An Examination of Paul Tillich's Soteirological Quest

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INTRODUCTION

A. Orthodoxy

As the name itself implies, the central focus of the Christian religion has always been Jesus Christ. The early Christians considered Jesus the fulfillment of the Messianic promise in the Old Testament and therefore gave him the Greek title "Christ." Both the man "Jesus of Nazareth" and the title "Christ" have been the focus of much reflection and study since Jesus' death. Soon after his death, Jewish witnesses to his life and death began to believe Jesus was the Christ and therefore was the answer to their soteriological questioning. That is, Jesus was believed to be the one who saved humanity from sin. Two questions naturally come to mind: 1)What was the "sin" from which humanity needed "saving?"; and 2) What is the "salvation" which Jesus as the Christ brought?

The first question receives its orthodox[1] answer by way of reference to the Biblical story of the fall. In traditional terms, Adam and Eve were created in a state of perfection and placed in the "Garden of Eden." In the Garden were two trees; one (the tree of knowledge of good and evil) from which Adam and Eve were Divinely commanded not to eat. Following the temptation by Satan and subsequent act of disobedience (i.e.. eating from the tree) they were in a state of sin. That is, the original sin (eating) resulted in a change of their nature such that they were now in a continual state of sin. The most important consequence of this state of sin was death or the loss of eternal life. It is death from which humans needed "saving," and it is this saving action which Jesus as the Christ performs.

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[1]"By orthodox . . . I mean something purely descriptive. Orthodox Christianity is that form of Christianity which won the support of the overwhelming majority of Christians and which is expressed by most of the official proclamations or creeds of Christian groups" (William E. Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology).

The orthodox answer to the second question involving salvation was formulated primarily by the Apostle Paul and states that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, humanity has been saved from death and has received eternal life. Theories about how this salvation occurred all involve some theory of atonement. The atonement is one of the most widely disputed concepts within the church. Therefore it is difficult to distinguish an orthodox belief concerning it. However, most theories involve a process whereby God in some way reconciles the condemned world unto Itself. This reconciliation contains both an objective side wherein Jesus as God's son pays the ransom to Satan who holds all humans captive to sin and through which God's "righteous wrath" is satiated; and a subjective reception of the Divine work by humanity whereby humanity realizes that the guilt of sin is removed and eternal life is possible. There certainly are wide variations, but generally salvation for Christians means that Jesus as the Christ reunites humans with their Creator.

B. Philosophies and Intellectual Movements Which Reshaped Orthodoxy

Numerous intellectual and philosophical movements have shaped the re-conceptions of the fall and salvation which have occurred in the years since the death of Jesus. As indicated already, the Apostle Paul was instrumental in developing the orthodox beliefs of the church. In the first centuries after the Apostle Paul, orthodoxy was further shaped by people such as Augustine, Pelagius, Calvin, Luther, Abelard and Anselm. Following the Reformation was the modern era in which orthodoxy came under attack from both secular philosophies and from liberalism within the church. The secular philosophies emphasized the reasoning and emotional powers of the autonomous individual over against the "fallen," deprived state of humanity. Rationalists such as John Locke, Hume and Kant did not think humanity was fallen or that original sin had somehow corrupted the entire human race. "They had great confidence that man's

reason was good and could solve all of man's problems" (Hordern 32). Within the church, liberals were striving to accommodate these new philosophies into the orthodox doctrines.

Basically, most liberals were dedicated to keeping an open mind to all that philosophy, reason and the latest trends in modern thought had to contribute to the Bible and Christian tradition. Among the liberals there were some more radical than others. For example, there were the humanists who believed that, " . . .instead of looking beyond himself for help or dreaming of a life after death, man is to fulfill and develop his personality [in this life]" (Hordern 88). The humanists looked to subjective experience for the "salvafic" keys needed to reunite or reintegrate the individual with itself. In the early part of the twentieth century, liberalism found its beliefs in the greatness of the individual had not come to fruition; the Kingdom of God had not been built on earth. As a result, a movement entitled neo-liberalism evolved. "The realistic analysis of the predicament of man drives [drove] neo-liberalism to the realization that the orthodox doctrine of sin is, in many ways, more realistic than the liberal optimism about man " (Hordern 106). Theologians in the neo-liberal or neo-orthodox categories began to re-emphasize many of the orthodox positions on sin, revelation through Jesus the Christ, and salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr are outstanding examples of those who participated in the rediscovery of orthodoxy. Both these men began their careers as liberals but soon found themselves embracing many of the orthodox Christian positions. Karl Barth believed all the attempts of liberal theologians to describe God via *a priori* human reason, experience, and/or other "this world" methods were misleading and improper approaches to theology. Niebuhr also criticizes the use of finite reason by explaining how it is incapable of *completely* describing the Infinite. For both Niebuhr

and Barth, knowledge of God is not gained strictly empirically or by way of reason or through history, but always as a result of God revealing Itself primarily through the Bible. Thus, for Niebuhr, Barth and others who found themselves rediscovering orthodoxy, human reason and history were useful in deciding false revelations, or even in determining the most useful linguistical form in which to state God's revelations, but the *primary* source of Christian revelations was the Bible.

Neo-orthodox theologians accepted and rejected aspects of both liberal and orthodox positions. Like the liberals, they were critical of Fundamentalism and they fully accepted Biblical criticism even in its radical forms. On the other hand, they reacted against liberal concepts such as the use of reason and natural theology in favor of revealed theology. This partial acceptance, partial rejection of various positions is the intellectual climate in which Paul Tillich was taught and formulated his thoughts concerning sin, Jesus Christ and salvation. Tillich is slightly different from both the neo-orthodox and liberal theologians. Unlike neo-orthodox positions, he joined the liberals in their unrestrained use of human reason and historical criticism. He also, like the liberals was very involved in attempting to relate culture and religion but, unlike the liberals he joined the neo-orthodox theologians in their insistence that all ideas must ultimately be subjected to the picture of Jesus the Christ as revealed in the New Testament.

C. Paul Tillich as the Boundary Between Neo-orthodoxy and Liberalism

Born in Germany in 1886 to a Prussian Pastor, Paul Tillich became one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. Tillich both taught and was taught at a number of universities in Germany and later in America. His dissertation on Schelling's Positive philosophy was completed in 1911 at the University of Breslau after which he served in the First World War as an army chaplain. Following the war, Tillich was employed as a professor at the universities of Berlin, Marburg, Dresden, Leipzig and

Frankfurt. His active involvement in the Religious-Socialist movement was unacceptable to Hitler, and therefore Tillich was forced to leave Germany for America in 1933. Not long after his arrival in America, Tillich was extended an invitation to teach philosophical theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York. While at Union Theological Seminary, Tillich became known as one of America's foremost theologians. Following his retirement from Union, he taught undergraduates at Harvard. His final employer was the University of Chicago, where a special position was created for him in 1963 to the time of his death in 1965.

Tillich wanted to speak to the whole of society, including both those who were inclined to attack the orthodox position and those who had an attachment to the orthodox position. Thus Tillich was at the same time critical and accepting of both the liberal and orthodox ideas. Throughout his career, Tillich developed a systematic theology which attempts to present the "truth of the Christian message" in such a way that it "speaks" to the present human situation (1: 3-4). Another way of saying this is that Tillich strives to maintain the kerygma of the Christian message while simultaneously applying it to the present predicament of humanity. Tillich's theology is centered around a process which ". . . proceeds in such a way that both successively and simultaneously the philosophical concepts of reason, being, existence, life, and history are set in correlation with the theological concepts of revelation, God, Christ, Spirit, and the Kingdom of God" (Karl Barth qtd. in McKelwey 12-13). Tillich utilizes this method throughout his entire system including his soteriological quest.

I

THE FALL INTO EXISTENCE

A. The Meaning of the term "Existence"

Before the soteirological answer can be given, one must understand the sin from which salvation is desired. In order to understand Tillich's description of sin, one must remember the method which characterizes Tillich's thought. First Tillich examines the present situation and then seeks the theological answer revealed through our experience within that situation. Therefore, rather than beginning with the Bible--as an orthodox theologian would--Tillich begins with an examination of the present human situation. However, before Tillich's description of the human predicament can be understood, one must first understand what it means to exist. Thus, a description of the term "existence" as used by Tillich is the first step towards a soteriological answer.

The fundamental use of the term "existence" in Tillich's theology refers to something "standing out of non-being" (2: 21). Non-being is described as *me on* and/or *ouk on*. The former refers to a state of potential being which is "not yet being" while the latter refers to absolute non-being. In the state of potential being, the powers of being are latent and need only be actualized to result in authentic existence. To exist one must proceed from absolute non-being to potential being and finally to actualized existence. However, the finite being never actualizes all its potentialities, nor does it ever completely escape the realm of absolute non-being. Therefore, everything in the universe which is said to exist, is simultaneously in the state of absolute non-being and potential being. The progression from *ouk on* to *me on* is the result of God's creative activity. On the other hand, the progression from potential being to authentic existence involves finite human action and therefore this is where sin enters the picture. Before the human action

which results in sin is directly addressed, the "perfect state" from which Adam and Eve fell is examined.

B. The Essential State and Temptation

It is the potential state or realm of essence from which Adam fell and we fall.[2] Tillich uses the term "dreaming innocence" to describe this state of paradise. In this "dream state," the real is anticipated but is not actual, it is possible but it has not come to fruition in existence. The term "innocence" points in an "analogical" way to the fact that in this inauthentic state, the individual does not have "actual experience, . . . personal responsibility. . . [or] moral guilt" (Tillich 2: 33-34). Like a dream, anything can occur in this essential realm without dire consequences. Tillich described it by saying that freedom and destiny are in uncontested union; one is free to choose anything, but one's choice is always in perfect union with one's destiny. (The concepts of freedom and destiny will be further delineated below.) Because freedom and destiny are in *uncontested* union, they are subject to temptation in the form of "aroused freedom."

Temptation occurs when freedom becomes aware of itself (aroused freedom) and seeks to actualize its potentialities. The state of temptation involves two equally harmful possibilities: 1)the loss of "dreaming innocence" as a consequence of actualizing one's potentialities; or 2) the loss of actual, real existence in the interest of preserving one's dreaming innocence. In finite freedom, the human inevitably chooses to actualize its potentialities over and against the protest of dreaming innocence. In the Biblical story, the protest of dreaming innocence is symbolized as, " . . . the divine prohibition against actualizing one's potential freedom and against acquiring knowledge and power" (Tillich

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[2]Tillich's description of the fall is a simultanious elucidation of both the past and the present. Another way of saying this is that the fall is an ongoing process which occurs throughout history, not an event which occured strictly in the past.

2: 35). The *inevitability* of the choice indicates that the fall from dreaming innocence is a process which permeates all existence. The fall is an "original fact" in that it is not, ". . . the first fact in a temporal sense or a fact beside or before others but it is that which gives validity to every fact" (Tillich 2: 36). Wherever something exists, dreaming innocence does not; thus, the tragic universal destiny of humanity is to fall from the essential realm into existence.

C. The Transition from Essence to Existence as a Free and Destined Choice

1. Ontology--

The state of "paradise," "temptation" and "the fall" have been discussed, however, there still remains an important question which has plagued theologians for 2000 years. In his *perfect* state, how is it possible for Adam to make a choice contrary to God's will? I have already indicated that Adam's capabilities included the ability to make a free choice and that this was also a destined choice. Naturally this raises the question: "How can one have a choice which is simultaneously free and destined?" Is there such a choice? Tillich does describe how Adam's choice is simultaneously possible and inevitable. However, in order to understand Tillich's theodicy, we must first have a basic understanding of his ontology.

Utilizing ontology, Tillich discovers the elements of freedom and destiny within the structure of existence which allow Adam to give into temptation and disobey God. Ontology seeks to uncover those structures which are utilized by the mind to comprehend being or non-being. They are " . . . always thought implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, if something is said to *be*" (Tillich 1: 163). One could say that these structures are the paradigm which makes human existence is possible; without them the mind cannot make sense of existence and consequently there is no existence. Tillich's underlying ontological concepts are present in every real experience and reveal to humanity its

finitude and need for Being Itself. Tillich demarcates four conceptual levels in his ontology. The first two are similar in their polarization and consist of: 1) the self polarity including the elements of individualization, dynamics, and freedom; and 2) the world polarity including the elements of participation, form, and destiny. The third and fourth categories deal with "the conditions of existence" and "the categories of being and knowing" respectively. Throughout the paper the relation of these concepts to Tillich's description of estrangement, his structures of destruction and salvation will be examined. At this point, however, an understanding of the fall will be facilitated by a familiarity with two very specific elements of Tillich's ontology, freedom and destiny. These two elements constitute the basic framework for Tillich's discussion of the fall and therefore it is important that we thoroughly examine them.

2. Freedom and destiny--

Freedom is a characteristic of the human self which is impossible without its opposite, destiny. Often the *element* freedom is falsely contrasted with *category* of necessity. The opposite of necessity is possibility, not freedom. The immediate experience of freedom does not include a determinacy or indeterminacy implied by necessity and possibility. Rather than the requirement of a true or false decision implied by necessity, "Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility" (Tillich 1: 184). The process of freedom involves: 1)a self-centered being weighing possibilities; 2)a decision for a particular possibility over and against other real possibilities; and 3)taking personal responsibility for its decision. Such freedom is only possible because real possibilities are present in one's destiny.

Destiny is the fabric of life from which possibilities are derived and created. Destiny consists of,

> . . . the indefinitely broad basis of our centered selfhood . . . . This refers to body structure, psychic strivings, spiritual character. It includes the communities to which I belong, the past unremembered and remembered, the environment which has shaped me, the world which has made an impact on me. It refers to all my former decisions (Tillich 1: 184).

Destiny implies the freedom to decide, while freedom depends upon destiny for real possibilities from which to decide. If the self fails to make the decisions implied in destiny, it risks the meaningless, contingent existence implied in freedom. On the other hand, the self is equally intimidated by the possibility of losing the meaning contained in one's destiny. The person must strive to maintain the personal freedom to shape its destiny while allowing his/her destiny to be shaped by its freedom. If either pole is allowed complete control, the self ceases to exist.

The preceding discussion provides us with a framework whereby we can understand the fall as both a free and destined choice. Unlike nature's "finite necessity" and God's "infinite freedom" humans have "*finite* freedom" (Tillich 2:31) Adam's finite freedom gave him the ability to decide against his essence in favor of his existence. In traditional terms this is the ability to decide against the Divine prohibition. However, Adam's choice was not made in a vacuum. Rather, it was made in and presented by the universal, tragic destiny of nature. Thus nature participates in the fall, and both humanity (symbolized by Adam and Eve) and nature (symbolized by the serpent) are indictable. In this way the fall involves: 1)Adam's free choice to actualize his potentialities; and 2)the destiny whereby nature arouses Adam's freedom through temptation.

II

ESTRANGEMENT AND EVIL

A. General Consequences of the Fall

1. Tillich's focus on estrangement rather than death--

Most traditional investigations of the fall emphasize the loss of eternal life as the primary result of the fall. Tillich does not emphasize this in his Christology or soteriology, but his basic answer to death is found in his ontology. For Tillich, death is a consequence of being at all. Death is not a result of the transition from essence to existence, but of the transition from absolute non-being to potential being. In order to be at all, finite humans must participate in the power to *be* which is Being Itself. They are created out of *ouk on* by God and will inevitably return to *ouk on*. The awareness of the inevitability of their return to absolute non-being produces anxiety which is, in turn overcome by way of courage. This courage is derived through the knowledge that one participates in Being Itself. Thus, although death is inevitable, anxiety about it need not control one's life. (This is a difficult part of Tillich's ontology which I am not sure I quite agree with. If humans know they will *inevitably* return to absolute non-being, can they really derive sufficient courage to overcome their anxiety simply from the knowledge of their participation in Being Itself?)

The focus of Tillich's soteriology is not on the overcoming of death, but on overcoming the schism between God and humanity which is the result of the transition from essence to existence. The fall into existence is a fall out of unity with God which means one is estranged from the Ground of Being. One is estranged not only from God, but from others, from nature and from oneself. This state of estrangement is Tillich's

basic characterization of the present human situation. In order to appreciate Tillich's position, let us examine a view which is significantly different from Tillich's.

2. "Essentialism" vs. estrangement--

Originally, "estrangement" was a philosophical term created by Hegal which indicated that in existence humanity was essentially what it should be. During the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, a philosophy which Tillich entitled "essentialism" developed. This philosophy held that,

> In existence, man is what he is in essence-- the microcosmos in whom the powers of the universe are united, the bearer of critical and constructive reason, the builder of his world, and the maker of himself as the actualization of his potentiality (Tillich 2:23).

In the thought of Hegal, Tillich finds "essentialism" in its all-inclusive classical form. In spite of its obvious imperfections, Hegal insisted that existence was not to be thought of as a "fall" from the eternal realm of essences. Rather, existence is an expression of the Divine will and shows the human in a teleological progression towards perfection. For the "essentialist," humanity's estrangement from itself, others and the Divine is reconciled in existence. "Essentialists" made the claim that in and through history or community the self is reconciled with itself and others. It is this description which all the existentialists (including Tillich) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries found objectionable. For them, human existence is characterized by estrangement, finitude, anxiety, guilt, meaninglessness, despair and the need for reconciliation. According to Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche and others the human predicament demonstrates that, "Reconciliation [from estrangement] is a matter of anticipation and expectation, but not

of reality" (Tillich 2: 25). Thus estrangement is the fundamental characterization of the human situation for Tillich.

B. Sin as "Unbelief," "*Hubris*" and "Concupiscence"

To be estranged for Tillich is to be in a state of sin. Sin is the inevitable result of actualizing oneself; sin is necessary consequence of the transition from essence to existence. Tillich recognizes three forms in which sin or estrangement manifests itself: "unbelief," "*hubris*" and "concupiscence." Following is an examination of each of these.

The sin of unbelief involves a turning away from one's cognitive union with God. In unbelief the central will and act of the individual is directed towards itself rather than towards God. Tillich uses the term "un-faith" to describe this state in which the total personality (with all its drives and desires) of the individual is estranged from God's will and seeks fulfillment outside or alongside God. Unbelief is the first manifestation of sin and is the first step towards the second (*hubris*) and third (concupiscence) manifestations of sin.

Hubris and concupiscence are distinct but involve each other. The ability of the human ". . . to transcend both himself and his world, to look at both, and to see himself in perspective as the center in which all parts of his world converge" leads to *hubris* (Tillich 2: 49). This ability to view one as the center of the universe tempts one to elevate oneself beyond the limits of finitude thereby crediting one with the power and importance of Infinity. In *hubris*, the individual tries to make itself God. Hubris is also a spiritual sin whereby finite acts such as knowledge, power, beauty, goodness and truth are elevated to a state of ultimate concern. At this point hubris and concupiscence are intertwined. In concupiscence the individual is driven beyond hubris; beyond the *elevation* of finite acts to divine status, and seeks complete *fulfillment in* finite acts. The self-centered being who is ". . . in a position between finitude and infinity" realizes that it

has the capability to draw ". . . the whole of his world into himself" (Tillich 2:52). Concupiscence than, is the desire of finite things for their own sake rather than because they are part of the Infinite Ground of Being. To further describe this concept, Tillich compares concupiscence to Freud's concept of libido. The libido impulses continually drive an individual to rid itself of his/her ". . . biological, especially his sexual, tensions and to get pleasure from the discharge of these tensions" (Tillich 2: 53). Concupiscence in the form of libido is primarily the unlimited desire for sex. Sex in itself is not bad. However it becomes concupiscence if ". . . one wants one's own pleasure through the other being, but does not want the other being" (Tillich 2: 54). Tillich expands the traditional use of the term "concupiscence" (which referred strictly to sex) to include all finite pleasures. Thus for Tillich, concupiscence is the unlimited desire to enjoy/attain all the finite pleasures for their own sake and only within oneself while outside the will of God.

Although sin is a state for Tillich, he does describe it as though it progresses in a semi-orderly fashion. Turning away from the Divine center (unbelief) leads to attributing divine importance to oneself, and finite human actions (*hubris*). Finally one succumbs to the unlimited desire to fulfill oneself through finite acts or through drawing the entire world into oneself (concupiscence).

C. The Evil Structures of Destruction

1. The structure of destruction implied in existence--

The estrangement of humanity manifests itself through sin, and sin in turn threatens to destroy the very structures of existence. This threat to the structures of existence is Tillich's conception of evil. Evil is implied in the structures of existence because the structures of existence are also, paradoxically, the structures of destruction. Therefore, in order to understand the structures of destruction, one must understand the

structures of existence as illuminated in Tillich's ontology. It is beyond the scope of this paper to completely describe his ontology, but I will discuss the elements within his ontology which serve as both the structures of existence and the structures of destruction.

Within the structure of existence Tillich determines eight elements which serve to shape and guide human life. The elements constitute two poles: 1)the self polarity including individualization, dynamics and freedom; and 2) the world polarity including participation, form, and destiny. In the state of "dreaming innocence" prior to the fall, these elements were in uncontested, polarized union. However, after the fall there is tension in their previously uncontested, polarized union, and by way of sin (unbelief, hubris, concupiscence) they may self-destruct. Destruction occurs if one polarity or the other prevails, disrupting the "tensionous union." The following is an examination of the polarized, structural elements as potential structures of destruction.

The fundamental paradigm for Tillich's discussion of evil is the self-world polarity. The human self is implicit in all experiences; it is in Tillich's terms, an "original phenomena." The completely evolved self perceives a world which is opposite, and removed from itself. The world is inclusive of all selves and all environments but only the fully developed, "ego-self" possesses the ability to transcend the world. By transcending the world of which it is a part, the human can encounter itself. Self-consciousness is thus provided by a world-consciousness and world-consciousness is provided by a self-consciousness. Evil is a possibility because the fundamental structure of existence (self-world polarity) is absolutely dependent upon the self maintaining complete centeredness.

Without a center the human loses the ability to transcend itself and its world consequently losing both. "Self-loss as the first and basic mark of evil is the loss of one's determining center; it is the disintegration of the centered self by disruptive drives which

cannot be brought into unity" (Tillich 2: 61). The disruptive drives manifest themselves in various forms but generally their effect may be described as the "horrifying experience of 'falling to pieces' " (Tillich 2: 61). In sin, the individual tries to draw everything into itself and in the process loses itself in everything. Fragmentation or even disintegration of the self results in a loss of one's center, one's self-consciousness and consequently one's world. The self-world polarity is the basic structure of existence which is healthy only if all the other elements which contribute to it are healthy. Therefore, a loss of one ontological element means a loss not only of its polar opposite but of the fundamental self-world structure.

2. The relation of evil to the ontological elements--

The polarized elements of freedom and destiny were discussed earlier. Now they are examined as structures of destruction. In freedom, the individual may relate itself to, and choose from a number of real possibilities present in one's destiny. Destiny provides choices and indicators as to which choice is preferable. Evil occurs when, in freedom (freedom which is distorted by sin) the individual seeks to relate itself to everything. That is, in the state of "uncenteredness," the individual fails to cognate the indicators presented by destiny, and tries to make a choice for everything. Humans can only have a limited number of relationships. Therefore in the attempt to make the choice to have a relationship with everything, the human eventually loses his/her meaningful relationship with anything. If one has no meaningful relationship with anything choices become arbitrary and any functional destiny is absent. Thus, evil self-loss or evil "uncentering" of the individual implies a loss of freedom and by necessity a loss of its polar opposite, destiny.

Resisting evil also means avoiding an extremely dynamic or static form. Without any form (extreme dynamics) one ceases to exist and without dynamics one fails to have

authentic, creative existence. All humans are driven to develop and take on new forms of being which are creative expressions of themselves. These potential forms are contained in the dynamic element of existence. Essentially, form and dynamics are in polarized, uncontested union. Regrettably, under the control of hubris and concupiscence one's dynamic drive becomes distorted and is then a ". . . formless urge for self-transcendence" (Tillich 2:64). The self is then in a continual state of uncenteredness resulting from the unconstrained "urge" which seeks creativity without form. However, a loss of one's dynamic drive is dangerous as well. A loss of the dynamic component results in a "final form" which means the individual is no longer creatively expressing him/herself and has no authentic existence. Thus the self may lose its own form through continually seeking self-transcendence (they are never really satisfied with their present form and never truly inhabit any form), or they may lose their dynamic drive which results in a rigid, empty existence.

The third set of elements, individualization and participation, may result in the "evils" of loneliness or collectivization. Both individualization and participation are necessary for a healthy self and an overemphasis upon one results in the loss of both. As a centered being, the human is capable of complete participation in the universal *logos* of Being. However, in estrangement (unbelief, hubris, concupiscence) the self is driven to isolation which reduces its ability to participate and ultimately results in the "empty shell of subjectivity" (Tillich 2:65). This "subjective shell" is an object, and is incapable of participation and finally becomes just one object among the rest. Thus the self is an object, and is no longer a distinct individual capable of making centered decisions.

3. The relation of evil to the ontological categories--

The destructive structure is not limited to the elements but affects the ontological categories as well. Utilizing the categories with which the mind grasps an understanding

of being and non-being (time, space, causality, and substance) Tillich examines reality. Tillich realizes that each category points both to authentic, genuine being and to the desolate state of non-being. The possibility of not being at all produces anxiety within the finite individual. In order to overcome the anxiety of non-being, the individual must have courage and self-affirmative powers which are derived from his/her participation in Being Itself. Unfortunately, estrangement awakens the anxiety within the finite human to such an extent that it threatens to destroy the courage within the individual and consequently the individual may return to non-being.

Traditionally, Christians believed the major consequence of the fall into sin was the loss of eternal life. This thought is not strange to Tillich's thought, but it is conceived in an alternative fashion. Death is implied in the structures of existence and is not a result of the fall. The "fall into existence" has nothing to do with biological death. Tillich writes, "The idea that the 'Fall' has physically changed the cellular or psychological structure of man (and nature?) is absurd and unbiblical" (2: 67). Unfortunately, the fall into existence has/does produce an anxious awareness of the inevitability of death. Humanity is aware of its temporality, but in estrangement this awareness become *anxious* awareness. If this anxious awareness of death is not overcome by courage it results in guilt which is " . . . the painful realization of a lost eternity" (Tillich 2: 68). The evil within existence causes the individual to realize it is in some way guilty of losing eternal life. Eventually this guilt or the breakdown of resistance (the loss of sufficient courage) against non-being results in suffering and loneliness accompanied by doubt, uncertainty, and finally meaninglessness. Thus estrangement from the Divine Ground (from which courage is derived) leads to the arousal of anxiety in the finite being. Anxiety in turn threatens to conquer the power of being within the individual and throw them back into the meaningless state of non-being.

D. Despair

Humanity resists the threat of non-being but in every case its resistance fails. Humanity cannot halt the progression of time, it cannot indefinitely inhabit a particular place and they don't possess aseity. Therefore every failed attempt at resistance reminds the person that he/she is finite and cannot resist non-being. The awareness of the breakdown of resistance efforts leads to despair. Although the person desperately wishes to escape the threat of non-being he/she realizes that every attempt has failed and will indefinitely fail. This is a most desolate, terrifying situation wherein the person is aware of his/her return to meaninglessness but can do nothing about it.

What makes the situation worse is that the person also is aware of the fact that it is personally responsibly for its present situation. The individual has caused the despairing situation and is invariably *in* the despairing situation. "One is shut up in one's self and in conflict with one's self. One cannot escape, because one cannot escape from one's self" (Tillich 2: 75). Despair is the ultimate result of estrangement, it is the terrible, yet inevitable result of finite self-actualization. Despair results both from the awareness of the futility of attempts to stop non-being from deconstructing being and of the realization that this destruction is self-caused.

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I have completed an examination of the human situation as described by Tillich. It is the answer to the fundamental question, "What is the sin from which humanity needs saving?" This sin is estrangement. Estrangement is the inevitable result of the free and destined choice to actualize one's potentialities. The transition from the essential, potential realm to the existential, authentic state results in a schism between the Divine Ground and finite humanity. A person is cutoff from the Divine Ground, and this separation manifests itself as unbelief, hubris, concupiscence and the structures of

destruction. The final result of sin is the state of despair, the state of no hope. The only desire in the state of despair is to escape it. It is this state in which the power of the New Being grasps the individual. The next step is an examination of the power of the New Being which is Tillich's answer to the second fundamental question, "What is the salvation which Jesus as the Christ brought?"

III

JESUS CHRIST AS THE NEW BEING

A. Jesus who is the Christ and the New Being

Tillich emphasizes the belief that the Christian faith is based in large part upon the reception of Jesus as the Christ by his followers. To understand this we must differentiate between the name "Jesus" and the title "Christ." The former is the name of a man who lived in Nazareth during the years 1 - 30 while the latter is a title, derived from a long mythological history and is imbued with many qualities. The Christian faith is based upon both the fact that Jesus of Nazareth appeared as the Christ and subjected himself to the conditions of existence; and the reception of that fact by those who, like Simon Peter, were/are compelled to call Jesus the Christ. Jesus is "the Christ" because his followers observed "Christlike" qualities in him and were driven to call him "Jesus the Christ." For these reasons, Tillich always uses the titles "Jesus as the Christ," or "Jesus who is called the Christ," or "Jesus who is the Christ" in order to remind one that "Jesus" was the man who received the title "Christ" (2: 98).

The Christ was the one who was to conquer the law or the "old eon" and bring the "new eon" into existence. This was the eschatological belief and hope of the disciples. They eagerly anticipated the "new state of things," the new "structures of existence" which would arrive with the Christ. Unfortunately the unexpected occurred. Jesus, the one they had called "the Christ," was conquered by existential estrangement (he died),

and the old structures of existence remained intact. The disciples were disappointed and left with the question, "Was Jesus the Christ?" How was Jesus who people had been compelled to call the Christ still to be understood as the Christ? Through the work of the Apostle Paul, the early Christians came to understand the Messianic paradox. This paradox states that the One (the Messiah) who was to transform the destructive structures of existence had Himself to be subjected to these destructive structures of existence. The early Christians came to understand that Jesus as the Christ had actualized essential being under the conditions of existence. The resurrection assured the early Christians that although Jesus had been subjected to all the temptations of the evil existential predicament He had triumphed over them. The conditions were not changed, but the eschatological expectations had been fulfilled in principle. Although the old structures of existence remained intact, the new structure was a present possibility. Therefore Tillich refers to Jesus as the New Being because in him the old reality in which God and humanity are split is overcome in principle and the "New Being" is a present possibility.

"The term 'New Being,' as used here, points directly to the cleavage between essential and existential being--and is the restorative principle of the whole of this theological system" (Tillich 2: 119). The New Being is different than the old being in a number of respects. ". . . It [the New Being] is new in contrast to the merely potential character of essential being; and it is new over against the estranged character of existential being. It is actual, conquering the estrangement of actual existence" (Tillich 2:119). Essential being is the law by which existential being is judged. The New Being has overcome the judgment of essential being upon existential being by Its conquest of existence. Existence is no longer beset by estrangement because Jesus as the New Being has overcome the essential-existential split. Jesus was the New Being, and those who

participate in Him through the Creative work of the Spirit participate in the New Being or in "New Beingness."

B. Expressions of the New Being

How does Tillich arrive at the conclusion that the New Being was present in Jesus the Christ? More specifically, what is it about Jesus that leads Tillich to believe the New Being was present in Him? In order to understand Jesus as the New Being it is necessary to remember the process which occurs whenever someone exists. Humans are first in the state of absolute non-being, then potential being and finally in estranged existence. For finite humans, the transition into existence is the fall into estrangement. For Christ, this transition does not result in estrangement. Jesus' being was essential being even while he was immersed in the existential predicament on Earth. Jesus as the Christ actualized *essential* being while under the conditions of existence, therefore all his words, deeds, sufferings and what Tillich refers to as his "inner life" are expressions of *essential* being. It is these expressions which lead Tillich to believe Jesus' being was the Divine Principle (i.e. the New Being) described in the Gospel of John. Before describing these expressions it is important to make the distinction between the Being of Jesus and expressions of His Being.

The Being of Jesus, the Divine *Logos*, or Divine Principle is beyond any finite description. Yet, a description of Jesus' "essential being" is exactly the aim and purpose of the search for the historical Jesus. Historical research attempts to determine which particular actions or words can definitely be attributed to Jesus and from them to develop an "essential" picture of Jesus. Unfortunately, any particular trait about Jesus is always subject to doubt and can not serve as a basis for the Christian faith. "Historical research cannot paint an essential picture after all the particular traits have been eliminated [Tillich even admits that the man "Jesus" may not be the historical name or person]

because. . . . It remains dependent on the particulars" (Tillich 2: 103). In Tillich's view, the search for the historical Jesus was destined to fail because those involved failed to realize that as finite, estranged beings they could never wholly describe essential Being. In the end Tillich says we must look to faith itself for an affirmation of the fact that Jesus as the Christ was the New Being. "But faith does guarantee the factual transformation of reality in that personal life which the New Testament expresses in its picture of Jesus as the Christ" (Tillich 2: 107). Although we can never describe the whole of Jesus essential character, Tillich thinks we can examine that life-changing picture in the New Testament for expressions of the New Being.

The first and most basic expression of the New Being is found in Jesus' words. His words are a *part* of his being but not the whole part because as the "Word" or "*Logos*" He is more than any particular word of his. It is not Jesus' words which make Him the "*Logos*." Rather, Jesus has the "words of eternal life" because he is "the Word." Because of this Tillich thinks it is important not to make the teachings or words of Jesus into doctrinal or ethical laws. If this "doctrinization" occurs it is a relapse into a legalistic way of salvation and limits Jesus to a moral teacher rather than the New Being.

Secondly, expressions of the New Being may be found in the deeds of Jesus as the Christ whereby the essential unity of God and Man was evident. A prime example of this unity is found in the Crucifixion where Jesus refuses to break his unity with God and calls out to It, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" Like his words, his deeds are *of* the New Being; his deeds do not *make* him the New Being. Therefore, when considering the command to "take on 'the form of Christ' " the fine distinction between "imitating Christ" and being "Christlike" must be made (Tillich 2: 22). A literal imitation of Jesus' life is impossible because the contingencies which shaped Jesus' deeds differ from those contingencies which shape our deeds. In our concrete situation, we are

called to be "Christlike" in the sense that we participate in the New Being while simultaneously allowing our particular contingencies to shape us.

The suffering which Jesus as the Christ underwent is also an expression of the New Being. Remember the Messianic paradox which states that in order to conquer the conditions of existence the New Being must completely subject Himself to them. Complete participation in finite suffering and a victory over death are also necessary implications of one who was to be the New Being. Tillich notes that some theories of atonement (Anselm in particular) fail to emphasize that the Christological Being necessarily implies His suffering and death. However, in Tillich's thought the Messiah must and does suffer and die.

C. The New Being Triumphs Over Existential Estrangement

1. General conquests of estrangement--

So far we see that Jesus as the Christ has demonstrated that he is the New Being. Now we ask how is it that the New Being transforms existential estrangement? How do we know that the New Being has overcome the God-humanity split, thereby making salvation a present possibility for us? What are the indications in the Biblical story which demonstrate for us how Jesus has confronted and overcome estrangement?

According to Tillich, the Bible depicts Jesus the New Being as thoroughly finite but with an eternal, actual unity with God. By way of this unity the New Being takes the negative elements of existence into Itself and transcends them. For example, the primary mark of finitude (anxiety) is attributed to Jesus in the Biblical stories describing the hours preceding his death. Even while on the cross, Jesus overcomes the temptation to fall into unbelief (removal of his center from the Divine center) and calls out to God who has forsaken him. According to Tillich, Jesus has often been referred to as "good," but Jesus qualifies this statement and escapes *hubris* by referring to His unity with God.

> He rejects the term "good" as applicable to himself in isolation from God and puts the problem in the right place, namely, the uniqueness of his relation to God. His goodness is goodness only in so far as he participates in the goodness of God. (Tillich 2: 127).

Jesus experiences the frustration and loneliness which result when a finite individual is unable to "commune" with another centered individual. These are just a few examples of how Jesus as the New Being is subject to conditions of existence, but triumphs over them in every case.

2. The Cross and Resurrection--

All the events mentioned in the above paragraph are demonstrations of the New Being conquering estrangement, but the symbols of the Crucifixion and resurrection express most powerfully the restorative work of the Christ. The "Christ event" is the central saving event of history, but not the only one. It is important to understand that for Tillich salvation may occur anytime Being Itself ecstatically manifests Itself and the healing power of the New Being is seriously accepted. Tillich asserts that the "Christ event" is to be used as the criteria by which all other saving events are to be judged. The New Being is important because it has overcome estrangement through Its death and resurrection thereby making salvation possible.

"The subjection to existence is expressed in the symbol of the 'Cross of Christ'; the conquest of existence is expressed in the symbol of the 'Resurrection of the Christ' " (Tillich 2: 152-153). On the cross we observe a personal human being who has confronted all the threats of estrangement including the anxiety of death, while by way of the resurrection we receive the conformation that Jesus was indeed the New Being and has conquered existential estrangement and death. The Crucifixion and resurrection are

interdependent events which contain both factual and mythical elements. "The cross is a fact which is given mythical, that is universal, significance. The resurrection is a myth somehow related to a fact which was experienced by the disciples of Jesus" (McKelway 169). While the factual event of Jesus' death on the cross is relatively easy for us to accept and understand, the concept of Jesus' resurrection has been the subject of a number of theories.

Tillich offers what he terms a "restitution theory." This theory describes how the presence of the New Being lives on after Jesus death on the cross. According to Tillich, Jesus did not physically raise from the dead, nor did his "soul," nor is the resurrection strictly psychological, whereby Jesus was made mentally present to humanity. Rather, the resurrection is the process where "In an ecstatic experience the concrete picture of Jesus of Nazareth became indissolubly united with the reality of the New Being" (Tillich 2: 157). Thus the events of Pentecost and the Ascension are combined by Tillich in such a way that ". . .the concrete individual life of the man Jesus of Nazareth is raised above transitoriness into the eternal presence of God as Spirit" (Tillich 2: 157). Through the resurrection Jesus as the New Being is made Spiritually present to all. Therefore all who participate in the Spirit participate in the power of the New Being to overcome estrangement. Thus it is through the symbol of the resurrection and subsequent Spiritual presence of the New Being that the early Christians and we receive confirmation that Jesus as the Christ has conquered death and estrangement.

3. Jesus' subjection to real temptation--

In every way, Jesus as the Christ is subjected to estrangement, and in every case (even death) He overcomes it. If indeed Jesus is painted as the "perfect" New Being who never succumbs to the sin possible in estrangement, one naturally begins to ask whether He was subjected to any real temptation. How could Jesus the Christ who was

continually in cognitive unity with God be truly tempted to disobey God? If Jesus' will was never removed from God's will how could he have truly made a choice? Was Jesus simply God's "robot?"

Against a monophysitic tendency towards a strictly divine nature which exempts Jesus the Christ from any real temptation, Tillich believes Jesus was indeed subject to real temptations. The immediate question of Tillich's system is, "How One who was in *essential* unity with Being Itself under the conditions of existence could really be tempted?" The answer involves the distinction between desire and concupiscence. Desire is not wrong in and of itself. It is desire which is unlimited in its quest to exploit "everything through power and pleasure" which qualifies as concupiscence and real temptation (Tillich 2: 128). Concupiscence while in *actual* unity with God (Jesus as Christ) would mean desiring finite fulfillment outside/alongside God. For example, concupiscence results in the paradise story when Adam exceeds/exploits the justified desire to attain knowledge and seeks knowledge without God. In the same way, the temptations presented to Jesus by Satan are real because they go beyond justified desire and result in concupiscence. Unlike Adam, Jesus chooses in finite freedom to reject Satan's temptations for unlimited food, knowledge and power thereby maintaining his unity with God and Its will.

As the New Being, Jesus maintains an actual unity with God while subjecting himself to the negativities and ambiguities of life. He is subjected to real temptations and yet chooses to maintain his unity with God. By way of His participation in the Ground of Being, Jesus as the New Being gains the courage to triumph over the negativities of life. Therefore, the destructive conditions of existence have not been removed but have been overcome by the New Being. Salvation--reunion with the

Divine--is plausible for humans because Jesus the Christ has actualized essential being while within the destructive, existential predicament of humanity. Therefore those who participate in Jesus as the Christ participate in that "New Spirit" thereby receiving the power and courage to overcome estrangement.

D. The Nature of Jesus the Christ

So far we have examined what the New Being was supposed to do, and how It did the work. But we still have to examine just how it is that Jesus takes the form/nature of New Being. This is the question of the Incarnation, which is traditionally answered by reference to the two nature theory formulated by the councils of Nicea and Chalcedony. Tillich departs from the traditional two nature theory in favor of his dynamic-relational theory. In this theory, Jesus is in some way adopted by, and/or takes the form/nature of the Divine *Logos* described in the Gospel of John. The traditional concept of the Incarnation (wherein God takes the form of the flesh in Jesus) is combined by Tillich with his own theory of adoption (Jesus as a human acts to accept the role of the New Being).

Tillich prefers the concept "Eternal God-man-unity" as opposed to the two nature concept (human and divine) when speaking about Jesus as the Christ. Tillich's primary problem with the two nature concept is that ". . . the term 'human nature' is ambiguous and the term 'divine nature' is wholly inadequate" (2: 147). According to Tillich, the two natures are analogous to "blocks whose unity cannot be understood at all" (Tillich 2: 148). In an attempt to avoid the problems associated with a strictly two nature theory, Tillich develops the dynamic-relational concept. The dynamic portion of this concept indicates the ambiguities to which Jesus the Christ was subject as a result of his finitude while the relational element indicates that although Jesus the Christ was in continuous

unity with God, He was not beyond essence and existence like God is. If Jesus was not completely God or completely human, what does the Incarnation mean?

For Tillich, a Christology of Incarnation is necessarily in interdependence with a Christology of adoption. Incarnation is indicative of the paradoxical idea that, the *Logos*, which is beyond the universe, completely manifested Itself through a personal life within the universe (Tillich 2: 149). The *Logos* never ceased being the *Logos* (which the process of metamorphosis would have made necessary) while subjecting Itself to the conditions of existence. This subjection to existence involves "tensions, risks, dangers, and determination by freedom as well as by destiny" (Tillich 2: 149). Thus the choice of Christ to accept the necessary subjection to existence is the adoption component of the Christological paradox. Jesus as the Christ made the choice to be the Christ, the New Being. The Christ, as the Logos accepts the world (adoption) which rejects His offer (Incarnation) to save them. Thus Jesus is neither completely human (although He is finite and experiences the threats of estrangement) nor Being Itself. Rather, Jesus is the New Being, a Divine Principle which makes salvation a present reality/possibility.

E. Salvation

1. The Atonement--

Traditionally, the doctrine of salvation is the doctrine of Atonement. An Atonement theory generally attempts to describe how God was "in Jesus, reconciling the world to Himself." It is beyond the scope of this paper to give a complete history or explanation of the atonement theories but suffice it to say that they generally attempt to explain "What exactly happened or happens with God, Jesus and humanity during salvation? While Tillich does not offer a complete theory, he does present principles which he hopes will guide a further elucidation of his "participating" form of Atonement. By using the term "participating" Tillich attempts to point to the dynamic changes which

occur in existence because of God's participation in existence. For Tillich, the atonement is both an event which occurred (Jesus life and death of the cross) and is an ongoing process (saving events still occur and therefore the atonement or atonements continue(s) to happen).

Tillich makes it clear that the process of atonement is the result of God's action alone. God exercises his justice (the structural form of love) by allowing the "self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement to go their way" (Tillich 2:174). Thus the structures of existence are not altered; rather, God's atoning activity involves Its participation in existential estrangement. Jesus the Christ is the mediator in the form of the New Being through which God acts to reconcile humanity to Itself. The Christ is not some sort of third reality upon which God is dependent for Its atoning work, but it is through the New Being that God participates in the world. (Tillich maintains that saving acts can occur outside of the Christ event. Therefore Tillich cannot say that God is dependent solely upon Christ for performing Its salvation.) God engulfs and transforms existential suffering by way of Its participation in existence. In the cross of Christ, God's central act of ". . . participation in existential estrangement becomes manifest" (Tillich 2: 175). Therefore, those who participate in the New Being, participate in the transforming, atoning action of God. (This participation is only in principle and therefore fragmentary.)

2. Salvation as the restorative, healing power of the New Being--

The transforming/atoning action of God through Jesus as the New Being serves to eliminate the schism between God and humanity. The New Being ". . . is the restorative principle of the whole of this theological system" (Tillich 2: 119). When used in reference to the New Being, the term "salvation" indicates "healing" action. This action means a ". . . reuniting [of] that which is estranged, giving a center to what is split,

overcoming the split between God and man, man and his world, man and himself" (Tillich 2:166). Healing is the power of the New Being whereby the "old eon" is taken into the New Being. Healing is not limited strictly to the Christ event, but may occur and has occurred through revelation within history. Being Itself may ecstatically manifest Itself through an historical event and salvation may occur in such an event if the healing power of the New Being is seriously accepted. The healing of humanity and of the individual is characterized in three ways.

Tillich presents a description of the three traditional processes of salvation: regeneration, justification and sanctification. The first two involve subjective and objective elements. The work of the New Being whereby the "new eon" is presented to the estranged individual is the objective side of regeneration. Subjectively, "regeneration is the state of having been drawn into the new reality manifest in the Jesus as the Christ" (Tillich 2: 177). In regeneration the New Being has prepared the individual for justification. Through justification two things occur: 1)God accepts the one who is unacceptable (objective); and 2)the individual realizes that it is accepted in-spite-of its unacceptability (subjective). Thus through the New Being the individual is made aware of the possibility of salvation (regeneration) and then the individual must accept the fact that it is accepted by God (justification). In this way the human-divine relationship is restored. The third characteristic does not indicate a concrete, specific act but is descriptive of the entire process. "Sanctification is the process in which the power of the New Being transforms personality and community, inside and outside the church" (Tillich 2: 180).

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Thus the New Being as found in Jesus the Christ is Tillich's answer to the soteriological question, "What is the salvation which Jesus as the Christ brought?" The

New Being brings the saving, healing, restoring power necessary to reunify humanity with its Creator. Jesus as the New Being has conquered the God-humanity split in principle and therefore those who participate in Him may be reconnected with God. Estrangement is no longer absolute but may be overcome through participation in the New Being. Through the process of Sanctification, God say's to the fallen, despairing individual, "In-spite-of your unacceptability, in-spite-of your estrangement from Me, you are accepted."

Certainly not everyone agrees with Tillich's answers to the numerous questions involved in a soteriological quest. Although Tillich wished to address the whole of society (as every theologian ideally attempts to) he does not satisfy everyone. Following is a critique of Tillich's quest by one of those people whom Tillich did not satisfy-- Alexander J. McKelway.

IV Critiques of Tillich's Soteriology

A. McKelway's Concerns

> This [the] problem and danger, to put the matter simply, is the lack of a consistent focus on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ . . . . there is the danger that man will be seen apart from who he is revealed to be in Christ and that God's revelation and salvation will be found in some other way or at some other place than in Jesus Christ (McKelway 177).

McKelway disagrees with Tillich's utilization of the Johnain principle of a Divine *Logos*. Within the Gospel of John, McKelway finds little or no evidence for an emphasis upon Jesus as the fulfillment of a Divine principle. Rather, McKelway discovers a single theme at work throughout the Book. "That theme is Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and who, because he is 'in the bosom of the Father,' is said to be 'in the beginning' and

'with God.' and who therefore--in this sense--is God" (McKelway 178). Because the New Testament clearly and distinctly focuses on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, McKelway questions Tillich's dynamic-relational model of the Incarnation. In this model Tillich attempts to avoid denying Jesus' human elements by illustrating how Jesus in some way adopted the Divine Principle termed the "*Logos*." McKelway, on the other hand thinks the humanity of Jesus is the human element which God contains within Itself. Instead of the adoption theory, which unnecessarily diverts our attention away from Jesus' divinity, McKelway returns to a more orthodox position by emphasizing that in Jesus we see the revelation of God.

Tillich's concept of the "New Being as an eternal principle of salvation" also causes McKelway to become concerned (McKelway 181). Earlier, the "Christ event" (Christ's death on the cross and resurrection) was explained as the central event whereby all other saving/healing events which occur throughout history are to be judged. Because the whole of the New Testament points to the "Christ event" as the culminating act whereby God was "reconciling the world to Itself," McKelway thinks that looking elsewhere for saving acts is both unnecessary and unbiblical. Therefore in regards to salvation, McKelway does not think saving/healing may be experienced outside or alongside the work of Jesus on the cross. For McKelway, all problems which humanity encounters and from which saving is needed are to be answered by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as described in the Bible.

McKelway does not think Tillich's restitution theory sufficiently illuminates Jesus as the concrete ". . . presence of God in the midst of man's sin and death and His victory over it" (181). Tillich focuses on the "ecstatic experience" whereby the New Being/Logos is reunited with the historical/concrete life of Jesus. However, McKelway does not feel that this theory is congruent with the Biblical story. In the New Testament

stories McKelway finds very physical, concrete language describing Jesus' actual appearance three days after His death. Although the appearances are mysterious and at times inexplicable, they contain realistic, authentic and physical elements which cannot be reduced to an "ecstatic experience." Therefore both McKelway and Tillich agree that somehow Jesus is made present within reality by way of the Spirit, but McKelway feels that we cannot deny the concrete aspect of Jesus' resurrection.

In addition to McKelway's concerns about Tillich's utilization of the New Being concept, McKelway also raises questions about Tillich's overall method. According to McKelway, the fundamental problem with Tillich's method is his failure to realize that, ". . . in Jesus Christ, God has fully revealed both his deity and his humanity in such a way that we can speak neither of the knowledge of God nor of man apart from Him [Jesus]" (McKelway 187). McKelway questions whether Tillich adequately acknowledges that essential humanity is not split. For McKelway, essential humanity is found not by looking at the human in existence, but by examining the life of Jesus Christ as described in the Bible. The essential human as revealed in Jesus Christ was not separated from God; in Jesus' life there was no human/divine split. McKelway thinks that throughout Tillich's system, Tillich makes sin/estrangement appear acceptable to God. McKelway's point is that God does not allow sin and evil, but that Tillich begins with the assumption that God does allow it. Tillich makes evil a necessary component of existence. "The so-called reality of sin can only be considered the most unreal and impossible of situations, which cannot stand and which itself is destined to fall" (McKelway 186).

Overall McKelway is appreciative of Tillich's work and acknowledges the depth with which Tillich has described the human situation. However, McKelway thinks Tillich addresses the wrong person in his theology. The person which McKelway finds appropriate is the one " . . . to whom mercy has been given, the man called, sanctified,

the approval of his peers (to overcome his estrangement) is the willingness to kill for something which is considered popular. High priced shoes, high priced jackets, clothes with particular colors, and anything which appears desirable to the collective consciousness of the group is sought by the person seeking acceptance. Let's take one example--the shoes--and ask how Tillich might further explain the "killing desire" for them.

At first glance it may appear the gang member desires the shoes simply because they are nice things to wear. However this is not the type of desire which leads her to kill. It is not the shoes themselves which are desirable, but the social status and feeling of worth which supposedly accompanies the shoes. The shoes are desirable because through them, the gang member thinks she will gain acceptance, fulfillment and elevate herself beyond what she presently is (i.e. to a higher social status). She has not experienced fulfillment or acceptance through God and is now seeking fulfillment and acceptance in other ways. This failure to experience God's acceptance and consequent turning to the gang for acceptance is an example and result of unbelief. In an act of *hubris*, she puts herself in the role of God which is to say she has elevated herself to the role of elevating herself by taking inappropriate action to acquire the shoes. She is under the control of "A demonic structure [which] drives man to confuse natural self-affirmation with destructive self-elevation" (Tillich 2: 51). The gang member who kills for shoes does not perceive the consequences of her actions for those outside her environment (her uncenteredness makes it impossible for her to do so) and is desperately striving to achieve acceptance through the shoes.

The desire to be accepted and the willingness to do almost anything to gain acceptance is not limited to the street gangs. I think this "gang mentality" is evident throughout society in varying degrees and manifests itself in a number of ways. Take, for

example the bystander at an accident where someone is in need but no one does anything. Why doesn't he or anyone else do anything? Psychologists attribute this unwillingness to act to many factors including the diffusion of responsibility which occurs in a group setting. Such diffusion may happen, but why? I think Tillich would say the central cause of this diffusion is the "gang mentality" of each individual standing there. Acting risks "standing out from the crowd," being different and therefore unacceptable. In this case in-action is similar to the shoes in that through the shoes and the in-action one gains acceptance (although it is a distorted, temporary form of acceptance).

3. Acceptance found in the New Being--

The Power of the New Being approaches people searching for acceptance with the message, "You are accepted, you do not need to do anything except accept the fact that you are accepted." Tillich's healing message is not presented as something which must be attained. Rather it is presented as a completely unconditional, welcoming message. Instead of demanding specific actions or words, Tillich's concept of salvation approaches those in despair, depression, lonelinessor meaninglessness with complete acceptance, with no judgments and says, "You are accepted." Although there remain many mysteries of the Christian faith, the one thing about which Tillich as a Christian is certain is that because of and through the New Being there is Divine acceptance.

Thus, the first step of the Christian who utilizes Tillich's concept of salvation in the attempt to "save" the gang member is to make her aware that she is accepted. The awareness that she is accepted may not occur easily. She may not even be fully conscious of her *need* for acceptance. In order to make her cognizant of her most basic need for complete acceptance, the need which appears to be driving her entire life, one must seek to show her how things can be better. By this I mean that for a "Tillichian" the saving message is not presented in a judgmental fashion. The judgment is already

occurring through the structures of destruction (The structural form of love). Rather, the gang member is made cognizant of her need for healing by saying things like, "Look at the better existence which is possible. Here is an example of what you can achieve. The way you are existing need not be a continuous burden to you. You do not need to attempt to escape real authentic existence through drugs or surrendering to the group consciousness."

This is just one example of how I think Tillich's thought functions in our present culture. Descriptions of how Tillich is applicable to life would take an another entire paper to describe. His thought is useful in gaining an understanding of why people perform unacceptable actions. Certainly there are numerous factors which can be considered the cause of a particular action, and no one can absolutely determine the specific cause of an action. However, I think Tillich's thought does "chime" with many aspects of our present culture. In our secularized society Tillich's thought still serves to illuminate the Christian view of society. Of the numerous thinkers past and present Tillich stands out as someone who has realistically explicated the Christian message in American culture.

CONCLUSION

A. The Fall

Tillich eagerly seeks to reformulate the Christian message in such a way that it can "speak" to the present culture. In his attempt to reformulate the concepts of sin and salvation Tillich uses both modern philosophical traditions and traditional theological concepts such as God, Jesus Christ, Spirit, and revelation.

Tillich begins his soteriological quest by explaining the "fallen" existential state of humanity. However, before Tillich describes the human in existence, he describes how the person arrives in the existential state. The human originates or evolves from a realm of potentiality which Tillich terms "potential non-being." The evolution or actualization of an individual is the result of the individual's choice which is simultaneously free and destined. The transition from essential to existential being results in a loss of "dreaming innocence" which is replaced by the condition of estrangement. Thus estrangement is the existential predicament of humanity. Estrangement from oneself, others and God characterize human existence. This state of sin is noticeable as unbelief, hubris and concupiscence which accompany all human action. These expressions of sin in turn threaten to destroy the very structures of existence. Thus the ontological elements and categories are in danger of self-destructing. All attempts by the individual to avoid the threat of destruction (the threat of non-being) prove futile and ultimately end in the state of despair.

Tillich relies heavily upon the use of existentialism and ontology to explain sin. Although Tillich believes the Biblical story of the fall expresses the state of sin, it does so in a highly symbolic fashion. In this respect Tillich differs from the conservatives who tend more towards a literal or concrete interpretation and subsequent use of the Bible. Tillich does not completely deny the Bible as some extremist liberals do or have done.

Tillich is a conservative in-so-far-as he believes humans are unable to remain within God's will and that this inability to remain united with God is their destiny. Yet, Tillich joins the liberal camp in-so-far as he credits humans with the capability of making a free decision for or against God. Conservatives disagree with Tillich's assertion that estrangement, not death, is the *main* result of the fall. However, most conservatives and liberals agree that humanity is in some way "cut off" from its Creator. Thus, Tillich's most basic view of humanity as estranged remains in agreement with the orthodox[3] beliefs of the Christian church concerning sin.

B. Salvation

Tillich's solution to the estrangement of humanity is Jesus the Christ as the New Being. The man Jesus of Nazareth receives the title Christ because he fulfills the role of overcoming the old structures of existence. Jesus is called the New Being because He actualized essential being in the existential realm; He actualized the "*new* structures of existence" while under the "old structures of existence." The most powerful expression of Jesus as the New Being overcoming estrangement is found in the symbols of the cross and resurrection. The Crucifixion symbolizes how the New Being confronted the ultimate threat to finite beings which is death. Not only did the New Being confront death but He triumphed over death as the experience of the resurrection affirms. Because Jesus as the New Being has conquered estrangement those who participate in Him receive the power to escape sin and be reunited with Being Itself.

In Tillich's reformulation of salvation his concept of the New Being functions in a variety of ways. From a conservative perspective, Jesus' primary function was/is to

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[3]"By orthodox . . . I mean something purely descriptive. Orthodox Christianity is that form of Christianity which won [wins] the support of the overwhelming majority of Christians and which is espressed by most of the official proclamations or creeds of Christian groups" (William E. Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology).

provide humanity with eternal life; to overcome the loss of eternal life which results from sin. Because the New Being focuses on overcoming estrangement *in this life*, a conservative would think that Tillich has removed the primary function of Jesus Christ. However, from a liberal standpoint Tillich has liberated Jesus from His previously limited role of simply providing victory over death. In-so-far-as the New Being is a present reality which works within history to heal humanity, Tillich joins the liberal insistence that Jesus must relate to our present culture. Tillich is a conservative in-so-far-as the New Being makes humanity aware of its participation in Being Itself and thereby of its eternal life in Being Itself.

As I concluded earlier, both conservatives and liberals agree that as a result of sin, humanity is in some way "cut off" from its Creator. For Tillich, humanity is saved from its estrangement through and by the power of Jesus the Christ as the New Being.

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