

Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Western Theology

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Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

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1. Background

Tillich's Life and the Development of His Thought

Prewar Years 1886-1918

This period is regarded as Tillich's preliminary age of his theological development. A portion of his life belonged to the 19th century, characterized by Romanticism. Brought up in the Romantic Movement, Tillich sensed and realized his particular relation to nature and history. Tillich was born on August 20, 1886 in Starzeddel, in the province of Brandenburg, Germany. In 1900, Tillich's father, a Lutheran pastor, was called to a new position in Berlin. Tillich attended Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium, an advanced high school for preliminary university education. During these years, he studied the philosophy of Fichte and Kant. In 1904, he graduated from school. Soon afterwards he matriculated in several universities located in Berlin, Tubingen, and Halle. During his years in these universities, he became familiar with the works of Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Shelling. In 1911, he received a doctoral degree in philosophy from the University of Breslau, and earned the licentiate in theology from the University of Halle in 1912. Latter in the year of 1912, he was ordained as a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the province of Brandenburg. Two years later, he was called to serve as a military chaplain in World War I. He served in the army for four years, from 1914 to 1918, and witnessed the terror and cruelty of the war. Suddenly, Tillich realized that much of his classical philosophy was inadequate. In January 1914, Tillich's late blooming emotional life issued into a serious love for Margarethe Wever whom he married. Nevertheless, 1914 was not a happy year for Tillich, he felt torn between career and family. His wife had an affair with his friend and left him.

Postwar Years 1918-1933

World War I marked the end of Tillich's period of preparation. This postwar period had significant influence on Tillich's philosophy. Tillich began his academic career at the University of Berlin after World War I, from 1919 to 1924. He lectured on the philosophy of religion by presenting the theology of culture which related religion to politics, art, philosophy, depth psychology, and sociology respectively. Postwar Berlin was a period of experience, struggle, and creativity, in which Tillich found another love. He met Hannah Wermer Gottschow and married in 1924. In the same year he was called to the University of Marburg in which the neo-orthodoxy theology of Karl Barth was incredibly popular. In this university, cultural problems, social and political ideas were all excluded from the theological agenda. Nevertheless, Tillich met Martin Heidegger at the university and was deeply influenced by his thought. In Tillich's words, Heidegger's thought could be described as "existentialism in its 20th century form" (Kegley and Bretall, ed. 1964, 14). For Tillich, Heidegger's existentialism was not a new way of thinking. Rather, it is an analytical pattern which took Tillich as far back as the thoughts of

Hegel, Schelling, and Kierkegaard. Synthesizing what he had learned from Schelling, Kahler and Kierkegaard and Husserl, Tillich reflected himself in his subsequent theological works with tremendous indebtedness to the thought of Existentialism. In 1925, Tillich was called to Dresden and, shortly afterward, to Leipzig. Tillich's view towards culture was greatly shaped by the arts during his stay in Dresden. In the same year, Tillich began to formulate his systematic theological ideas (Pauck 1967, 95). In 1929, he was a professor of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt which was the most liberal and modern university in Germany at the time. His numerous public lectures brought forth contradictory views with the growing Nazi movement. Thus, in 1933, Tillich's professorship at the University of Frankfurt was dismissed shortly after Hitler assumed power in Germany. Fortunately Reinhold Niebuhr was in Germany that year, and invited Tillich to the Union Theological Seminary in New York. In November 1933, Tillich and his family immigrated to the United States of America.

American Years 1933-1965

After Tillich's arrival in New York, he taught at Union Theological Seminary as Professor of Philosophical Theology from 1933 to 1955. Union Theological Seminary was his shelter at this time because his existence in Germany was threatened by the Nazi government. Needless to say, this seminary also allowed him to become acquainted with American philosophers. Tillich joined the Theological Discussion Group, American Theological Society, and Philosophy Club while he was a professor at the Union Theological Seminary. In addition, he was closely related to the depth-psychology movement aroused at Columbia University. Tillich believed that "it is impossible today to elaborate a Christian doctrine of man, . . . without using the immense material brought forth by depth psychology" (Kegley and Bretall, eds. 1964, 19). The American period of Tillich's life was a combination of two worlds, namely, the Old and the New world. For Tillich, "a too quick adaptation is not what the New World expects from the immigrant, but rather the preservation of the old values and their translation into the terminology of the new culture" (19). Living in these two worlds triggered a fundamental question of human existence for Tillich: "What am I?" An essential question that theology and philosophy both attempt to answer. The appearance of the first volume of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, which he had begun at Marburg in 1925, reached completion in New York in 1951 while teaching philosophical theology at Union. After Tillich retired from the Union Theological Seminary, he became a University Professor of Harvard University in 1955 and the second volume of his *Systematic Theology* was published in 1957. Tillich moved again in 1962 and took a post as the Nuveen Professor of Theology at the University of Chicago. While in Chicago Tillich published his long awaited third volume of *Systematic Theology* in 1963. He remained at the University of Chicago until his death on October 22, 1965. Tillich's body was cremated and interred in a park named after him in New Harmony, Indiana.

2. Works (Selected List)

Die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart (1925, *The Religious Situation*, 1932, 1956); *The Interpretation of History* (1936); *The Protestant Era* (1948); *The Shaking of the Foundations* (1948); *Systematic Theology Volume 1* (1951); *The Courage to Be* (1952); *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analysis and Ethical Applications* (1954); *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (1955); *The New Being* (1955); *The Dynamics of Faith* (1957); *Systematic Theology Volume 2* (1957); *Theology of Culture* (1959); *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (1963); *The Eternal Now* (1963); *Morality and Beyond* (1963); *Systematic Theology Volume 3* (1963); *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue* (1965); *On the Boundary* (1966); *My Search for Absolutes* (1967); "The Philosophy of Religion," "The Conquest of the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion," "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture" in *What Is Religion?* ed. James Luther Adams (1969); *My Travel Diary 1936: Between Two Worlds* (1970); *A History of Christian Thought: From its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism* (1972); *The System of the Sciences* (1981, German original 1923)

3. Themes

[Forthcoming]

4. Outline of Major Works

Systematic Theology Volume I

Christian Theology

Tillich's theology is, without a doubt, a Christian theology. Tillich believes that the Christian theology is designed to fulfill the demands of church. To proclaim the truth of the Christian message and to construe the truth for new generations are two apologetic ways for the church to answer questions that rise from the situation in which the church dwells. "Theology is the methodical interpretation of the contents of the Christian faith" (*ST* 1951, 15). As a result, answering such conditional questions with the Christian message is the work of Christian theologians. Answer-to-situation type of the theological work characterizes Tillich's theology, in which the "creative interpretation of existence" is found. Indeed, situation triggers certain different questions about human existence and the Christian theology answers these questions based on the Christian message. Thus, Tillich's theology is an apologetic theology over which the kerygmatic theology underlies. It is clear to note that Tillich's systematic theology is characterized by a theology of synthesis which synthesizes two poles (e.g. apologetic and kerygmatic theology) standing in the polarity of every existential situation. Such an existential approach to theology has signified Tillich's thought. Examining the human situation is the first step for theologians take in their attempts to answer human existential questions. For Tillich, there are two criteria rendered for every theology, namely, "the object of theology is what concerns us ultimately" (12), and "what concerns us ultimately determines our being or non-being" (14). In other words, the object of theology is to explain our ultimate concern which determines our being or non-being.

The Christian way of explaining our ultimate concern must be derived from the Christian message, which includes the Bible, the church history, and the history of religion and culture. All these are regarded as the sources of systematic theology. Yet, the religious experience is the medium indicating those sources to talk to us. Tillich regards this experience as a medium, not the source itself, through which the sources come to us. Among these sources and open experiences, a quest for the norm of the Christian systematic theology is necessary to guide theologians. A norm to which the sources and the medium are subjected to must be derived from Jesus the Christ event. For Tillich, this norm is the "New Being in Jesus as the Christ" (50). Thus, the "New Being in Jesus as the Christ" is not only the object of theology, but also is our ultimate concern which determines our being or non-being. Accordingly, the "method of correlation" is taken by Tillich himself as a mode to link questions with answers, situations with messages, human existence and divine revelation. As Tillich states, "the method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian Faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence" (60). This method summarizes Tillich's theological system. In this system, the philosophical questions raised by analysis of human existence and the theological answers based on the sources, the medium, and the norm of the systematic theology must be divided and maintained. For Tillich, such a division underlies the structure of his theological system.

Reason, Revelation and Symbol

Reason is not the source of theology, yet it plays a significant role in the theology. Tillich distinguishes two categories of reason, namely, an ontological reason and a technical reason. The former is the "structure of the mind which enables the mind to grasp and to shape reality," and the latter "is reduced to the capacity for 'reasoning'" (71-75). For Tillich, the fundamental idea of reason is the ontological reason. The technical reason is adequate only as an adopted instrument for revealing the ontological reason. The ontological reason, in which subjective and objective are rooted, can be related to logos. The subjective reason can be defined as the rational structure of the mind, and that is able to catch and to form the reality. Relatively, the objective reason can be defined as the rational structure of reality, and that is caught and formed by the mind. Consequently, Logos is "the word which grasps and shapes reality" (74), and therefore is the ontological reason. Tillich takes the term, the depth of reason, to relate the transcendental power of which to the meaning of being-itself. However, reason subjects to our actual existence, and therefore reason experiences the limitations, conflicts, and ambiguities of our existence. Accordingly, a quest for revelation is inevitable to resolve the finitude of our reason.

Revelation unveils what concerns us ultimately. Tillich distinguishes two categories of revelation, namely, original and dependent revelation. An original revelation is a "giving" side revelation which never "gives" to us before, while the dependent revelation is a "receiving" side revelation by which the individual and the group are transformed. "Jesus is the Christ both because he could become the Christ and because he was received as the Christ" (126). Thus, the revelation of Jesus as the Christ, in which Christian message is rooted, is the final and actual revelation, and which in turn resolve the finitude of our existential reason. Revelation unveils our ultimate concern. Yet, the ground of revelation, for Tillich, is described as the "ground of being manifest in existence" (155). In terms of Christianity, "the ground of being is God" (156). Revelation mediates knowledge through human cognitive reason. The knowledge of revelation is the knowledge of God which must be described symbolically. The "Word of God" is a symbol for God revealing itself in Jesus as the Christ, because the Word of God reveals God's manifestation in Jesus as the Christ which is the meaning of the symbol. For Tillich, symbols direct above themselves to something else. Symbols, not like signs, participate in the power of that which they symbolize. "A symbol has truth: it is adequate to the revelation it expresses. A symbol is true: it is the expression of a true revelation" (240). Religious symbols can be true symbols only if they participate in the power of the divine to which they point. Religious symbols are "double-edged," they point themselves to the infinite as well as the finite; they drive the infinite toward the finite and the finite toward the infinite; they unveil the divine life for the human and the human for the divine. Religious symbols transfer ultimate truth through things, persons and events.

Being and God

The question of God is the fundamental question of theology. Without a doubt, God is the answer to the question of theology. Yet, where can we find the answer? For Tillich, he believes that the answer is implied in the analysis of being. Tillich turns the question of God to the question of being from which the answer to the question of God lies. Examining the question of being (i.e., What is being-itself?) is not to examine the particular being or a group of beings. Rather, it is to examine the question of what it means *to be*. Tillich believes that such an ontological question of being-itself springs from the "shock of nonbeing." Nonbeing is experienced as the threat to being, which generates a sense of finitude. In other words, finitude unites being with nonbeing. Thus, the fundamental questions are of being and nonbeing, namely, *to be* and *not to be*. Human's finitude is incomprehensible without the concept of nonbeing because finitude is experienced on the human level. Nevertheless, we have the capability to operate our imagination to surpass our finitude and to point to infinity. Therefore, we are able to be aware of infinity. This awareness presupposes the question of God. Yet, this awareness of infinity is rooted in our awareness of finitude. The concept of the finitude is necessary for Tillich's works because this concept drives him to the question of God. For Tillich, we are able to ask the question of God, because we are aware of infinity. "The question of God is possible because an awareness of God is present in the question of God. This awareness precedes the question" (206). "The question of God must be asked because the threat of nonbeing, which man experiences as anxiety, drives him to the question of being conquering nonbeing and of courage conquering anxiety. This question is the cosmological question of God" (208). Accordingly a quest for God is inevitable for human beings.

God is the answer to the question implied in the human awareness of the finitude. God concerns us ultimately. Whatever we grasp as our ultimate concern we call "god." "god" must be encountered by us in concreteness (214). Tillich uses the lowercase "g" to stress the necessity of concreteness over against ultimacy in the idea of god. Yet, our ultimate concern must transcend every concrete concern. Therefore, Tillich uses the uppercase "G" to stress the transcendent dimension over the concrete concern. However, in transcending the finite, our ultimate concern breaks off the concreteness of a being-to-being relationship with us. This is the indispensable inner conflict in the idea of God. For Tillich, this conflict is the guide to examine the history of religion. Tillich argues that polytheism rising from the need for concreteness or absoluteness motivates a step toward monotheism; and that one's "need for a balance between the concrete and the absolute drives him toward trinitarian structures" (221). Trinitarian monotheism is not that it allows only one god, but that the ultimacy prevails over the concrete. It is rather a qualitative than quantitative characteristic of God. It also allows human to speak of the living God in whom the concrete and the ultimate are united. "Trinitarian monotheism is concrete monotheism, the

affirmation of the living God" (228). The question is how we describe this living God?

For Tillich, God is being-itself, not *a* being among other beings. To describe the relationship between being-itself and finite beings, Tillich takes the word, "ground." For Tillich, God is the ground of being, the ground of the structure of being. God as being itself is the ground of the ontological structure of being. In other words, every ontological being has its power to be in being itself, participate in the ground of being. All accounts of God are expressed through what we comprehend. Can we know God? For Tillich, the answer is clear: we can. Adopting the theory of *analogia entis* (analogy of being), that is, "that which is infinite is being itself and because everything participates in being itself" (239), The theory of *analogia entis* explains the possibility of knowing and saying anything about God. However, for Tillich, the *analogia entis* justifies our ways of saying about God only under a fact that "God must be understood as being itself" (240). Thus, existential approach to God through the category of finitude must be described symbolically. God is the ground of being, being-itself; who concerns us ultimately. Thus, God is our ultimate concern.

Systematic Theology Volume II: Existence and the Christ

"Existence and the Christ" is Tillich's exposition of Systematic Theology II in which he presents his Christology and Soteriology in terms of the existentialist perspective. He integrates the person and work of Christ in opposition to the traditional dichotomy of the doctrine. For him, Christology is a function of soteriology. The doctrine of salvation creates the christological question and gives direction to the christological answer (ST II, 150). Tillich as a philosopher of life whose full research has been the relationship of religion to existence, relates the significance of existentialism to Christian theology (Tavard 1962, 14). For Tillich, "existentialism gives an analysis of what it means to exist" (ST II, 25). Tillich's philosophical theology is the interpretation of Christian symbols in terms of his own particular philosophy of Christian existentialism (Randall 1969, 31). He claims that existentialism arose out of a protest to Hegel's perfect essentialism. According to him, the task of systematic theology is to show the character of existentialist revolt and confront the meaning of existence, which has developed in it with religious symbols pointing to the human predicament. The common point in existentialist thought is that human being's existentialist situation is a state of estrangement from his/her essential nature. Tillich contends that Hegel's essentialism is in error because the latter believes that estrangement has been overcome and the human being has been reconciled to his/her true being. For the existentialist confronting the real world, existence is characterized by conflict, anxiety and destruction. Humanity is in the threat of existence. The world is not yet reconciled, in individual, in society or in life (ST II, 24-5).

Existence is estrangement and not reconciliation; it is dehumanization and not the expression of essential humanity...man becomes a thing and ceases to be a person. History is not the divine self-manifestation but a series of unreconciled conflicts, threatening humanity with self-destruction. The existence of the individual is filled with anxiety and threatened by meaninglessness (ST II, 25).

Existentialism is an analysis of human predicament and the answers to the questions implied in human predicament are religious. Tillich, the theologian prefers to find answers in the symbols of the Christian message. The existentialist move rediscovered the classical Christian interpretation of human existence as symbolized in the myth of the Fall. Together existentialism and Christianity analyze the character of human existence (Randall 1969, 30-1). "In so doing, existentialism is a natural ally of Christianity" (25). This explains why Tillich's theology follows a "method of correlation" by which through an existential analysis unfolds humanity's ultimate concern and "proceeds to show that the New Being in Jesus Christ" is the answer to human predicament (Tavard 1962, 22).

The sense of transition from essence to existence is crucial in existentialist theology. The "symbol of the Fall" is decisive, according to Tillich, to sharpen this understanding because it helps to understand the transition from essence to existence. In the doctrine of the Fall, Tillich rejects all forms of literalistic interpretation. Literalism of myth and symbols distorts the religious meaning. The story in Genesis 1-3, if taken as a myth shows the description of the human being's awareness of existential estrangement and provides the scheme to illustrate the transition from essence to existence. By virtue of finite freedom, human beings contradict their essential nature.

It is finite freedom which makes the transition from essence to existence possible (ST II, 31). Tillich describes the state before the Fall in psychological terms as "dreaming innocence." The metaphor of "dreaming" is a description of the state of essential being. The word "innocence" indicates unactualized potentiality (33). Tillich says that the symbol of "Adam before the Fall" must be understood as the "dreaming innocence of undecided potentialities" (34). By the actualization of finite freedom driven by the awareness of finitude and anxiety, the state of dreaming innocence is lost. "Human beings decide for self-actualization, thus producing the end of dreaming innocence" (34-5).

The concept of the New Being represents the central category or symbol for the entire scope of Tillich's theology. The notion of estrangement and of Christology, Being-Itself and God, finitude and human being, religions, ecclesiology, culture, and history and its hopes, are formed and framed in the "category of the New Being as it is defined in and through his christology" (Adams, Pauck and Shinn, eds. 1985, 313). Christ is a symbol in which the ambiguities of existence are being resolved. The Christian confession "Jesus as the Christ" is the symbol of the New Being. The Christian message is that Jesus as the Christ was subjected to the conditions of existence but overcame the existential estrangement. The appearance of the New Being under the conditions of existence, yet conquering them, is the paradox of the Christian message. (ST II, 92). With reference to eschatological symbolism, Tillich says that "the Christ" is the one who brings the new reality. "Christ is the end of existence lived in estrangement, conflicts and self-destruction, existential distortion, the ambiguities of life and human's historical predicament" (118-20). To experience the New Being in "Jesus as the Christ" is to experience the power in Jesus Christ who has conquered the existential estrangement. In Christ, the conflict between the essential unity of God and humanity and human beings existential estrangement is overcome (125).

The appearance of the New Being is also understood as the Incarnation in which Tillich differentiates between "God has become man" and "Logos became flesh." Tillich prefers the latter as the proper way of understanding the Incarnation. The concept "God has become man" according to Tillich is a non-sensical statement. To say that "God became man" would mean God ceased to be God by becoming man, which is impossible. "The only thing that God cannot do is to cease to be God" (94-5). Tillich prefers the Johannine understanding of the Incarnation, "Logos became flesh." The Incarnation as revelation can be explained by the Logos, which is the principle of the divine self-manifestation of God. The word "flesh" stands not as a material substance, but for historical existence, and "became" points to the paradox of God participating in that which is estranged to God (95). God's revelation in "Jesus as the Christ" as the bearer of the New Being presupposes that God loves the world and the revelation of "Jesus as the Christ" is the actualization of this love (96).

Tillich offers a radical reinterpretation of the Incarnation. The appearance of the New Being is the new reality of salvation. The central message of the Incarnation is that God has acted for human salvation. God has established a new reality in which we may participate (Adams, Pauck and Shinn eds., 1985, 316). Tillich criticizes the traditional understanding of the Incarnation which has been understood in contradictory terms, such as: eternal and temporal, mutable and immutable, and God and human. Tillich says that these symbols are inheritance of pagan mythology. The notion that the divine unites with human nature is a conception of pagan philosophy. If these conceptions are taken literally, they are pagan conceptions. That is why Tillich proposes "deliteralization" as an approach in dealing with symbols and myths. Tillich differs from Bultmann in that he did not reject myths. He retained them and recognized them as they are, but myths and symbols must be interpreted. Tillich rejects "demythologization." For him, "demythologization" is dangerous because it may "deprive religion of its language and silence the experience of the holy. Symbols and myths must be criticized on the basis of their power to express what they are supposed to express, namely, the New Being in Jesus as the Christ" (152).

The actuality of the historical person Jesus is crucial for Tillich. To deny the actuality of that essential humanity is to deny the substance of the message of the gospel. "If Jesus is not a historical person and if no essential humanity actually entered into existence then nothing new has happened, the New being is not actualized and the New being remains merely a hope" (Adams, Pauck, and Shinn 1985, 319). Viewed in this way, Tillich distinguishes two different implications of the historical Jesus. The first is the actual living person in Jesus who was received as the Christ. Tillich refers to this historical person witnessed by the disciples as the historical figure behind the records of the New Testament. The second is the historical Jesus reconstructed through

historical criticism on the basis of the sources available to the modern mind. The problem, according to Tillich, is that these two referents are fused into one. On the contrary, Tillich distinguishes "the living person behind the text" from "the historians reconstruction out of the text." (322). The living person behind the text is of paramount importance and crucial for the validity of the Christian message. Tillich argues that the historical portrayal of the modern mind is in no way essential to the message of the Christian faith, for they are merely projections of scholarly interest. The modern reconstruction of the historical Jesus is hypothetical, which is always subject to criticism because of its "more or less probable," nature, hence, it can never be a vehicle to express the ultimate concern. Tillich contends that if we cannot know Jesus through historical inquiry, we can know Jesus through faith, that is, the historical person Jesus who is received by faith as the Christ (322).

The New Testament faith in relation to systematic theology expresses two basic relations of Christ to the existential estrangement, namely: first, Christ's subjection to existence; second, Christ's conquest of it. These two relations are expressed by the two Christian symbols, the cross and the resurrection, which by way of their nature are interrelated and should not be separated. The subjection to the ultimate negativities of existence is expressed in the symbol of the cross and the victory over the existential estrangement to which Jesus was subjected, is expressed in the symbol of the resurrection. This is Tillich's soteriology which is understood as healing, an event of reuniting that which is estranged, the overcoming of the break between God and humanity, the world and humanity, and persons and themselves (96). Christ as the New Being is determined by this understanding of salvation in which Tillich emphasizes that "Christology is a function of soteriology" (150). "Salvation is the reclamation of humanity from the old reality and the transference to the New Being." Hence, salvation is "the fulfillment of the ultimate meaning of existence through the power of the New Being" (96). Tillich understands salvation in threefold character. The first is regeneration, which is salvation as participation in the New Being. The power of the New Being grasps humanity in its bondage to existential estrangement and New Being is actualized through human participation. Second, salvation as acceptance of the New Being is Justification. It is the power of God through the New Being to draw to and accept the unacceptable. "Accepting that one is accepted is the paradox of salvation" according to Tillich. Third, sanctification is the process in which the power of the New Being transforms persons and communities (179).

Systematic Theology Volume III: Life in the Spirit; History and the Kingdom

Volume Three of Tillich's Systematic Theology appeared when Tillich's fame was at its height. It does not only deal with his doctrines of divine spirit, of the Kingdom of God, and of eternal life. It is also the culmination of his doctrine of God and his christology (Taylor 1987, 29). This volume revolves around Tillich's treatment of life's ambiguities and their relation to the divine Spirit and its presence in life's struggle for an unambiguous life. Life in the presence of the divine Spirit is the expression of Tillich's philosophy of life. The Spirit of God answers and resolves the ambiguities of life. The human being as a religious being is an organism in which the dimension of the spirit is dominant. Tillich claims that human life integrates itself in the life of the Spirit in such a way that human beings experiences the Spirit as the unity of power and meaning in life (ST I, 250).

In volume III, life becomes the main issue. Life is seen as a combination of essential and existential elements. The presence of the Holy Spirit in life is described as the Spiritual Presence. Human beings become aware of the Spiritual Presence as they engage in the quest for an unambiguous life in such a way that they can be grasped by this Spiritual Presence. Tillich's doctrine of the Spirit is the solution for human beings' ambiguities of life. Human beings' experience of the ground of being presupposes a religious experience of reunion with the ground through the reuniting work of God. That reuniting work is a redemptive work of God as Spirit. God as Spirit is "the most embracing, direct, and unrestricted symbol for the divine life" (249). The category of the divine Spirit is the symbol for the divine power of redemption and healing. Correspondingly, the category of the New Being manifests the creative and redemptive work of God as experienced in human history especially in the Christian community (Adams, Pauck and Shinn, 1985, 308-9). By the presence of the divine Spirit as constitutive of the New Being, is definitively present in Jesus as the Christ (ST III, 144). The whole event of the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, life death and resurrection is the work primarily of God as Spirit.

Tillich articulates his understanding of the Holy Spirit in relation to the structural functions of life that bring healing and redemption. "The Spirit does not disrupt those structural functions, but grounds and heals them. Personal, social, political, and ecclesial structures of human institutions are intrinsic to the experience of the divine Spirit" (Taylor 1987, 30). Tillich rejects any ecclesiasticism or absolutizing of structures, and that ecstasy is just an intrinsic to the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit. Tillich's work is a defense of the ecstatic manifestation of the Holy Spirit as a presence in life against its critics, grounding his defense on the message of the New Testament. For Tillich, ecstasy in life's structures is another way of understanding "self-transcendence." Self-transcendence is the human drive to connect with the divine and the infinite. Ecstasy is a religious drive of human beings to ground life to the divine Spirit as an expression of an ultimate concern (30). It is the task of an existentialist analysis to show the unity of human structure and ecstasy as the work of the divine Spirit. According to Tillich, God works through the communities and churches that manifest the New Being of Jesus as the Christ (31). Tillich claims that the finite is potentially an element in the divine life. There is a mutual immanence of the divine Spirit and human spirit. The presence of the divine Spirit is the presence of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. The divine Spirit is the spiritual presence of Christ in us and also the spiritual presence of God in us (ST II, 292).

Tillich's doctrine of the "Kingdom of God" is related to the symbols of "Spiritual Presence" and "Eternal Life." Tillich clarifies that each of them includes the other two but because of the differences in symbol materials, he differentiates them. Tillich uses the term Spiritual Presence as the answer to the ambiguities of history and Eternal Life as the answer to the ambiguities of life universal. However, Tillich clarifies that the symbol of the Kingdom of God is more embracing than the symbols "Spiritual Presence" and "Eternal Life." According to him, this is the consequence of the double-character of the Kingdom, namely, the inner-historical and the transhistorical side. "As inner historical, it participates in the dynamics of history which is manifested through the Spiritual Presence. As transhistorical, it answers the questions implied in the ambiguities of history which is identical with Eternal Life" (ST III, 357). The immanental element of the Kingdom of God relates to the inner-historical side. Tillich uses the Israelites experience to explain that God actively participates in history, in their political struggle as a nation. The victory of Israel is the victory of God. The God of justice is the basis of conquering and overcoming the demonic forces of history. But the immanental element is not separated with the transcendental element. The transcendental-universal element is constitutive within the immanental-political interpretation. The Kingdom of God cannot be produced by the inner-historical development alone. "The historical vision is enlarged and superseded by the cosmic vision" (360). When harsh realities become an experience of estrangement in which the demonic powers have shattered the meaning of existence, the estrangement will be conquered and defeated by the power of God, and the prophetic hopes of the coming of the new creation will be fulfilled. Tillich says that this new eon will not happen through historical developments but through divine intervention in history, leading to "a new heaven and a new earth" (360).

Tillich's treatment of the "History and the Kingdom of God" is an extension of the doctrine of the divine Spirit. Just as the presence of the divine Spirit which implies the solution of the ambiguities of life, the Kingdom of God and Eternal Life mean the conquest of the ambiguities of history. History is a salvific movement toward the universal unambiguous fulfillment of the meaning of existence, which is the realization of the Kingdom of God. Tillich's interpretation of history in relation the notion of the Kingdom of God always relates to the idea of Eternal Life, which is the history of salvation. The end of history is Eternal Life in which all being is taken up into the Divine Life (ST III, 356-64).

Tillich's notion of *kairos* gives a new understanding of the meaning of history which is a key to his Christological understanding of history. (Tavard 1962, 88). Tillich's interpretation of history is framed under the notion of the New Being. *Kairos* is God's time not human understanding of time-(*chronos*). *Kairos* is a moment in time which is related to the "Unconditioned." When Tillich speaks of the *kairos*, he speaks of the "Unconditioned." *Kairos* is the "point in history in which time is disturbed by eternity" (Tavard 1962, 88-9). Tillich speaks of it as a "moment at which history has matured to the point of being able to receive the breakthrough of the manifestation of God" (ST III, 369). Tillich refers to the New Testament concept to describe this moment as the "fulfillment of time" as the words used by "Jesus and John the Baptist when they announced the fulfillment of time with respect to the Kingdom of God, which is 'at hand'" (369). *Kairos* is "all-decisive time, a

meaningful and qualitatively fulfilled moment in time" (Tavard 1962, 89). It is the "manifestation of the divine dimension of the moment," it is God's time, "when the new reality has come, the time of the New Being" (89). It is the divine time of God's overcoming of all the ambiguities of being, life and history in Jesus as the Christ.

5. Relation to Other Thinkers

[Forthcoming]

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7. Internet Resources

Tillich Resources with Systematic Theology Reader's Guide

Books, articles, and sermons by and about Tillich at religion-online.org

Encyclopedia entry on Tillich from the Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexicon

Short biographical sketch and photo of sculpture in Paul Tillich Park

The North American Paul Tillich Society website

Deutsche Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft, [website](#)

"Paul Tillich," article on [Wikipedia](#)

8. Related Topics

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Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930)

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