hermeneutics

Overview

The diverse theologians in this chapter are concerned with history, tradition, and interpretation. They variously include Neo-Orthodoxy, existentialism, and narrative theology in their work.

Wolfhart Pannenberg affirmed a strong role for historical evidence in faith. He also believed that the end of history is already anticipated and realized in the Resurrection, while he also emphasized the open and incomplete nature of history. He sought to reconcile the absolute and history, faith and reason.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, influenced strongly by Heidegger and responding negatively to historicism, developed a hermeneutics of human experience. Acknowledging that human beings always stand within a tradition, his hermeneutic theory attempted to take into account the changing nature of the human context. He was in critical discussion with both Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida.

Paul Ricoeur saw the need for a dual form of hermeneutics: that of suspicion and of retrieval. After his work on Freudian psychoanalysis, he focused on the role of metaphor as the key to a theory of discourse and meaning. He explored the diverse forms of discourse in Scripture to highlight the importance of religious language in determining our understanding of revelation.

David Tracy, as a Catholic, has sought to move beyond transcendental Thomism. His theological method incorporates a version of correlation that necessarily involves critical questioning. He elaborates a theory of interpretation that includes historical-critical, literary-critical, and social-scientific modes.

Hans Frei focused on the importance of narrative for biblical interpretation and saw theology as “thick description.” He was critical of both historical criticism of the Bible and Fundamentalist biblical literalism. For him theology needs to serve as a critical appraisal of the Christian community’s own language and actions.

See the additional bibliography for works by Rosemary Radford Ruether, a feminist historical theologian.

Key names, titles, and terms

Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–)

kerygma

transcendental Thomism

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002)

Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*

Wirkungsgeschichte (history of effects, effective history)

Jürgen Habermas

Jacques Derrida

reception hermeneutics (Konstanz School)

Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005)

Ricoeur’s *Philosophy of the Will*

hermeneutics of suspicion

hermeneutics of retrieval

distanciation

David Tracy (1939–)
 Tracy's *The Analogical Imagination*
 Rosemary Radford Ruether (1936–)
 Fundamental theology
 Systematic theology
 Practical theology
 praxis
 Hans Wilhelm Frei (1922–88)
 Post-Liberalism
 thick description

Additional Bibliography

- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *The Church Against Itself: An Inquiry into the Conditions of Historical Existence for the Eschatological Community*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1967.
- . *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. New York: Seabury, 1974.
- . *Women and Redemption: A Theological History*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.

Review Questions

1. Describe some of the key themes in Pannenberg's thought that reflect his view of history in relationship to Christianity.
2. Explain Pannenberg's view of the Absolute. How does his work to relate the Absolute to "finite consciousness" bring him close to Rahner's theology?
3. Describe Gadamer's concept of the "classic." What is Habermas's criticism of this definition? Do you see any way to reclaim this concept in order to respond to Habermas?
4. What is reception hermeneutics? How does it relate to Gadamer's thought?
5. According to Ricoeur, how do the form and meaning of discourse relate?
6. Describe Tracy's revision of the method of correlation. How does it differ from that of Tillich, Ruether, and Ogden?

Related Websites

1. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "God the Spirit—and Natural Science"—a digital video of Pannenberg giving a lecture on the topic of religion and science
<http://www.counterbalance.net/pberg/index-frame.html>
2. Stanley J. Grenz, "Pannenberg on Marxism: Insights and Generalizations," *Christian Century*, September 30, 1987 824–26
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=89>
3. Scott McLemee, "Questioning the Past: A New Biography Fuels Debate over the Relationship between Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophy and the Nazi Era," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 18, 2003
<http://chronicle.com/free/v49/i45/45a01401.htm>
4. Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005)—a collection of links to published works, commentaries, online articles, and other resources
<http://www.theology.ie/thinkers/ricoeur.htm>

5. Lois Malcolm, “An Interview with David Tracy,” *Christian Century*, February 13–20, 2002, 24–30
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2269>

Chapter Twelve

Evangelical Theology

Overview

The roots of Fundamentalism can be traced to at least one source: the 1910 adoption by the Presbyterian General Assembly of a five-point statement of beliefs, referred to as the “five fundamentals.” The early evangelicals of the period tended to separate from their surrounding culture, resisted ecumenism, and considered themselves a “righteous remnant” for Christ. Later, a new Evangelical movement began to develop, led by those critical of the Fundamentalists for their “lovelessness,” among other traits.

G. C. Berkouwer stressed the role of theology in the service of Christian proclamation (*kerygma*). He advocated for the view that revelation and faith are in co-relationship. Faith comes from God and only has reality in co-relation.

Carl F. H. Henry was critical of most modern theologies and emphasized biblical inerrancy and the doctrine of the Bible over all other Christian doctrines. While advocating for the full or plenary inspiration of the Bible, he admitted that inerrancy does not claim accuracy in all details (e.g., scientific measurements). But his resistance to the concept of “limited inerrancy” and his overemphasis on rationalistic questions counter the general trends in today’s Evangelical theological circles, one of which seeks to bring Evangelicals back to the confessional standards of the Reformation.

Key names, titles, and terms

J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937)

Harry Emerson Fosdick

Carl F. H. Henry (1913–2003)

Henry’s *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947)

G. C. Berkouwer (1903–96)

Herman Bavinck (1854–1921)

co-relation

kerygma

apokatastasis

inerrancy versus complete infallibility

Bernard Ramm (1916–92)

Stanley J. Grenz

Alister McGrath

Ramm’s *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* (1983)

Review Questions

1. Elaborate on Berkouwer’s concept of co-relation. How does it relate to his idea of the nature and authority of Scripture?
2. How did Berkouwer’s take on the doctrine of election break with the Calvinist Canons of Dort? How does he agree and disagree with Barth’s view?
3. What is *apokatastasis*? How does it play a role in debates among Evangelicals, particularly in the response to Berkouwer’s theology?

4. What would you identify as modern or a change from older Fundamentalist views in Henry's approach to biblical interpretation, including his "doctrine of the autographs"? What do his critics view as "outdated" in his methods?
5. What does Ramm identify in Barth's thought that he finds helpful for Evangelical theology?
6. Choose either Pinnock, Grenz, or McGrath, describe the theologian's contribution to the development of contemporary Evangelical theology.

Related Websites

1. Donald W. Dayton, "The Battle for the Bible: Renewing the Inerrancy Debate," *Christian Century*, November 10, 1976, 976–80
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1823>
2. "Henry, Carl," Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Modern Western Theology—two essays on Carl F. H. Henry
<http://tinyurl.com/2cttc3>
3. "Homiletics Interview: Clark Pinnock," Homiletics Online—an interview with Pinnock focusing on his concept of "open theism" and the controversy it has raised among evangelicals
<http://www.homileticonline.com/subscriber/interviews/Pinnock.asp>
4. Walter Hearn, "An Interview with Bernard and Alta Ramm," *Journal of American Scientific Affiliation* 31 (September 1979): 179–86—an interview with Ramm by a journal with a Christian perspective on science
<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1979/JASA12-79Hearn.html>
5. Christians for Biblical Equality: Free Articles—downloadable articles published by CBE, an evangelical organization promoting biblical interpretation that supports equality for men and women
http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/free_articles/free_articles.shtml

Chapter Thirteen

Feminist Theology

Overview

Feminist theology is directly influenced, of course, by secular feminism. The feminist concepts of gender, sex, equality, agency, and oppression have all emerged in the secular academic environment and been appropriated by feminist theologians, who have found insightful, creative use of these ideas in the a Christian context.

Mary Daly was at one time a feminist Catholic theologian; today she is a “post-Christian” radical feminist. Her analysis of patriarchal religion in *Beyond God the Father* (1973) was trenchant and highly influential. Her early works challenged the Church to bring women into partnership with men, to create opportunities for all to experience self-transcendence; her later works embrace a Goddess, advocate women’s separatism, and ultimately rejects all patriarchal forms of religion and society.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza is known for her work as a New Testament scholar. She sees the “Kyriarchy” as the structure that underlies the complex layers of oppression in society. Her work has brought forward the concept of a “discipleship of equals” promoted by Jesus in the Gospels, and she has also reclaimed Sophia, or Wisdom, as an aspect of God and Jesus as Sophia’s prophet.

Sallie McFague’s work has critiqued triumphalist approaches to the Christian God and advocated for new metaphors to describe the Divine. Her contributions include an elaboration of metaphor as central to theology and a new concept of God’s maternal role in human existence.

Luce Irigaray is a French philosopher whose radical concept of the Trinity links an analysis of female sexuality to a view of God that emphasizes relationality and fluidity. In contrast to Daly, she rejects separatism, and yet she embraces an emphasis on gender differences, albeit complex and subtle ones.

See the additional bibliography below for works by other feminist theologians.

Key names, titles, and terms

Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1953)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *The Women’s Bible* (1895)

Valerie Saiving Goldstein’s “The Human Situation: A Feminine View”

Mary Daly (1928–)

Daly’s *Beyond God the Father* (1973)

Daly’s *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978)

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1938–)

Kyriarchy

wo/men

Schüssler Fiorenza’s *In Memory of Her* (1983)

diakonia

hermeneutics of suspicion/liberation/religious agency

Q source

Sophia (wisdom)

Sallie McFague (1933–)

McFague’s *Metaphorical Theology* (1982)

McFague’s *Models of God* (1987)

Luce Irigaray (1930–)
 Jacques Lacan (1901–81)
jouissance

Additional Bibliography

- Brock, Rita Nakashima. *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*. New York: Crossroad, 1988.
- Heyward, Carter. *Saving Jesus from Those Who Are Right: Rethinking What It Means to Be Christian*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.
- Isasi-Díaz, Ada María. *En la lucha = In the Struggle: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*. 10th Anniversary Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: Crossroad, 2002.
- Pui-Lan, Kwok. *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*. Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2000.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon, 1983.
- Welch, Sharon. *A Feminist Ethic of Risk*. Revised edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- Yee, Gale. *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Women as Evil in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Review Questions

1. Explain the significance of Daly's *Beyond God the Father* for both Catholic thought and early feminist theology.
2. What insights, if any, from Daly's later "post-Christian" works could Christian feminists use in their theologies? If you do not believe there are any applicable insights, explain why.
3. Describe Schüssler Fiorenza's concept of the "discipleship of equals." What does she find in the Gospels to support her use of this term?
4. Explain McFague's use of metaphor in theology. What is its importance for her theological project?
5. Describe Irigaray's concept of *jouissance*. Do you see any parallels in McFague's work or the thought of other feminist theologians you have studied? Elaborate.
6. The conclusion of the chapter posits that feminism (including feminist theology) must aim to acknowledge women's equality with men while exploring their difference. Do you see a strong divide between "equality" and "difference"? How might a feminist theology begin to address human diversity (including gender and other human differences) within a context of equal authority and agency? What resources do the theologians in the chapter offer for this project?

Related Websites

1. "Feminist Philosophy of Religion," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-religion/>
2. Anne Carr, "Is a Christian Feminist Theology Possible?" *Theological Studies* 43, no. 2 (1982): 279–97
<http://www.womenpriests.org/classic/carr2.asp>
3. Michael Barnes Norton, "An Interview with Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: Critical Reflections on Philosophy and Theology," *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture* (September 2003)
http://www.philosophyandscripture.org/Issue1-2/Schussler_Fiorenza/schussler_fiorenza.html

4. Sallie McFague, “An ‘Intermediary Theology’: In Service of the Hearing of God’s Word,” *Christian Century*, June 25, 1975, 625–29

<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1887>

5. Luce Irigaray—biographical sketch and a list of primary and secondary sources on Irigaray, compiled by Bridget Holland

<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/Irigaray.html>

6. Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Bridging the Gap,” *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum*—the feminist Catholic scholar and historian addresses the challenges of being a progressive religious thinker and activist

<http://www.bostonreview.net/BR20.1/ruether.html>

Chapter Fourteen

Black Theology in America

Overview

A major source of inspiration to African American theology is the thought of Martin Luther King Jr. His vision of the “brotherhood of man” and “the beloved community” was part of an overall theology of hope for liberation of Black people in the United States and, ultimately, people of color internationally. While known for his advocacy of a version of Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance, he spoke out against the war in Vietnam and economic injustice domestically. He celebrated the tradition of the African American church while pushing his faith community to work for justice.

James H. Cone is one of the leading figures in Black Theology, known for his seminal work in *Black Theology and Black Power* and *A Black Theology of Liberation*. He expressed in these works a skepticism of any theology that claimed to speak for all times or all places, and he argued that biblical revelation must correlate with black historical experience. His Christology focuses on Jesus as the Black Messiah, the one who liberates Black people from oppression.

Another important development in Black Theology is the contribution of Womanist theologians. From Renita Weems and other biblical scholars has come insightful critique of the Pauline letters and the Hebrew Bible story of Sarah and Hagar. Kelly Brown Douglas has expanded the portrait of Christ to include Black women in history and a focus on his actions in ministry. Delores Williams has used explorations of Black women’s experience to dialogue with Black male theologians and white feminist theologians. She has also argued against a view of the Cross that glorifies suffering. Womanists have also contributed to Christian ethics through their analysis that includes poor Black women’s experience of oppression.

Key names, titles, and terms

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–68)

Mahatma Gandhi

nonviolent resistance

satyagraha

Henry David Thoreau

Rosa Parks

King’s *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967)

Sojourner Truth

Frederick Douglass

Gayraud S. Wilmore’s *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*

Middle Passage

Dwight N. Hopkins

“Invisible Institution”

Black Power

National Committee of Negro Churchmen

Black Manifesto

Afrocentrism

reparations

James H. Cone (1938–)

Cone’s *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969)

Cone's *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970)

Malcolm X

Womanist theology

Alice Walker

Renita J. Weems

Jacquelyn Grant's *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (1989)

Kelly Brown Douglas's *The Black Christ* (1994)

Delores S. Williams's *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (1993)

Katie G. Cannon's *Black Womanist Ethics* (1988)

Emilie M. Townes's *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope* (1993)

Cain Hope Felder, editor, *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (1991)

Review Questions

1. How were King's critique of Liberal theology and insights into the economic injustices of capitalism combined in his thought and activism? Give examples.
2. Explain the role of African indigenous religions and the experience of slavery to the development of the Black church tradition. Refer to any additional reading or research you have done in this area, if applicable.
3. What is the "Invisible Institution"? How did its invisibility affect its characteristics?
4. What were the main points of the Black Manifesto? How did it view the relationship between Black and white churches?
5. Describe Cone's concepts of revelation and eschatology. How do these work together in his theology?
6. From your reading in chapter 9 about Liberation theology, what common themes do you see in, for example, Gutiérrez's theology and Cone's theology? How would you characterize their differences?
7. What is Kelly Brown Douglas's response to earlier concepts of the Black Christ? Describe what you would say is her Christology. How does her view compare with Jacquelyn Grant's?

Related Websites

1. Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project—a comprehensive collection of links and resources related to King's writings, as reflected in the collection held by Stanford University
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/mlkpapers/>
2. Bill Moyers Journal: James H. Cone and Reinhold Niebuhr, November 23, 2007—includes a link to a video of Cone lecturing on his most recent research topic, theological connections between the Cross and the lynching tree
<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/11232007/profile.html>
3. William Hordern, "Dialogue on Black Theology: An Interview with James Cone," *Christian Century*, September 15, 1971
<http://www.nathanielturner.com/dialogueonblacktheology.htm>
4. James M. Cone, "The Gospel and the Liberation of the Poor," *Christian Century*, February 1, 1981, 162–66
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1696>

5. “Literature Review by Carley Daniel-Hughes,” Feminist Sexual Ethics Project—a review of Kelly Brown Douglas’s *Sexuality and the Black Church*

<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/christianity/chris-lit/chris-lit-douglas.html>

6. Cheryl J. Sanders, “Wading in the Water,” Culture Watch, *Sojourners* (August 1994)

<http://tinyurl.com/3c6lsh>

Chapter Fifteen

Theology of Religions: Christian Responses to Other Faiths

Overview

Christian theologians responding to other religions have often in the past taken an exclusivist position. That is, they advocate Christianity as the sole way to salvation and as therefore superior to all other faiths. As theologians have begun to acknowledge the pluralistic nature of society, they have had to contend with new ideas about Christianity in relation to other belief systems.

Henrik Kraemer can be seen to argue for a kind of exclusivism, tempered with an acknowledgment that there is no way to prove the superiority of any one religion because there is no universal agreement on the criteria. Nevertheless, he claimed that all non-Christian faiths lacked a fundamental sense of God's righteousness and that most did not understand divine forgiveness of sins.

Karl Rahner developed an inclusive vision that depended on the mystery of God's grace; he described how any one individual should be considered a potential "anonymous Christian" because of this factor. He argued for the necessity of missionaries to bring more people to Christianity, since he believed that many could be brought to full consciousness of God's gift to humanity.

Other theologians such as Stanley Samartha advocated for Christian engagement with other religions through dialogue and an attempt at mutual witness. Wilfred Cantwell Smith emphasized the role of personal faith in interreligious dialogue and saw the potential for individuals to deepen their faith through developing their understanding of other religious traditions. John Hick theorizes that all great religions depend on the Real as their center and so are capable of finding common ground with each other.

Key names, titles, and terms

Langdon Gilkey

exclusivism

Henrik Kraemer (1888–1965)

totalistic view of religion

World Council of Churches

Neo-Thomism

Karl Rahner (1904–84)

anonymous Christian

Stanley Samartha

Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916–2000)

John Hick (1922–)

Masao Abe

sunyata

Review Questions

1. What did Kraemer mean by concluding that non-Christian religions were systems of self-salvation? How did this influence his perspective on religious pluralism?
2. According to Rahner, what is a "lawful religion"? How did this concept fit in his inclusive vision of religion in the modern world?

3. Why does Smith argue for the concepts of personal faith and cumulative traditions rather than “religion”? Do you find his ideas more or less helpful in approaching the challenge of religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue?
4. What is the “Real,” according to Hick? Do you see this as a useful concept in comparing religious traditions? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
5. Out of the various concepts and approaches discussed in the chapter, which do you believe is or are most helpful in promoting interfaith dialogue? From our own experience, are there any other concepts you would point to as effective in such a process?

Related Websites

1. “Research Report: Women’s Interfaith Initiatives in the United States Post 9/11 (2006),” The Pluralism Project at Harvard University
<http://www.pluralism.org/research/profiles/display.php?profile=74448>
2. Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000)—biographical sketch, bibliography, links to other online resources about his work
<http://www.as.ua.edu/rel/aboutrelbiowcsmith.html>
3. John Hick: The Official Website
<http://www.johnhick.org.uk/>
4. “Profile: Diana Eck,” *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, PBS—an interview (transcript and digital video provided) with the Harvard professor of comparative religions Diana Eck
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week443/profile.html>

Chapter Sixteen

Christian Thought at the End of the Twentieth Century

Overview

This chapter briefly discusses “postmodernism” and its relationship to contemporary Christian theology. It then moves on to highlight several important thinkers influenced by postmodern theories.

Gordon Kaufman sees the advent of the nuclear age as demanding a radical reconception of theology. He has created a four-category scheme as the basis of his theology—God, world, humanity, and Christ. His refers to God as the “ultimate creativity,” what encompasses a complexity of factors, powers, and processes.

Thomas Altizer stands out for his self-identity as an atheist working out a Christian theology that is authentic to the Christian gospel. He emphasizes God’s *kenosis* in the process of Creation and has explored the apocalyptic context of Jesus.

Mark C. Taylor has outlined an “a/theology,” characterized by the “death of God” and a radical Christology. Deconstructionism is a major feature of his thought.

Jean-Luc Marion is a conservative theologian who identifies God’s revelation as *agape*. He elaborates an anti-idolatry theology that warns against attempting to define God using human names.

Alvin Plantinga argues against foundationalism as he proposes that theistic beliefs are basic, that is not open to justification but held unconsciously. Nicholas Wolterstorff tackles the problem of evidentialism and criticizes apologetics that relies on a direct relation between acceptance of the rationality of Christianity and conversion to belief.

Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* and other works develop his thinking on language and its uses, along with its relationship to metaphysics. He explored a pluralist theory of meaning in which he described how “language games” allow participants to understand the meaning of each other’s discourse.

D. Z. Phillips, a Wittgensteinian, emphasized the distinctiveness of religious language. He insisted on a strong division between superstition and genuine religious belief.

George Lindbeck offers a conception of religion and doctrine based on anthropological, sociological, and philosophical theories. Influenced by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz as well as by Wittgenstein, he argues for a distinction between a community’s doctrines and the role of theology, which he sees as providing optional theories rather than acting as communal norms.

Stanley Hauerwas, a Post-Liberal ethicist, has explored the role of “story” in the Christian tradition, particularly in the context of Jesus as the story that forms the church.

See the additional bibliography for works by other postmodern theologians.

Key names, titles, and terms

postmodernism

Gordon D. Kaufman (1925–)

Thomas Altizer (1927–)

kenosis

Mark C. Taylor (1945–)

Taylor’s *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*

Jean-Luc Marion (1946–)

Marion’s *God Without Being* (1991)

Alvin Plantinga (1932–)
 foundationalism
 evidentialism
 Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951)
 Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)
 Normal Malcolm (1911–90)
 D. Z. Phillips (1934–2006)
 Kathryn E. Tanner (1957–)
 George A. Lindbeck (1923–)
 cognitive-propositional
 experiential-expressive
 Stanley Hauerwas (1940–)

Additional Bibliography

Fulkerson, Mary McClintock. *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
 Keller, Catherine. *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.
 Kristeva, Julia. *In the Beginning Was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
 Tanner, Kathryn. *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.
 ———. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.

Review Questions

1. Describe Kaufman's concept of God in the context of his three-step process of theological construction. What does he mean by God as "relativizer" and "humanizer"?
2. Summarize the criticisms of Kaufman provided by the author. Do you find these convincing? Why or why not?
3. What dialectical qualities can you detect in Altizer's theology? How else would you characterize his thought? (Consider the other theological themes explored in this book and elsewhere in your reading, such as those found in process theology, hermeneutics, and so forth.)
4. How does Taylor define the "middle ground" between Derrida's "absence" and Altizer's "total presence"? How does this middle ground fit within the context of his theology?
5. Define Reformed epistemology, and summarize Plantinga's and Wolterstorff's contributions to it.
6. Explain Phillip's distinction between authentic prayer and superstitious prayer. What do you think of the criticism of this perspective described in the chapter?
7. Which ideas raised by the postmodern thinkers portrayed in the chapter do you find most appealing? most accessible? least successful or defensible?

Related Websites

1. William C. Placher, "Thinking Our Way to the Ultimate," *Christian Century*, May 19–26, 1993, 557–61—a review of Gordon Kaufman's *In Face of Mystery*
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=68>
2. Trevor Greenfield, "Thomas Altizer: Christianity in Historical Perspective," *Quodlibet: Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy*, 3, no. 4 (Fall 2001)

<http://www.quodlibet.net/greenfield-altizer.shtml>

3. “Stanley Hauerwas, ‘The Liberalism of Reinhold Niebuhr’”—comments by Gabriel Fackre on Hauerwas’s view of Niebuhr as expressed in Hauerwas’s *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church’s Witness and Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001)

<http://home.comcast.net/~gfackre/Stanley-Hauerwas.html>

4. “One Lectureship, Two Theologians: Welker and Tanner Bring Their Cutting-Edge Scholarship to HDS in 2002”—an article discussing the work and thought of Kathryn Tanner and Michael Welker (including interview material with both theologians), who participated in a lecture series at Harvard Divinity School in 2002

http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news/article_archive/delentz_lectures.html