KARL RAHNER'S CONCEPT OF REVELATION:
A CONVERGENCE OF TRADITIONAL, BIBLICAL
AND CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

by
Peter Travis Kroeker

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

The theological category of "divine revelation" must
address today the problem of how conceptually to conceive
of God and the relation of God to a historical and secular,
"natural" world.   In the context of Christian theology this
involves the questions of the authority of tradition and of
scripture, and how to reinterpret Christian faith in a non-
authoritarian, rational, and meaningfully relevant way.
Karl Rahner is a Roman Catholic theologian who has attempted
to address this problem, to articulate a theological vision
which retrieves the Christian tradition through a process of
faith seeking understanding in human experience, through a
"transcendental anthropology." It is Rahner's conviction that
human experience is at its very core the experience of God
as the mysterious source and _telos_ of the world. Rahner's
transcendental anthropological understanding of revelation
theology paves the way for an incarnational convergence of
traditional, biblical, and contemporary theology, and in
this thesis we will seek to sketch and evaluate the main
contours of this convergence.

Rahner's own theological roots are to be found in St.
Thomas Aquinas, and in the first chapter the general Catholic
background to Rahner's theological concerns is briefly out-
lined, with particular reference to Thomas' understanding of
revelation. Thomas' concept of revelation, while it exhibits
an impressive participatory synthesis, employs an intellectu-
alist and ahistorical model of prophecy which cannot do

justice either to scripture or to contemporary human experience; it must therefore be reinterpreted in our changed theological and historical milieu. Rahner, while preserving Thomas' emphases on the mystery and hiddenness of God in revelation and the analogical character of all theology, seeks to expound an anthropocentric, historical and non-authoritarian concept of revelation which does greater justice to the biblical texts and contemporary human experience than Thomas' medieval approach.

In chapter two, then, we consider Rahner's transcendental anthropology as the modern locus in which his view of revelation is developed. Rahner's theological starting point is a transcendental analysis of the human situation, investigating the inner conditions which make possible historical human experience--knowledge, freedom and faith. His approach grows out of the Marechal school of transcendental Thomism, and he seeks to establish the thesis that human knowledge and historical experience is predicated on mankind's openness to God as the absolute horizon of Being who grounds human being and meaning. This "supernatural existential" implies a universal self-revelation of God which is present in creation, in the very ontological structure of human being, and it is the historical experience and articulation of this supernatural existential which constitutes salvation (revelation) history. It is in this way that Rahner seeks to unite transcendence and history in the human quest for identity, for God, a unity which is mediated by the insight of

"prophetic" traditions, i.e. the meaningful historical articulation of the experience of God. These prophetic traditions are not to be understood in an authoritarian or objectivist manner, but can only be apprehended in the reductio ad mysterium of faith; thus theology is the science of mystery which is best carried out in the church as the community of faith.

The ecclesial mediation of revelation through the continual reappropriation of scripture and tradition thus constitutes the focus of chapter three. In this chapter we seek to understand Rahner's view of the authority and inspiration of scripture and its relation to the development of dogma in Christian tradition. Bringing his theological vision into a more explicit conversation with the biblical literature and the findings of contemporary biblical scholarship, we wish to test the hermeneutical and biblical adequacy of Rahner's synthetic perspective.

Christology lies at the heart of Rahner's incarnational theology, and in chapter four we examine Rahner's Christological starting point and his interpretation of the Christ event and its significance. Rahner has been criticized precisely at this point for his failure to adequately represent the historical and concrete teachings of the New Testament regarding Jesus Christ by employing categories which are too abstract and philosophical. Therefore our central concern in chapter four is not only to determine the role of Christology in Rahner's thought, but also to discover

whether his modern reinterpretation of Chalcedonian Christo-
logy is congruent with the Christological models of the
New Testament.

This theme is taken up in a new context in chapter five,
where we evaluate the practical theology which flows from
Rahner's incarnational vision. Does Rahner's Christology
relate to revelation as praxis, and how is this relevant
to the church, which, as the sacrament of salvation for
the world, extends and represents the Incarnation in history?
In this final chapter, then, we critically consider the
possibilities for a convergence of traditional, biblical,
and contemporary theology in Rahner's thought from the
standpoint of praxis and the relation between the church
and the world.

ABBREVIATIONS

Foundations	Foundations of the Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity
S.M.	Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, 6 volumes
S.T.	Summa Theologica
T.I.	Theological Investigations, Volumes I-XVII, XX

CHAPTER I

KARL RAHNER'S ROOTS IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Introduction

The task of the Christian theologian is to reflect critically upon the meanings of Christian scripture and tradition in a manner appropriate to the contemporary setting. Only insofar as the claims, images, and teachings of that tradition continue to illumine present human experience in a coherent, meaningful, and comprehensive way can the vitality of Christian tradition and theology be maintained. Central to the claims and doctrines of Christianity is the concept of revelation, which assumes as its ultimate source the participation and self-communication of God in history. At the same time, central to the self-understanding of the modern western world is its characteristic "turn to the subject," in which humanity is recognized as the creator of meaning in history. The consequent problematic of the possibility and modality of divine revelation in a thoroughly relativistic and anthropocentric history is therefore a critical focus of contemporary theological reflection.

This problematic has a multiplicity of facets and permutations: the relation of Geschichte and Heilsgeschichte, "inner" and "outer" history, faith and reason, nature and

grace, theology and culture. The list could be protracted, but at the heart of each of these correlates lies an alienation which seeks to be resolved, an aporia which implores a new way to wholeness via a unitary method. Within the parameters of the theological enterprise itself this alienation has accomplished one of its most caustic results in the division between the study of the written sources of revelation--the scriptural texts--and the appropriation of those sources in language and concepts relevant and accessible to the contemporary world. The lacuna between biblical and dogmatic theology admits of no facile synthesis, yet both must take the results of the other seriously--the historical and the philosophical--if Christianity is to have an authentic "revelatory" function. What we are speaking about, in a word, is what may be called a "hermeneutic of revelation"[1] or an "ontology of events"[2] which provides an understanding of faith, of God's relation to the world, in a manner which integrates objective historicity and subjective response in an irreducible unity. One of the most prominent theologians to attempt this task in our day is Karl Rahner, who, by means of his "transcendental anthropology" has delineated a theological approach which addresses the above problematic. In this thesis, we will engage Karl Rahner's theology in order to descry his contribution to a contemporary understanding of revelation, with special attention to its significance for a convergence between traditional, biblical, and contemporary

theology.[3]

Of course, as a Jesuit and therefore a "church theo-
logian," Rahner's thought must be viewed in its Roman Catho-
lic context. Despite the ecumenical convergence of Catholic
and Protestant theology, particularly following Vatican II,
there remain in Rahner's theology certain distinctively
"Catholic" lineaments, not least of which being his overt
Thomism, which must be taken into account. With the nine-
teenth century eclipse of the Tübingen school of Catholic
theology by the neo-scholastic Thomism of Joseph Kleutgen and
his colleages and disciples, the shape of Vatican I pronounce-
ments and twentieth century Catholic theology was decisively
cast.[4] Defensively attacking the Tübingen theologians for
their openness to subjective post-Kantian idealism and
scientific historical study (biblical criticism)--in other
words, their open dialogue with contemporary thought and Prot-
estant theology--the neo-Thomists espoused an anti-historical
Thomism resolutely based on an Aristotelian scientific
method which objectively and analytically defined theologi-
cal truth in dogmatic propositions. This positivistic
alignment of Aristotelian epistemology, anthropology and
metaphysics with St. Thomas' theology, ratified by Pope Leo
XIII's encyclical _Aeterni Patris_, provided a sought-for
unitary method, but one which operated in a static, two-
story universe of nature and supernature and which therefore
conceived of revelation in an "extrinsicist" manner. Such
a view could cope neither with historical development and

the multiplicity of conceptual frameworks in the history of theology (i.e. it lacked an historical method) nor with the spiritual and community life of the human subject (who was viewed as an individual abstract nature).[5] As Gerald McCool points out, Kleutgen and the neo-Thomists failed to perceive the significance of the metaphysics of the act of existence in Thomas' thought which distinguished it from the static Aristotelian essentia.[6] Given its lack of sensitivity for scripture, exegesis, and positive theology, as well as the absence of a modern historical method, neo-Thomism was destined to become an arid and narrow scholasticism.[7]

It was in this context that the "modernist" controversy arose around the turn of the century, led by scholars such as Loisy, Blondel, and Tyrell.[8] Although they cannot be uniformly described, these thinkers all accepted the results of biblical criticism, espoused a metaphysics of becoming (historical evolution) rather than being, and advocated an epistemology of intuition rather than abstraction. This, of course, placed them beyond the pale of neo-scholasticism and they thus incurred the censure of the church. It was not until the static neo-scholastic framework was attacked from within through a return to its original sources, St. Thomas in particular, that Thomism as a monolithic system was fragmented and theological pluralism acknowledged.[9] These new theologians sought to retrieve Thomas in such a way as to overcome the static, objectivist interpretation of him by neo-scholasticism,

and in a manner more congenial and adequate to the modern
world.

The great influence of this renewal movement in
Catholic theology was demonstrated at Vatican II, particular-
ly in the dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, Dei
Verbum, in which the first draft of the constitution, which
was thoroughly informed by neo-scholastic categories, was
decisively rejected and eventually replaced by a much more
open and progressive statement.[10] One of the most influ-
ential of these renewal theologians, particularly at
Vatican II, where he was an official theological consultant,
is Karl Rahner, and it is to his thought that we now turn.
We begin with Rahner's reinterpretation of the most impor-
tant traditional source of scholasticism and also perhaps of
modern Catholic theology, St. Thomas Aquinas. After out-
lining the basic characteristics of Thomas' classical view
of revelation, we will proceed to a critical examination of
the reified neo-scholastic appropriation of Thomas which has
been attacked as internally inconsistent, incompatible with
modern self-understanding, and incommensurate with the
biblical data. Rahner, in contrast, propounds a different
understanding of revelation which retrieves Thomas'
emphasis on the mystery of God and the analogical character
of all theology, in a manner more in keeping with the spirit
of Thomas' thought and in authentic dialogue with the
modern world and biblical studies.

St. Thomas Aquinas begins his vast treatise for "the instruction of beginners" in matters of "sacred doctrine," with a discussion of "the nature and extent of sacred doctrine," and in the first article of this first question in the Summa Theologica, he asserts the following:

> It was necessary for man's salvation that
> there should be a knowledge revealed by God,
> besides philosophical science built up by
> human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man
> is directed to God, as to an end that sur-
> passes the grasp of his reason . . . .
> Even as regards those truths about God which
> human reason could have discovered, it was
> necessary that man should be taught by a
> divine revelation; because the truth about
> God such as reason could discover, would
> only be known by a few, and that after a
> long time, and with the admixture of many
> errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which
> is in God, depends upon the knowledge of
> this truth. Therefore, in order that the
> salvation of man might be brought about more
> fitly and more surely, it was necessary that,
> . . . . besides philosophical science built
> up by reason, there should be a sacred
> science learnt through revelation.[11]

Hence, although Thomas nowhere undertakes an explicit examination of "revelation" as a category or theme of his theology,[12] this opening statement discloses its central importance for him as the presupposition of all sacred doctrine.

In this passage we are presented with a number of immediately identifiable characteristics of revelation, as Thomas views it. First, it is a knowledge revealed by God; hence revelation is primarily conceived as an intellectual act of cognition. This knowledge, however, exceeds the capacity of natural human reason and therefore

(as we see in I, 1, 2) cannot be the subject of a proper
science, but proceeds "from principles known by the light
of a higher science" and hence must be accepted by _faith_
(I, 1, 1 ad 1).[13] Furthermore, this knowledge surpasses
rational apprehension because of its exalted subject matter[14]
and object,[15] namely the teleological goal and fulfilment
of mankind which is God himself; hence this knowledge con-
cerns the _salvation of God_.[16] We must also notice that
although revelation is authoritatively revealed from above,
beyond human reason, it does nonetheless also contain
knowledge accessible by human reason insofar as it has
reference to God (I, 1, 7). Thus, although revelation
properly conceived is distinct from reason, it is not
contrary to reason because it is established upon the
First Truth (II-II, 1). Hence:

> . . . sacred doctrine makes use even of human
> reason, not, indeed to prove faith (for
> thereby the merit of faith would come to an
> end), but to make clear other things that
> are put forward in this doctrine. Since
> therefore grace does not destroy nature,
> but perfects it, natural reason should
> minister to faith as the natural bent of
> the will ministers to charity.
> (I, 1, 8 ad 2)

In this chapter, then, we will more closely examine
the above mentioned components of revelation in order to
understand better its role in Thomas' theology. We will
discuss first the process or act of revelation itself in
prophecy, and then proceed to its manner of communication
and its ultimate purpose and fulfilment, before concluding
with some critical remarks regarding interpretation.

The Act of Revelation: Prophecy, Rapture and the Deiform Intellect

In I, 2 of the Summa, Thomas turns to a consideration of the manner in which God is knowable, stating that because "the ultimate beatitude of man consists in the use of his highest function, which is the operation of the intellect," this beatitude lies in the knowledge of God, who as pure act and therefore pure being (ipsum esse, I, 3, 4) is therefore also supremely knowable.[17] However, because God as pure intelligibility exceeds the natural capacity of the created intellect, he cannot be an object of human knowledge. This is more readily perceived when it is understood that, according to Thomas, knowledge (intellectual vision) requires that "the thing seen is in a certain way in the seer" (I, 12, 2), namely according to the mode of the knower; hence the knowledge of the knower is delimited by its nature. Since the mode of being of human nature is corporeal and its existence is created and participated, not only is it impossible for humans to know things which are not in matter (e.g., angels), but even less can they know self-subsistent being (I, 12, 4), i.e. God, whose essence and existence are one.[18]

Here we must examine the human act of cognition more closely if we are to understand the possibility of revelation and the beatific (immediate) vision of God, i.e. salvific knowledge and salvation respectively. In the first place, all human knowledge is derived from sense perceptions

which are hypostatized (not substantially but as "simili-tude") by the imagination, which mediates this "phantasm" to the active (agent) intellect, whose function it is to illumine the image, that is, to abstract the formal (essential) universal element contained in the particular image/object.[19] The judgement thus made by the light of the active intellect as to what a thing is, is in turn assimilated by the passive intellect, and the truth of this knowledge is determined by "the conformity of intellect and thing" in the judgement (I, 16, 2). Obviously, since the essence of God cannot be represented by any created simili-tude (I, 12, 2), God cannot be perceived by the senses or via the imagination, which are the normal processes of human knowledge (I, 12, 3).

However, the non-corporeal light of the human in-tellect which participates, as it were, the light of the first intellect (which is God, I, 12, 2),[20] is capable in prin-ciple of seeing the essence of God, but only if God him-self informs the intellect in such manner that "the divine essence is united to the created intellect, as the object actually understood, making the intellect in act by and of itself." (I, 12, 2 ad 3). This is what is known as the "immediate vision" of God and it is only possible if God elevates the human intellect above its own nature by grace (I, 12, 4).

> . . . it is necessary that the power of
> understanding [21] should be added by di-
> vine grace. Now this increase of the

> intellectual powers is called the illumi-
> nation of the intellect, as we also call
> the intelligible object itself by the name
> of light or illumination . . . . By this
> light the blessed are made deiform--that
> is, like to God . . . .   (I, 12, 5)

This deiform intellect is the ultimate beatitude and ful-
filment of human being, the salvation which constitutes
the focus and end of revelation.

From this context in which the possible beatifica-
tion of the human intellect is clarified, we are better able
to understand Thomas' explicit discussion of the nature and
process of revelation in II-II, 171 and following of the
Summa. We have already noted that revelation is primarily
a cognitive act, a knowledge of salvation which surpasses
the light of natural reason and thus requires the gracious
elevation of the intellect by God. Thomas explains that
this is a two-fold process involving both inspiration, as
the elevation and illumination of the intellect by God,
and the actual revelation, namely the "very perception of
Divine things" (II-II, 171, 1 ad 4). But it is the divine
light which constitutes the formal element in prophetic
knowledge (II-II, 171, 3 ad 3). In the prophetic vision,
this divine light takes the place of the active intellect,[22]
thus assuming the judicative function of the cognitive
act--that which classifies and interprets the images which
it receives, which is obviously the more important function
and therefore the primary characteristic of prophecy
(II-II, 173, 2).[23] However, in both of these aspects of

knowledge--representation and judgement--the gift of prophecy surpasses the natural abilities of the human mind.[24]

Concerning the images which are divinely presented to the prophet's mind in the revelatory experience, this can be accomplished in various ways: by way of sense perception, by forms implanted in the imagination (which is accompanied by abstraction from the senses, II-II, 173, 3, and can take the form of dreams, visions, or ecstasy, II-II, 174, 1 ad 3), or by the direct impression of intelligible species on the mind (II-II, 173, 2). These images, to become intelligible, require the enlightening interpretation of supernatural light (II-II, 173, 2 ad 3), but this prophetic light must be distinguished from the immediate vision of the divine essence in two ways. First, prophecy is not a habit, i.e. "the prophetic light is not in the prophet's intellect by way of an abiding form, else a prophet would always be able to prophecy . . . ." (II-II, 171, 2). Therefore the divine illumination is present only as a passion, a transitory impression, whereas the light of the beatified is present as an abiding and complete form.[25] Secondly, the recipients of prophetic vision do not see the very essence of God in an immediate way, but see only those types of divine knowledge which God deems necessary to reveal to them (II-II, 171, 4; 173, 1). Thomas likens prophetic knowledge to a "mirror image" of the divine truth, in contrast to the direct and perfect sight of the visio beatifica (II-II, 173, 1): "Prophecy is by way of being something imperfect in the genus of Divine

revelation . . . . The Divine revelation will be brought to its perfection in heaven . . ." (II-II, 171, 4 ad 2).[26]

The revelatory experience of prophecy can have various degrees of intensity or excellence according to the intellective purity of its perception, i.e. the nearer its approximation to the end and fulfilment of man in the beatific vision:

> But it is evident that the manifestation of divine truth by means of the bare contemplation of the truth itself, is more effective than that which is conveyed under the similitude of corporeal things, for it approaches nearer to the heavenly vision whereby the truth is seen in God's essence.
> (II-II, 174, 2)

Hence in prophecy proper, ecstasy is accorded the highest status of imaginary vision because it is most purely and consciously intellective; and visual appearance of the intermediary is prophetically more expressive than words alone, which are more expressive than mere significative images (II-II, 174, 3). However, the highest degree of prophecy, which exceeds the parameters of prophecy proper, is the purely intellective vision, without any accompanying vision in the imagination (II-II, 174, 3). This vision only Moses, the first teacher of the Jews and the greatest of the prophets,[27] and Paul, the first teacher of the gentiles and the greatest of the apostles, were privelaged to receive (II-II, 174, 4; 175). This "super-prophetic" experience Thomas calls "rapture," and it is characterised by a temporary immediate vision of God, thus

differing from the beatific vision only insofar as the
latter is of a permanent form (II-II, 174, 5 ad 1).[28]
Such a state of rapture entails a certain "violation" of
human nature because one is withdrawn from the senses and
uplifted to the realm of supernature in order to perceive
the divine essence itself. But it is an elevation which,
though it exceeds human nature, is not contrary to nature
but rather perfects it as the image of God (II-II, 175, 1).

Having established the process of revelation to be
a cognitive act of knowledge, we proceed now to Thomas'
understanding of the content of revelation: what kind of
knowledge is this salvific truth which God communicates to
the recipient of revelation? We find firstly that it is
an enlightened knowledge "whereby it is possible to know
all things both Divine and human, both spiritual and
corporeal . . . ."(II-II, 171, 3). The knowledge of
revelation can thus be divided into two categories:
1) the formal objects of faith and theology which can be
known only by way of revelation and therefore belong more
properly to the realm of prophetic knowledge, i.e. the
revelatum; and 2) those theological truths related to God
and salvation which are attainable by natural reason but
are placed into the ordo ad Deum by revelation, i.e. the
revelabilia (I, 1, 1; II-II, 1, 1). But properly under-
stood, revelation is the communication of the revelatum,
and this consists primarily in two things: the true know-
ledge of God (revealed in the Trinity) and the mystery of

Christ's incarnation (primarily the hypostatic union) (II-II, 174, 6).[29] These truths were progressively re-vealed in three stages: before the law to Abraham, under the law to Moses, and under grace through the Son of God, the last of which is the revelation vouchsafed to the apostles and on which the entire faith of the church is established (II-II, 174, 6).[30]

We have seen that knowledge is the primary charac-teristic of prophetic (revelatory) experience, but this knowledge is provided for the edification of the church. Hence, "it follows that prophecy consists secondarily in speech, in so far as the prophets declare for the instruc-tion of others" (II-II, 171, 1), and it is this thematiza-tion of prophetic knowledge, this didactic and ecclesial transmission of revelation, which we will now consider.

The Communication of Revelation: Sacra Doctrina

Before we can fully understand Thomas' conception of sacra doctrina, it will be necessary to point out two further (related) characteristics of the act of revelation in proph-ecy, namely hierarchy and authority. In his discussion of the act of revelation, Thomas likens the recipient of revelation to a student being taught by God, where

> the truth of knowledge is the same in
> disciple and teacher since the knowledge
> of the disciple is a likeness of the know-
> ledge of the teacher . . . . Consequently
> the same truth must needs be in prophetic
> knowledge and utterances, as in the Divine
> knowledge, under which nothing false can
> come . . . .   (II-II, 171, 6)

The truth of revelation is revealed by divine authority
and cannot be rationally confirmed or denied; hence the
third concern of prophecy is the working of miracles which
offer a supernatural confirmation in support of the author-
itative revelation (II-II, 171, 1; 178).

This authority is maintained, furthermore, in a
hierarchical order in which those with greater participa-
tion in the perfection of divine goodness convey the revela-
tion to those of lower degree, e.g. the angels mediate
revelation from God to man in prophecy proper (II-II,
172, 2).[31] Likewise, in the communication of revelation to
the faithful these same principles apply, viz. "in order
that a man arrive at the perfect vision of heavenly happi-
ness, he must first of all believe God, as a disciple be-
lieves the master who is teaching him" (II-II, 2, 3); and
the content of this teaching is hierarchically mediated by
the doctors of the church as they conform to the author-
ity of the canonical scriptures written by the apostles and
prophets who received the revelation.[32] This scriptural
authority is strongly upheld by Thomas, for even though it
is not to be identified with the revelation per se (I, 1,
2 ad 2), which occurs in the act of cognition alone, it is
the locutio based on the revelatio which therefore contains
the articles of faith necessary for salvation.

The fact that the original revelatory experience
is subsequently expressed in word in order to be communi-
cated to the faithful means, eo ipso, that those with faith

possess less perfect knowledge (cf. II-II, 9) and under-
standing (cf. II-II, 8) of the revealed truth than the re-
cipients of revelation. This is so because for the faith-
ful truth is propositionally known in the mode proper to
the human intellect, which is "to know the truth by syn-
thesis and analysis" and "with a certain amount of com-
plexity" (II-II, 1, 2). The knowledge communicated by
word is not that of cognitive vision of the objects of
faith, but rather analogical signification of divine truths
which are veiled by similitude (I, 1, 9; 12, 11 ad 1).[33]
Words as the signs of ideas, which are the similitudes of
things, cannot properly apply to that which transcends rea-
son and nature, and therefore can never be viewed as uni-
vocal representations of the objects of revelation.
Rather, they must be understood proportionally, that is,
"according to the relation of a creature to God as its
principle and cause" (I, 13, 5), recognizing at the same
time that this relation exists not in God, who exists out-
side the order of creation as its first cause or ground,
but in the mind of the finite creature who must think in
temporal, historical categories.[34] One must also recognize
that although revealed knowledge is predicated substantial-
ly of God, it does not fully represent him because the
finite significations lack God's infinite perfection
(I, 13, 2). Even the positive knowledge of revelation,
therefore, is only properly understood by way of negation,
as Thomas points out in his article on the possibility of

affirmative propositions about God:

> . . . when it [our intellect] understands
> simple things above itself, it understands
> them according to its own mode, which is in
> a composite manner; yet not so as to under-
> stand them to be composite things.
>
> (I, 13, 12, ad 3)

In this manner the knowledge of revelation is communicated
in scripture and by the symbols of the church, i.e. the
creeds and traditions which explicate the scriptures
(II-II, 1, 9 and 10), and believed by faith as God en-
lightens or "proportions" the intellect (I, 12, 1 ad 4).[35]

As we have previously noted, faith and reason,
though distinct, are not incompatible. So reason is also
employed in the communication of revelation insofar as it
is subsumed under the guidance of revelation and faith,
that is, subservient to the divine order.[36] Thus reason
can be employed to answer objections to the articles of
faith (I, 1, 8; II-II, 2, 10 ad 2), to clarify the teaching
of sacred doctrine (I, 1, 5 ad 2), and to demonstrate the
"preambles of faith" which are "a necessary presupposition
to matters of faith" (II-II, 1, 5 ad 3), because "faith
presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes
nature, and perfection presupposes something that can be
perfected" (I, 2, 2 ad 1). It is obvious, then, that
revelation has as its primary focus and purpose the per-
fection of human nature, to provide knowledge of the divine
order which enables the human creature, by the grace of
God, to pattern and direct his or her life according to

its end, namely the immediate vision. Revelation is
therefore not so much necessary because of human sinful-
ness[37] as because of human finitude and corporeality.
It is not so much an historical phenomenon[38] as the cog-
nitive communication of divine knowledge. Sacred doctrine
is the rational presentation and explication of revelation
which points to the ultimate source and end of human
nature, thereby earning the designation "the science of
God and the blessed" (I, 1, 2).

We have now come to the final aspect of the circle
of faith belonging to revelation--namely its perfection
in the beatific vision, i.e. salvation. Of course, this
has been repeatedly mentioned above, for revelation can
only be discussed in correlation with the beatific vision.
It remains for us to examine more carefully the nature of
that immediate vision in which the ultimate and permanent
self-communication (or revelation) of God is realized.

Revelation as Salvation: The Beatific Vision

Earlier in this chapter it was pointed out that the
excess intelligibility of God above the human intellect pre-
cluded any natural knowledge of God in himself. We went on
to show, however, that if God gratuitously elevated the
intellect beyond its ordinary nature, it could participate
the essence of God immediately. It must now be pointed out
that this excess remains even in the beatific vision, i.e.
since the created intellect remains finite in its mode, it

cannot know God infinitely in the mode of God's existence:

> Since therefore the created light of glory
> received into any created intellect cannot
> be infinite, it is clearly impossible for
> any created intellect to know God in an
> infinite degree. Hence it is impossible
> that it should comprehend God.
>
> (I, 12, 7)

Thus in the immediate vision of the blessed, God is seen, possessed, and enjoyed "as the ultimate fulfilment of desire" (I, 12, 7 ad 1), but still as--or rather precisely as--incomprehensible in principle.[39] Thus the correlative to revelation is the immediate vision of God which is at the same time the incomprehensibility of God.

In order to illustrate the profound importance of this seemingly paradoxical dialectic between revelation and God's incomprehensibility, which forms the basis of the doctrine of analogy, we shall briefly examine A.M. Fairweather's critique of Thomas' view of revelation.[40] It becomes obvious that Fairweather bases his critique of Thomas on a neo-scholastic interpretation of Thomas when he asserts that the fundamental ground of Thomas' metaphysics, upon which Thomas also establishes his concept of revelation, is a "static causality." On this view, an identity of "likeness" based on the participation of the effect in the cause, the object known in the knower, constitutes the processes of knowledge and perfection, and therefore this also constitutes the hermeneutical focus from which Thomas' theology is understood. Fairweather correctly points out that, given this understanding of

Thomas' metaphysics, a union of the created intellect with God is patently impossible because of the difference between "likeness" and "identity." The deiform intellect and the "light of glory" are therefore, according to this analysis, inconsistent with Thomistic metaphysics, and there is really no possibility for an "actual meeting" between the prophet and God in Thomas' thought. The truths of revelation (which are indirect, the "effects" of God) are thus separated from their subject matter, viz. God's substance, and the objects of faith are robbed of all moral dynamic because no communion with God is really possible. Fairweather complains that in Thomas, revelation does not focus on the proper concern, which is not God's substance, but God's relation to humanity.

> Without the approach of God as their basis, propositions concerning God's nature cannot have a revelational value. . . . That Aquinas could not make room for such an approach must be attributed to the circumstance that he seeks to determine how God meets with man according to the possibilities allowed by his metaphysics, not from the witness of those to whom such a meeting was given.[41]

Such a personal relational revelation is not only impossible from the human side, but Thomas' view of God precludes the possibility of any relation existing in God, because God cannot be dependent in any way on creatures. Thus Thomas is also compelled by his metaphysics to deny any active procession of love and will by which God reveals himself, since these are wholly immanent in God himself. By denying this, Thomas denies the subject

matter of revelation itself, namely God's relation to us
by means of his outgoing divine acts which afford both
immediate awareness of God and real knowledge of God.
If we thus, contra Thomas, realize that the subject
matter of revelation is not God but God-in-relation-to-
ourselves, then analogical predication is similarly super-
fluous and "the names which revelation teaches us to apply
to God may truly describe Him."[42] These names apply not
to God's essence (which we cannot and presumably desire not
to know) but to his actions.

> We do not know the transcendent essence of
> God, but precisely in so far as this obser-
> vation is true it is of no moment, since God's
> essence is precisely what He is not con-
> cerned to reveal to us. But we do know
> God in relation to ourselves. This is His
> revealed nature . . . and what He is con-
> cerned that we should know about Him.[43]

Therefore are the words spoken by the prophet conceptu-
ally appropriate to the understanding of revelation,
because they preserve God's actual approach to the
prophet and enable the hearer to experience this same
communion with God, or at least a "truly spiritual
relation."[44]

There are many points in his presentation which are
open to criticism,[45] but in my view the fundamental defect
of Fairweather's critique is his hermeneutical focus on,
in his words, Thomas' "static causality," rather than on
the correlation between revelation and the incomprehensibi-
lity of God. The hermeneutical approach employed by Karl

Rahner is much more instructive on this point, and we turn now to an examination of its main contours.[46] Rahner states that for Thomas incomprehensibility does not mean that there is some "part" of God which unfortunately remains unknown (I, 12, 7 ad 2), but "ultimately and radically understood [incomprehensibility] is itself an inner moment in the knowledge, attainable only by revelation, of the possibility of the immediate vision of God."[47]

Rahner identifies a two-fold problematic which this Thomistic teaching occasions,[48] both of which Fairweather alludes to and uses against Thomas as reasons to reject his understanding of revelation, again because he interprets Thomas' teaching exclusively from the standpoint of "static causality." The first problematic concerns the relationship between the infinite God (whose essence is pure being) and the finite human being, whose essence and existence are distinct, and whose essence determines the degree to which this existent being participates in God as a "likeness" (similitudo). Rahner asserts that this relationship cannot be made intelligible by the concept of creation or any causal model. Rather, it must be understood that God in absolute freedom "establishes us for us in our difference from him, and he retains in himself this difference established by him, because it is established purely by him, so that there is not the same difference for him as he bestows on us as our essence."[49] This ultimately mysterious ontological relationship is radicalized in the

immediate vision of God, and how this is possible can only
be resolved in the incomprehesibility of God, which is
here viewed positively as the climax of the ontological
relationship between God and the creature.

The second problematic Rahner identifies is the
relation between the self-communication of God in grace and
glory and the illuminating and elevated (but created) light
of glory, both of which are required for the direct vision
of God according to Thomas' metaphysics. Rahner proposes
that in accordance with Thomistic theology one must "under-
stand created grace and the created light of glory as a
disposition which the self-communication of God in grace
and glory creates as _its_ effect and as the condition of its
possibility."[50] Again, this is not explained by Thomas'
metaphysics or by the doctrine of created light, nor can it
be, for we are not dealing with the incomprehensibility of
God as a merely accidental and problematic aspect of the
immediate vision; rather, it is demanded by the essence
both of the direct vision and of human being. What Rahner
is essentially concerned to argue (following Thomas) is
that the incomprehensibility of God is at the heart of
the ultimate fulfilment and salvation of man and therefore
must also be present at the heart of revelation.[51] Hence
the liability of Fairweather's circumscription of revelation
within the bounds of the finite and his univocal identifi-
cation of revealed truth with conceptual categories, which
results in a lack of concern for the hidden, the incompre-

hensible.[52] Fairweather fails to recognize that it is
precisely this reductionistic anthropological self-under-
standing (i.e. lack of concern for the incomprehensible,
remaining at the level of the finite conceptual image)
which Thomas seeks to overcome in his view of revelation.
Namely, Thomas wishes to affirm human destiny as transcend-
ing the conceptual toward the incomprehensible; that this
gives ultimate meaning and purpose to human existence and
therefore constitutes the inner condition of all relational
activity (which is what Fairweather is so concerned to
affirm). In the words of Rahner:

> Divine revelation is not the unveiling of
> something previously hidden, which through
> this illumination leads to an awareness simi-
> lar to that found in ordinary knowledge of
> the world. Rather it means that the 'deus
> absconditus' becomes radically present as
> the abiding mystery. This mystery presents
> itself through revelation as the source of
> forgiveness, salvation and an eternal home.
> Revelation does not mean that the mystery
> is overcome by gnosis bestowed by God, even
> in the direct vision of God; on the contrary,
> it is the history of the deepening perception
> of God as the mystery.[53]

Critical Summary

In conclusion, the following observations regard-
ing St. Thomas' doctrine of revelation are important.
First, by way of critique, although Thomas formally
adheres to the authority of scripture in his view of
revelation, his own theology is practically informed by
the categories of Greek thought, which are ahistorical and
oriented to the model of causality.[54] Per Erik Persson

asserts that the _ordo_ Thomas employs in constructing his theology is therefore not derived from Hebrew thought and cannot do full justice to the biblical data.[55] Although his typological contrast between Hebrew and Greek thought is perhaps somewhat tendentious, Persson's criticism that Thomas' view of revelation is not easily aligned with the biblical texts can be maintained. This is particularly true with regard to the intellectualist and individualist character of St. Thomas' prophetic model which, in contrast to the pluralism of models presented in scripture, presents us with a monolithic concept of revelation.[56] The neo-scholastic interpretation of Thomas did not overcome this problem, but exacerbated it, as we have seen, by failing to recognize even those resources in St. Thomas which provided the possibilities for a more biblical emphasis.

Related to this is the concern that revelation is not historically located in Thomas, and that biblical revelation is objectified into the articles of faith which become the starting point of theology and which have little relation to the historical events themselves. Certainly it would be difficult in our day to defend the objective authority either of a particular set of articles of faith or a particular set of metaphysical principles by which to interpret those articles. Indeed, for modern day theology revelation and metaphysics have both become problematical, requiring a starting point in the human subject and a historical focus. This has resulted in a fundamentally different hermeneutical

method from that employed by Thomas, a method which no longer finds it possible to categorically distinguish between nature and supernature, reason and revelation. This does not mean that Thomas' view of revelation has become irrelevant, but it does mean that his teachings must be reinterpreted in our changed theological and historical milieu. We shall explore the thesis that Karl Rahner's contemporary retrieval of Thomas' theology elucidates the significance of Thomas' teaching for a proper modern theory of revelation.

CHAPTER II

THE SUPERNATURAL EXISTENTIAL AND SALVATION HISTORY

Having examined St. Thomas Aquinas' view of revela-
tion as the major traditional source of Rahner's own thought,
we wish in this chapter to investigate more closely Rahner's
attempt to reinterpret Thomistic revelation theology in a
manner more congruent with the modern world. The funda-
mental concern of this chapter will be, therefore, to intro-
duce Rahner's transcendental anthropology, which provides
the context for his general discussion of revelation, and
then to discuss his concept of salvation--or revelation--
history.

Rahner's Transcendental Anthropology

Whereas the ancient and medieval world--and hence
every field of knowledge therein--functioned with reference
to a single all-embracing metaphysic which assumed the exist-
ence of God as a unifying factor in the world, the modern
world recognizes no such cosmological order. Nor does modern
science think of God as an objective reality within the world
who figures into all calculations and hypotheses. No longer
is nature fused with supernature in an objective structure
of reality, nor is mankind any longer under the tutelage
of God or a particular metaphysic. This autonomy of man
from an externally-imposed authority to an anthropocentric
orientation eroded the traditional presuppositional status

of revelation, causing it to become problematical, and requiring a new model of interpretation. We turn, then, to Rahner's attempt to construct an acceptable contemporary understanding of revelation, one which functions in a pluralistic and anthropocentric setting.

One of the most insistent insights underlying Rahner's "later" theological work is that theology today must operate in a thoroughly and irreducibly pluralistic setting.[1] No individual theologian or group of theologians can integrate all of the results of the various sciences into a comprehensive theological synthesis. Not only is there no longer a unified philosophical framework which might function as a "handmaiden" to theology,[2] and a plethora of natural sciences which exist in avowed independence from formal philosophy--which, due to their pervasive influence on the self-understanding and experience of modern man, therefore constitute a vitally important dialogue partner of contemporary theology.[3] Today theology itself is fragmented into a pluralism of methods and disciplines which preclude the formulation of a single theological system.[4] The consequent observation must be made, therefore, that all theologians and Christians, no matter how much they have studied, "are and remain rudes in a certain sense," and that the task of "foundational" theology (the quest for an intellectual justification of faith and a theological procedure) must be accomplished "antecedent to the task and the method of contemporary scientific inquiry, both

theological and secular" in what Rahner calls the "first level of reflection" on the "idea" of Christianity.[5] In other words, we are to recognize our situation of "gnoseological concupiscence"[6] deriving from pluralism, and resist the temptation to reduce Christian theology prematurely to a particular aspect or focus (be it of content or method) of theology.[7]

What, then, is the proper starting point and method for "foundational" theology?[8] For Rahner, the answer lies in the direction of a "transcendental anthropology," namely a reflection on the necessary conditions and structures which make possible human knowledge and experience. At this point Rahner's transcnedental appropriation of Thomistic metaphysics becomes germane to the discussion, and it is therefore necessary to sketch those basic contours of the philosophical foundations of Rahner's transc dental Thomism which are important for our purposes.[9] First, as Rahner himself points out, to speak simply of transcendental philosophy or the transcendental method is somewhat obscurantist since there is no systematic unity amongst its adherents[10] (which include such diverse parties as Kant and German idealism, Heidegger and existentialist phenomenology, and Marechal and transcendental Thomism). Besides, it is incorrect to conceive of a philosophical method as being merely an instrument for theology introduced ab extra, for philosophy is an inner moment in theology itself.[11]

Rahner's own approach is generally placed into the

transcendental Thomism of the Marechal school.[12] Joseph

Marechal, a Jesuit philosopher from Louvain, perceived a

connection between the Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge

and transcendental philosophy. In opposition to the

dogmatic realism of the neo-scholastic Thomists and the

existentialist realism of the Gilsonian Thomists,[13] Mare-

chal argued that Kant's critical epistemological inquiry into

the conditions of human knowledge by means of transcendental

deduction, when properly carried out, leads not to critical

idealism but to critical realism. Kant failed to arrive at a

metaphysical realism because he did not take into account the

entire activity of intellection, i.e. its inherent dynamism

and ontological openness, but examined only the necessary

formal conditions for representation, i.e. logical objectivity.[14]

Rahner, following Marechal, claims to find support for

this in Thomas' theory of knowledge, arguing that the

excessus ad esse of the intellectus agens constitutes an

a priori formal condition of the possibility for abstraction

(objective knowledge). This movement of the mind toward

intelligibility, argues Rahner, is actually an a priori openness

or Vorgriff (pre-grasp) toward Absolute Being as "pure" in-

telligibility, which therefore constitutes the "horizon" and

ground of all possible beings. This Vorgriff of the agent

intellect must be clearly understood, for it constitutes the

heart of Rahner's metaphysics of knowledge and prepares the

way for a philosophy of religion open to the possibility of

divine revelation; it is the cognitive basis for a theology

of revelation. The agent intellect as the condition of the
possibility of actual intelligibility, contends Rahner, must
therefore have a universal orientation in order to know the
sensibly intuited as limited, as this concrete existent.
It must know that the form or being which is sensibly
apprehended borders upon further possibilities not restricted
by this material concretion, and such a knowledge "is poss-
ible only if, antecedent to and in addition to apprehending
the individual form, it comprehends of itself the whole
field of these possibilities . . . ."[15] This "transcending
apprehension" of further possibilities Rahner calls Vorgriff,
which he identifies with Thomas' excessus as the necessary
condition for apprehending the objects of metaphysics which
are grounded in the sensible world.[16] This Vorgriff, therefore,
although it is the ground of objective knowledge, never
attains to an object itself, i.e. its Worauf ("whither") is
not humanly conceivable because it always transcends the
sensible world toward the infinite universal. Yet its
terminus ad quem is implicitly affirmed in every act of
cognitive abstraction and is sought by the active intellect
in every act of cognition.[17] The claim vis-à-vis Thomas
is that he supports the view that metaphysical knowledge
(which is grounded by God as Absolute Being) is a priori
and is reflected (comes to light or self-consciousness) in
the phantasms (objects in the world).

Rahner's articulation of his variety of transcendental
Thomism is found most explicitly stated, as the German sub-

title indicates, in <u>Geist in Welt: zur Metaphysik der end-
lichen Erkenntnis bei Thomas von Aquin</u>,[18] and the question
to be asked of it is whether or not Thomas' metaphysics can
bear the weight of such an interpretation. There can be no
doubt, of course, that Rahner translates the discussion from
the ontic objectivist categories of the medieval world into
the ontological categories of contemporary metaphysics, which
focus on the human subject. But Langdon Gilkey expresses a
pessimistic view of Rahner's attempt, arguing that Thomistic
categories simply cannot be historically translated, that
the medieval <u>Weltanschauung</u> is so different as to render the
content of Thomas' thought irrelevant to the modern world.[19]

George A. Lindbeck, on the other hand, although he
agrees that Rahner's interpretation of Thomas is exaggerated
and somewhat arbitrary,[20] argues convincingly that it is not
incompatible with Thomas' thought, nor does it violate its
essential tenor, to propose an <u>a priorism</u> in Thomas' meta-
physics.[21] Lindbeck's argument is comprised of two theses:
1) Thomas' emphasis on the <u>a posteriori</u> characteristic of all
knowledge was directed against the objectivist <u>a priorism</u>
of Augustinian Platonism, and was therefore asserting the
necessity of the <u>conversio ad phantasma</u> for every act of
human intellection, as against pure intellectual objects of
thought such as innate ideas. Therefore, despite Thomas'
occasional use of "extractionist" rather than "projectionist"
or "illuminationist" language, this does not preclude,
in Thomas' thought, a nonobjective "transcendental"

a priorism, which indeed would seem to find support in
Thomas' doctrine of illumination or the light of the agent
intellect.[22] 2) The relation between first principles and
the agent intellect in the process of abstraction according
to St. Thomas (e.g. I, 117, 1), suggests a parallel to the
Vorgriff auf esse in Rahner's transcendental metaphysics.
These non-objective first principles, the a priori antici-
patory knowledge of being identified with the agent intel-
lect, are then projected upon or reflected in phantasms,
and thereby reflexively and objectively known. Lindbeck
concludes:

> . . . the a priorist interpretation of Aquinas'
> position makes more philosophical and logical
> sense than do the alternatives. The easiest
> way to combine his various strands of analysis
> into an intelligible whole is to say that our
> consciously accessible knowledge of being is
> a reflection in experience of the light of the
> agent intellect, and that this latter must,
> therefore, be understood as a preconscious
> anticipation or openness to the fullness of
> being, to God.[23]

The important question at stake in Rahner's proposal is
the possibility of a Thomistic metaphysics which, while
based on "worldly" or sensible knowledge (concrete experi-
ence), nonetheless presupposes an ontological openness
to an absolute horizon of Being as the condition for all
human cognition; hence the possibility of a Thomistic
metaphysics in a subjective anthropological context.

If such a metaphysics (as "transcendental anthropology")
can be reasonably established as plausible, then we are also
provided with a possible starting point for transcendental

theology, i.e. the possible self-revelation in history of the Absolute Being which grounds human being and knowledge. This thesis is delineated in Rahner's <u>Hörer des Wortes</u> (ET <u>Hearers of the Word</u>),[24] a project in fundamental theology which develops a

> metaphysical anthropology of man as the one who listens in his history for a possible revelation from God. If we name the aptitude for something <u>potentia</u> . . ., then we may designate this piece of fundamental theology . . . as the ontology of the <u>potentia oboedientialis</u> for the free revelation of God.[25]

By revelation Rahner here means special categorical revelation which cannot be deduced philosophically from human nature[26] (this would be to fall into the fallacy of Protestant liberalism and Catholic modernism),[27] but not can it be purely extrinsic or antithetical to the structure of human subjectivity as spirit[28] (this being the error of Protestant "neo-orthodoxy" and Catholic "extrinsicism").[29] Man, as spirit, possesses an unlimited openness (<u>Vorgriff</u>) toward Absolute Being which makes possible the affirmation of the finite reality in objective knowledge, and yet in that very affirmation, it negates the finite in its reference to the infinite, i.e. God. Thus in every act of knowledge man already possesses a negative and unthematic knowledge (participation in the Being) of God. The ultimate human question is whether this Being can be known in a positive, disclosive way. It is in this sense that man is compelled to search in history (as the "place" where

human ex-sistence and knowing occur)[30] for a possible self-revelation of God.[31] Rahner concludes:

> If man stands before the God who freely
> reveals himself; if this revelation has to
> occur in human history if it occurs at
> all--for indeed if it failed to occur the
> most essential thing in human history
> would be the discernible silence of God;
> if man is from the start oriented towards
> this history in which this revelation may
> possibly occur, then in his essence [Wesen]
> man truly is that existent thing [Seiende]
> who, at the core of his essence [der Mitte
> seines Wesens], is attentive to a possible
> revelation of God in human history. Only he
> who listens, and only to the extent that
> he listens, is that which he specifically
> has to be--man. And so metaphysical anthro-
> pology becomes the ontology of the potentia
> oboedientialis for a possible revelation.[32]

But here we have already entered in to a discussion of general revelation, for this transcendental anthropology is itself not purely "natural," but is a priori conditioned by God's gracious interior revelation or self-communication.[33] This theme of general revelation we now take up more explicitly, in the context of a discussion of nature and grace.

Nature and Grace

Hearers of the Word is an earlier, more philosophical and formal attempt by Rahner to articulate the kind of transcendental anthropological base for theology which is also found in the opening chapters of the Foundations of the Christian Faith.[34] In the latter work, Rahner is engaged in explicit dialogue with the particular, empirical sciences, and he argues that although man's origins and experience are rooted in the empirical world, all attempts to explain

man in such terms are doomed to failure. Only the recognition of human subjectivity, the awareness that man transcends all finite systems through his orientation to the infinite and therefore questions everything, can provide an adequate anthropological starting point. This transcendental terminus a quo affirms the grounding of all human knowledge and experience in a pre-apprehension (Vorgriff) of Being per se, which is not a particular object alongside other objects, but "a basic mode of being which is prior to and permeates every objective experience."[35]

In this context, human freedom is not to be conceived as the mere capacity to choose between various a posteriori objects (including God as one alternative);[36] rather: "When freedom is really understood, it is not the power to be able to do this or that, but the power to decide about oneself and to actualize oneself."[37] Freedom is therefore understood as the orientation of the whole subject in the totality of his or her existence vis-à-vis God himself, a freedom of being and not merely a freedom of acts. Freedom is thus a "capacity for the eternal"[38] in which by accepting or rejecting one's existence one decides for or against salvation. Insofar, then, as man can accept himself as the finite who is grounded in and orientated toward the infinite which can never be grasped or comprehended but only loved, it can be said that "the history of salvation and revelation (including the history of Christian theology) is also a history of man's systematic reflection on himself as a free

being."[39]

The preceding quotation indicates the concrete unity of nature and grace, of philosophy and theology in Rahner's transcendental anthropology. The experience of oneself as a finite creature and the experience of God as the term of human self-transcendence is a single historical experience, a concrete unity which can only be fragmented in subsequent reflection.[40] But how is this unity to be understood in such a way as to protect the gratuity of grace and revelation, i.e. the freedom of God? How is the particularity of a Christian "history of revelation" to be understood in relation to the general transcendental relation between God and man which has so far occupied our attention? For an answer to these questions we must examine more closely the relation of nature and grace, general and special revelation in Rahner's thought.

From the very beginning of his career, in his reflections on the relationship of nature and grace,[41] Rahner has been concerned to develop a doctrine in contradistinction to the neo-scholastic duplex ordo.[42] In traditional post-Tridentine scholasticism, supernatural grace is viewed as an external superstructure superimposed on human nature by God, but which is in itself inaccessible to human experience and has no ontological effect on human consciousness: it is an object of faith alone. On this view nature, as the realm of concrete "rational" human experience, functions in virtual independence from grace, possessing but a negative

potentia obaedientialis for grace which is nothing more than a "non-repugnance" to the divinising elevation of supernatural grace. Criticizing this view as inadequate both biblically and philosophically, Rahner asserts that the a priori orientation of human nature to God is a supernatural ordination involving an inner ontological modification of human existence which he terms a "supernatural existential." As has been indicated above, this supernatural existential is none other than the self-communication of God himself as the unobjective condition and horizon of all human experience. There is, consequently, no such thing as "pure" nature in the concrete life of man.

Rahner claims that what is lacking in neo-scholastic extrinsicism is a proper biblical understanding of what medieval theologicans called "uncreated grace."[43] Basing his argument on the Pauline view of grace as the endowment of the Holy Spirit, the communication of God himself, from which the created gifts of grace are derived as a consequence, Rahner argues against the reversal of the order in scholastic speculation, where God's indwelling is based on created grace. Presupposing Thomas' ontology of the beatific vision where God's essence itself takes the place of the created species impressa (otherwise it would not be an immediate vision of God at all but a finite representation), Rahner argues that any self-communication of God cannot be based on a created "accidental" modification of human nature, but must be grounded in God

himself through a "quasi-formal causality." In other words, rather than being preceded by an efficient causality which produces a created reality out of the cause, God's self-revelation must be based on a formal causality in which the human subject is taken up into the ground or _forma_ of God himself, i.e. God "communicates his own divine reality and makes it a constitutive element in thefulfillment of the creature."[44] This formal causality must be qualified by the prefix "quasi" in order to indicate that God (unlike any other _forma_) is not limited or determined by the subject. God's absolute transcendence, in other words, is not compromised in this self-bestowal, and the "quasi" "provides an emphatic reminder of the analogical nature of our concepts in the matter of a relationship to the world known only through Revelation . . . ."[45]

The ontological implication of this view is that God's self-communication precedes salvation (the immediate vision of God) as the ground of its possibility. And since God's salvific will is everywhere and always extended, this ontological self-presence of God is a permanent supernatural existential of man.[46] Thus, Rahner avers, it is

> . . . legitimate for us to interpret man, when he experiences himself in the most various ways as the subject of unlimited transcendence, as the event of God's absolute and radical self-communication.[47]

Rahner invokes the Scotist model of nature and grace in which the self-exteriorization of God, climaxing in the incarnation, is the preeminent act of God on which the

possibility of creation itself rests.[48]   In this framework,
creation and incarnation are seen as two aspects of the single
self-communication of God, the latter interpreting and
grounding the former.

Before moving on to the history of the interpretation
of man's supernatural existential, we will first examine
Rahner's attempt to protect the gratuity of this super-
natural existential as God's gracious and _free_ self-
communication. Rahner declares, again in his earlier
writings,[49] that in concrete actuality there is no such
thing as "pure" nature, but that in theory such a possibility
must exist and have meaning in itself, for human nature
cannot "exact" God's grace. Since the _visio beatifica_
cannot be due to man by nature, the gratuity of creation and
the gratuity of salvation (grace) must be kept distinct.
Thus the formal or theoretical meaning of the _potentia oboe-
dientialis_ includes only the natural human capacity for
self-transcendence and an openness (of a positive, not
merely non-repugnant kind) toward the supernatural exist-
ential, but which can function meaningfully even apart from
it.[50] This distinction, however, can only be made formally
since in concrete human experience one's total orientation
is elevated by the supernatural existential; there can be no
definable separation of grace and nature in real life.

This theoretical need for nature as a "_Restbegriff_"
(remainder concept) is criticized by William Shepherd in his

extensive study of Rahner's view of nature and grace.[51]
Shepherd feels that Rahner's technical doctrine of nature
and grace is constricted by his attempt to treat the nature-
grace problematic in the too narrow confines of the neo-
scholastic framework, which focuses primarily on man's
being. This is unfortunate, Shepherd argues, since Rahner's
theological system as a whole (particularly in his later
writings) operates in a unified and universal evolutionary
framework. The "double gratuity" which Rahner seeks to defend
focuses too much on man's being in isolation from his concrete
historical situation and thus threatens the unity of God's
action and of human nature in the world. Its logical and
purely formal articulation is antithetical to Rahner's
otherwise historical and concretely situated theology:

> The proper assertion, given Rahner's systematic
> principles, would seem to be that God created
> concrete nature, and this concrete nature,
> this "compound," is exactly what nature is in
> history. Creation and gracing occur simul-
> taneously, resulting in a complex, structured
> human situation. From God's point of view,
> nature exists as the consequence of one action
> only, one gratuitous decree . . . .[52]

Revelation History

In Rahner's later work, this concept of double
gratuity and the Restbegriff is nowhere to be found, the
focus always being on the totality of the human situation as
actualized in history.[53] We turn therefore to the question
of universal (general) and particular (special) revelation
and salvation history in Rahner's theology.[54] Because
human history is in its very essence the self-communication
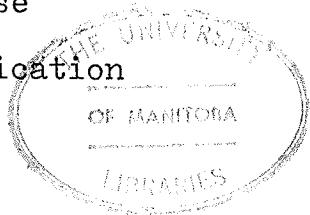
of God as the supernatural existential, all of history is revelation history, i.e. the history of the transcendental relation between God and man.

> If transcendence always has its very being _in_ history, is always mediated historically, and if man has a transcendental condition which is constituted as a permanent feature of his life as a person precisely by what we call divinizing grace by God's self-communication . . ., then precisely that _absolute_ transcendence directed towards the absolute intimate presence of the ineffable mystery giving himself to man has a history and this is what we call the history of revelation.[55]

Therefore the history of revelation always includes two aspects: man's supernaturally elevated transcendence grounded in God himself, which is universally present but always remains the holy mystery, incapable of conceptual expression; and secondly the historical objectification and interpretation of this transcendental experience. This second aspect exists coextensively with the free history of the world and not only the explicit history of religion,[56] since "the categorical history of man as a spiritual subject is always and everywhere the necessary but historical and objectifying self-interpretation of the transcendental experience which constitutes the realization of man's essence."[57]

However, as this provisional and therefore evolving categorical history of transcendental revelation moves toward a clearer and more comprehensive expression of the supernatural existential, a more explicitly religious self-interpretation of this revelatory experience of God will

appear, and this is the usual meaning of the term "revelation history."[58] Because this history is provisional and co-determined by guilt, a distinction must furthermore be made between salvation--and revelation--history "proper" (that is, a true and error-free interpretation of God's self-communication) and this general revelation history, since the former is not yet fully present-to-itself or self-consciously thematized in the latter. Yet this in no way precludes the existence of a genuine history of revelation--one which is not only "natural" but possesses "supernatural elements"--in the whole of human history.

The criterion for distinguishing between what is erroneous human misunderstanding and what is the legitimate interpretation of the transcendental experience of God represented in the concrete history of religion is Jesus Christ, who is "the full and unsurpassable event of the historical self-objectification of God's self-communication to the world. . . ."[59] This constitutes the particular mediation of the actual or "official" explicit history of revelation and salvation. All other revelation history can be identified as "proper" or true only in the light of Christ, and this includes the salvation history of the Old Testament. How this is so must be more clearly explained.

The saving acts of God in history are present for us through the word-revelation which interprets them.[60] That is to say, faith interpretation and event cannot be separ-

ated in the revelation because faith is nothing else than a person's acceptance of the transcendental orientation of his or her existence toward the mystery of God, an acceptance which recognizes (interprets) the categorical mediation of that relationship, that transcendental reality and goal. Hence the "prophets"[61] as bearers of divine revelation, are people of faith who correctly objectify (through language) the trancendental experience of human beings as mediated in historical events. These prophets are bearers of "special" revelation because they express the human transcendental experience of God "in such a way that it becomes for others too the correct and pure objectification of their own transcendental experience of God, and it can be recognized in this correctness and purity."[62] The "word" of revelation, therefore, is not something external or subsequent to the objectively tangible event, but "an inner constitutive element of God's saving activity considered as an event of human history as such."[63]

In the Old Testament itself, however, the dividing line between authentic prophets and false prophets (genuine revelation history and sinful, proud religious history) was not unambiguous. There is no unified interpretation of the Old Testament possible except in its openness to an unknown redemptive future, an openness which is fulfilled and answered in Christ.

> It is not the concrete content of this history
> before Christ in the old covenant which makes
> it the history of revelation, for nothing
> really happens in the realm of the categorical
> which does not also happen in the history of
> every other people. What makes this history
> a history of revelation is rather the interpre-
> tation of this history as the event of a
> dialogical partnership with God, and as a
> prospective tendency towards an open future.[64]

In Christ, the history of mankind finds the categorical

mediation of God's universal self-communication which

thus indicates the implicit goal and meaning of humanity.

As the absolute and unsurpassable Word of God in history,

Christ distinguishes authentic revelation from profane

history and brings the former to self-realization and

concrete expression in the latter.

The task of theology is to perpetuate in historical

word and social structure this unique and absolute self-

revelation of God in Christ. That is, it must refer human

experience to its ultimate reference point and salvation,

the one mystery of God in Christ which alone fulfills and

explains man. This means that theology will not just pro-

claim revelation as a mystery to be accepted by faith as

opposed to reason,[65] but it will connect the revelation

of God as mystery to man's self-understanding, to human

experience. Thus it will articulate the _a priori_ (tran-

scendental) conditions which make possible human experience

by reflecting on their _a posteriori_ (historical) mediation

in the special history of divine self-communication

unsurpassably realized in the Incarnation.[66]

Conclusion

We have seen that the incomprehensibility of God as found in St. Thomas' theology is directly related to the anthropological starting point in Rahner's thought, i.e. the incomprehensibility of God is the a priori horizon of man's knowledge and experience. God as the absolute mystery, the fullness of being, has graciously given himself to man as the innermost yet supernatural (or transcendental) existential of human being, causing humanity itself to be the unfathomable mystery, "an indefinability come to consciousness of it-self."[67] By stating that the essence of human nature is mystery (or grace), therefore, Rahner does not mean that there is something as yet undisclosed in the sense of an undiscovered, unknown piece of the puzzle. Rather, he refers to the impenetrable horizon of all understanding, the immediacy of the incomprehensible which grounds all human comprehension and experience. If one accepts this "first level" definition of man as essential mystery, then it follows that human beings are essentially oriented toward and searching for an answer to the question which they themselves are, for a revelation of this mystery. However, this search is carried out in the context of history, that is, the self-understanding of man as mystery is mediated through man's categorical encounter with con-crete reality, which is intersubjective and pluralistic. When human beings reflect on the totality of this cate-gorical experience, they become aware that they themselves

cannot be defined as the composite sum of their finite
experience (and therefore neither can human history be so
defined), but that they are in some inexplicable and unob-
jectifiable sense always prior to and more than their
finite pluralistic experience. In order to "save" their
existence from the nihilistic meaninglessness which results
from an ununified pluralism, human beings seek an event(s)
which brings together the transcendental and the historical,
the subjective and the intersubjective, in an ultimate and
absolute manner. Humanity seeks the fulfilment of its
whole being, and this history of promise and fulfilment
is articulated in the history of revelation or salvation
history--the thematic experience of the self-communication
of the absolute mystery.

Excursus: A Comparison of Rahner and Pannenberg

Wolfhart Pannenberg's theological concerns touch
base at many points with those of Rahner. He too attempts
to provide a unitary understanding of theology within the
contemporary pluralistic setting, a "search for a road to
knowledge which transcends all the differences between the
sciences and is based on the idea of knowledge as such."[68]
Pannenberg also seeks to situate this unitary method in a
universal anthropological and historical setting, but he
pursues this not via a transcendental anthropology but
through a hermeneutic of universal history which functions
with reference to God as "the all-determining reality."[69]
As does Rahner, Pannenberg views revelation history as

universal and as that which comes to thematic expression
in the history of religions.

> The material of theology which reflects upon
> this complex of experience (of the reality
> of God) is not a religious subjectivity
> which is dependent upon an act of faith,
> not a religious interpretation of the world
> laid down in advance by an authoritative
> revelation. It is the history of religion
> as the record of men's historical experience
> of themselves in the context of the totality
> of their world, and thus of the reality of
> God and the gods. The truth of such an
> experience depends upon its power to illuminate
> the situation of men in their actual histori-
> cal world.[70]

Here, however, we begin to perceive the basic difference
between Rahner and Pannenberg. Whereas Rahner argues that
faith and event cannot be separated in the revelation
experience because the gracious divinization of human
nature presupposes the revelation event itself as the
condition of its possibility, Pannenberg separates faith
and fact, arguing:

> There is no need for any additional perfection
> of man as though he could not focus on the
> "supernatural" truth with his normal equipment
> for knowing . . . . In particular, the Holy
> Spirit is not an additional condition with-
> out which the event of Christ could not be
> known as revelation.[71]

In Pannenberg's view, revelation occurs in the events of
history as historical facts, which, when seen in their
traditio-historical context and rationally appropriated
through a hermeneutic of universal history, provide the
basis for faith. Faith is entirely oriented toward the
future; it is required because human experience and

knowledge is still in progress and therefore the assertions
of revelation theology cannot be finally verified. However,
verification of all truth is ultimately dependent upon a
knowledge of the totality of reality, and this requires a
theo-logical model (since God is the all-determining ground
of reality) which best accounts for human experience. This,
Pannenberg asserts, is provided only by the Judeo-Christian
revelation, for it alone takes into account the contingency
of reality and yet provides a unified account of all
reality by its proleptic reference to the ultimate future
of mankind in the life, death, and especially the resur-
rection of Jesus Christ (where God is definitively revealed
as the power of the future).

Pannenberg's method of explaining revelation and
evaluating its truth claims from the standpoint of a
hermeneutic of universal history would appear to throw all
stakes into a historical method, a proper hermeneutic.[72]
Revelation is primarily viewed as a hermeneutical model
which unifies human experience, a rational view of reality
which requires faith only insofar as its final disclosure
and verification lies in the future.

Rahner's understanding of revelation is less a
hermeneutic model than, in Vincent Branick's words, an
"ontology of understanding" grounded in a metaphysics of
the act of to be,[73] which, as we have seen, is presupposed
by God's gracious self-communication as the mysterious
term of human self-transcendence and quest for understanding.

This ontological unity of nature and grace in concrete human existence makes it impossible for Rahner to separate faith from reason in the act of understanding, for this act can never be fully objectified. Therefore, in Rahner's view, it would be impossible to develop, as Pannenberg seeks to do, a hermeneutic of universal history on a purely rational or scientific level. What is required in theology, rather, is a reductio ad mysterium which refers all truth to the single--and in principle incomprehensible--mystery of God as its illumining source.[74] This is the foundation of human and historical unity: theology as the science of mystery, a mystagogia which leads people into the conscious experience of grace, which is none other than the revelation of God himself. But such an experience is itself grounded in God's primordial self-communication to all humanity, and this must be accepted before the categorical, historical revelation can be understood in its proper horizon (a horizon which transcends universal history because it grounds this history). This acceptance is nothing else than faith, which seeks understanding via historical mediation.

The foregoing comparison between Rahner and Pannenberg points to certain salient methodological differences between the two, which have important implications for their concepts of revelation and their understanding of the task of theology. Pannenberg's preoccupation with verification and the

emphasis on the historical transparency of truth which a truly rational method can objectively apprehend,[75] belies his more classical apologetic concern to provide theology with a critical, rational basis. Rahner's approach, on the other hand, is more concerned with truth as manifestation[76] and the subject's being grasped or apprehended by the truth as it is mediated in human experience, viz. spirit in the world.[77] To over-simplify the contrast for the sake of making a point, we might say that Pannenberg's focus is on the critical moment of distanciation and objectification--the historical-critical process--whereas Rahner converges on the post-critical participation in the subject matter, the appropriation of historical revelation by surrendering to the ultimate claim which it mediates. This is also undoubtedly the reason for their different locations of the study of revelation. For Pannenberg it is to be carried out in the academic environs of the university, whereas for Rahner the authentic mediation of revelation is accomplished by the church's participatory appropriation of its meaning. This does not mean that theology is for Rahner autonomous from the methods and results of the other sciences or that revelation is purely fideistic, for his emphasis on critical reason and the scientific study of theology is vigorous. But it does mean that for Rahner the hermeneutical circle cannot be completed in such a context, that it requires a participatory Hingabe which is accomplished in the ecclesial community.[78]

CHAPTER III

THE ECCLESIAL MEDIATION OF REVELATION: SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

In the last chapter we saw how Rahner's transcendental anthropology provided the lodestar for an anthropologically based, historical, and yet fully theo-logical understanding of revelation. We learned that, in Rahner's view, although theology is a reflection on concrete history, the salvific meaning of historical events cannot simply be known a posteriori. For in order to affect human salvation, they must address human being in its wholeness, its essential nature, and this presupposes the grace-given ability of man to discover, comprehend, and receive that meaning. In other words, the a posteriori meaning can only be grasped by means of the a priori ordination of man to God and God's self-communication, i.e. the supernatural existential or the "grace of faith."[1] A constitutive element of God's revelatory or salvific acts in history is therefore the word, insofar as it is the interpretative mediation of the events themselves.[2] This linguistic representation of revelation is handed down (paradosis) so that others too may participate in the revelatory experience, and it is this linguistic process of interpretation, transmission, and appropriation of revelation to which we turn our attention in this chapter.

At the heart of our concern here is the relation between scripture and tradition, and their authoritative interpretation. When we speak of scripture and tradition, however, we

do so in the "more modern sense," where "tradition means the continuous stream of explanation and elucidation of the primitive faith, illustrating the way in which Christianity has been preserved and understood in past ages."[3] This must be stated in a more refined manner. Given the unsurpassable climax of the history of revelation in Jesus Christ, in whom the definitive and irrevocable presence of God to the world as its salvific Reality is mediated, revelation is "closed" by the Christ event. The divine plenitude is fully given in Christ, and it is this eschatological saving event which is interpreted and mediated by the apostolic church in the traditio Jesu Christi we know as the New Testament. This observation already precludes a sharp distinction between scripture and tradition, since scripture is itself a result and mode of tradition, i.e. it is the concrete written objectification of tradition. The polemical debate between Protestants and Catholics concerning sola scriptura versus the "two sources" theory has subsided,[4] since contemporary ecumenical Protestants recognize the New Testament as the product of the early church's preaching and faith, and the Catholic position propounded at Vatican II nowhere argues for a two sources theory, nor denies the material sufficiency of scripture.[5] The difference which remains, however, is that in Catholic Christianity, scripture is inseparably linked with ongoing tradition and the teaching office of the church.[6] The historical transmission of revelation is fundamentally an ecclesial process, for the propositional form of

the normative faith of the apostolic church which is embodied
in scripture, in order to be understood, requires the living
tradition of faith as experienced in the abiding historical
manifestation of God's salvific grace, viz. the church.

> There is such a thing as an authoritative mission,
> a giving witness to faith in Jesus Christ, and scrip-
> ture itself represents the result and the consequence
> of this living tradition. Tradition is at once a
> transmitted succession both of witnesses and of what
> is being witnessed to. Scripture, then, presents
> itself as something which appears only in connec-
> tion with the living and authoritative mission of
> the church and with the testimony of the church
> which is grounded in the Spirit. From this per-
> spective, however much scripture has a normative
> character for the later church, it will manifest
> nevertheless an ecclesial character.[7]

Our intention in this chapter is to examine Rahner's
ecclesial and post-critical understanding of the authority of
scripture which, as we saw in the first chapter, was formally
affirmed but incompletely evinced in the theology of St.
Thomas. Central to our purpose, then, is to bring Rahner's
thought into a more explicit conversation with the biblical
literature and the results and opinions of biblical scholar-
ship; to determine the hermeneutical possibilities of Rah-
ner's systematic theology for biblical theology, particularly
as it relates to the contemporary problematic of revelation.
Therefore we begin with the concept of the inspiration of
scripture and its canonicity, and then proceed to the
development of dogma in the post-apostolic church.

Inspiration of Scripture

From the time of St. Thomas, the Catholic understand-
ing of inspiration has traditionally operated within the

scholastic framework of instrumental causality.[8] On this

view both God and man are viewed as authors of the scrip-

ture in a manner analogous to the hypostatic union, in that

God as the principal cause employs the instrumental cause

(the human author in his unique personality and freedom) in

producing the inspired word of God.[9] Two representative

proponents of this approach in the past century were

1) J. B. Franzelin, who in as effort to accommodate the liter-

ary-critical problems of the biblical texts applied instru-

mental causality only to the formal content of scripture

(the ideas), not the material words and expressions employed

by the human author;[10] and 2) M. J. Lagrange, who articulated

a theory of verbal inspiration based on instrumental causal-

ity.[11] This approach, however, is not without salient

problems which need resolution, and Rahner points to four of

them.[12] First, it is not clear as to how God is an author

of the scripture if not a literary author, or how two authors

could produce the same effect in a way that preserves the

full authorship of both in the whole work. An appeal to

instrumental causality does not solve this difficulty.

Secondly, it is patently obvious when reading the biblical

texts that the inspired authors are unaware of any "illumina-

tion" of the intellect by God.[13] Inspiration would therefore

appear to be an unconscious activity, and a proper doctrine

of inspiration must therefore come to terms with the manner

of God's action within the human author in such a way that

human authorship is positively required but that God is also

the author by "formal predefinition."[14] The third problem

facing a theory of inspiration is that of canonicity, i.e.

how can the church know the scriptures to be inspired, es-

pecially since the writers themselves did not know it? In

view of the protracted and controversial history of the forma-

tion of the canon, it is clear that there was no explicit

apostolic revelation concerning the inspired writings. Hence:

"Inspiration has to be conceived in such a manner that it

demonstrates by itself how the church knows the inspiredness

of the books of the New Testament . . . ."[15] Finally, the

relationship between the infallible inspired scriptures and

the infallible teaching magisterium of the church must be

conceived in such a way that neither renders the other super-

fluous, and that provides a common root for both (thus safe-

guarding the material sufficiency of scripture and avoiding

a spurious two sources theory). In other words,

> inspiration should be understood as demonstrating
> from its own nature that the Bible is _the_ book ...,
> and _the_ source for the teaching authority and, con-
> versely, that the Scripture is, from the beginning,
> the book of the Church who can testify to its inspir-
> ation because it is her book.[16]

It is obvious that Rahner's heuristic delineation of

the above problems, although dogmatically stated, is very

concerned to provide an understanding of inspiration more

in keeping with the biblical evidence and the results of

modern biblical criticism. It is therefore in order to exa-

mine more closely the biblical understanding of inspiration

to see whether Rahner's dogmatic solution does justice to it.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the Bible is its considerable diversity, not only of literary forms and styles, but of theologies and basic religious attitudes as well. This theological, cultural and personal variety which admits of no facile harmonization or coherent unity,[17] must be taken into account in any adequate doctrine of inspiration, particularly as it relates to canonization. Closely related to this observation is the complex history of composition which lies behind the biblical literature. Not only is it impossible to identify the authors of many of the biblical books, but most of these books have undergone a lengthy history which is impossible to reconstruct with great accuracy: from oral tradition through early literary strands and numerous editions and redactions to its final--frequently "anthological" --form. This history of "compilation," of course, includes numerous "re-readings" or reinterpretations of the earlier material by the later editors in a manner congruent with their own experience and historical circumstances. As John L. McKenzie states:

> We know, or we think we know, that in the ancient world the manuscript was treated with great freedom; it was subject to the revision and expansion of each successive owner, and it is this constant process which has created our critical problems. In oral tradition the material is flexible to the extreme, and it can be said without exaggeration that each successive bard or balladist was the creator of the story anew. The material was "composed" each time it was told.[18]

In view of this, who is the inspired author, and can the traditional conception of instrumental causality or verbal

inspiration adequately accomodate these biblical realities?

The term "inspiration" (Gk. Θεόπνευετος, "God-breathed") occurs but once in the biblical corpus, that is in II Timothy 3:16 where the term is applied to "all" or "every" scripture.[19] In the biblical context, this word did not refer to the Greek concept of inspiration, where the prophet was viewed as the passive instrument of a divine power who through ecstatic compulsion delivered the immutable divine oracle to humanity. Rather, "God-breathed" should be related to the function of the Spirit (πνεῦμα) of God (Θεός) as the creative power of God expressed through the actions and words of God's representatives in the world. Inspiration in this context is quite different from ecstatic oracular utterance, as A. J. Heschel points out:

> Prophetic inspiration differs from both ecstasy and poetic inspiration in that it is an act in which the prophetic person stands over against the divine person . . . . The prophet, unlike the ecstatic, is both a recipient and a participant. His response to what is disclosed to him turns revelation into dialogue. . . . By response, pleading, and counterspeech, the prophet reacts to the word he perceives. The prophet's share in the dialogue can often give the decisive turn to the encounter, evoking a new attitude in the divine Person and bringing about a new decision. In a sense, prophecy consists of a revelation of God and a co-revelation of man.[20]

It must of course be noted that we are not here speaking of scriptural inspiration, for the prophets were not primarily concerned to write books but to proclaim God's will to the community of faith through spoken word and deed. However, that is all the more reason to question the appropriateness of "verbal" inspiration terminology in describing the

biblical dialogic, community-oriented understanding of inspiration. Bruce Vawter attributes the following attitude to the biblical communities:

> While it was to their interest to lay stress on the authorship of the spirit, they were perfectly aware that the spirit had uttered the word through a community of men, the same kind of living, fallible, developing community of men in which the spirit's presence was still being felt.[21]

The important focus of inspiration, then, is the continuing presence of the Spirit in the community through the word which can only be properly understood under the guidance and charism of the very Spirit who had earlier inspired the prophets. In this context the flexibility of the written word becomes more intelligible since it is not the "books" but rather the living encounter between God and his people which is of paramount importance.

This last point may be briefly supplemented with one further observation. The charismatic representatives of the biblical communities, i.e. the prophets and apostles, were just that--representatives of God and the people who did not proclaim their own minds, but expressed the historical encounter between God and his people. The written traditions of that salvation history were, therefore, not so much the creative genius of individual writers as they were the faithful articulation of the self-understanding, and the experience of God possessed and mediated by the biblical communities.[22] But here we are already anticipating Rahner's thesis, to which we now turn.[23]

Rahner begins with the assertion that God has instit-
uted the church by his absolute will in "redemptive-histor-
ical pre-definition."[24] What this means is that God's his-
torical action of redemption, which is culminated eschato-
logically in Christ, is carried on in history by the church
as the definitive presence of God's grace in the world. This
institution of the church is brought about by God in a
unique manner within the apostolic church, which therefore
constititutes the basis and norm for the subsequent history
of the church. The ground of this assertion lies in the
Christological provenance of the church, for according to
Rahner, God was at work in a special way through Jesus who
"founded" the church by his death and resurrection.[25] The
death and resurrection of Jesus, as the absolute saviour who
proclaimed in his person the eschatological Kingdom of God
to be composed of all those who followed him (i.e. his
disciples), definitively confirmed that in Jesus Christ,
God himself is given to the world as its salvific end. This
offer must therefore always be historically and tangibly
present through the community of salvation which Christ
founded and to whom he entrusted the gospel.[26] The basic
constitution of this new community was established during the
apostolic period of the church, that is, until the time of
the closure of revelation with the writing of the last
New Testament book. It was during this time that the church
developed her distinctive self-understanding vis-à-vis other
"non-Christian" religious phenomena (both intra-murally and

extra-murally), clearly articulating her own basic convictions and theological structures.[27]

It is here that the significant role of the scriptures, as part of the "constitutive elements" of this apostolic church, becomes evident. For the scriptures are "a self-expression of the faith of the Church, a written embodiment of that which the primitive Church believed and what in faith she laid down for herself."[28] The New Testament is thus at the same time both a witness of revelation and a witness of faith, viz. the church's understanding of the Christ event. It concretely expresses the church's unique and distinctive self-understanding which is normative for all future ecclesiology. We are now ready to hear Rahner's statement of his thesis:

> . . . in creating through his absolute will[29] the Apostolic church and her constitutive elements, God wills and creates the Scriptures in such a way that he becomes their inspiring originator, their author. Let it be noted that we say "creating," for we wish to stress that the Scriptures originate not only on the occasion, or in the course of the institution of the Apostolic Church, but that the active inspiring authorship of God is an intrinsic element in the formation of the primitive Church becoming Church, and derives its mark from being this. God wills the Scriptures and himself as their originator. He achieves both because and in so far as he wills himself as the acting and efficient author of the church.[30]

From this point Rahner is able to address himself to the problems posed to all theories of inspiration. Firstly, with regards to authorship, God is not to be understood as an author in a literary or "bookish" sense. Rather he establishes and wills the scriptures insofar as they are

necessary as constitutive elements of the apostolic church, the community of redemption, which is God's ultimate intention. Man is the author of scriptures insofar as he freely conceives the book within the redemptive-historical situation in which he exists, which is willed by God. Hence God is the primary author of the reality within which man freely participates through grace, and which he expresses in words by faith. This also solves the second question concerning the conscious or unconscious process of inspiration, because it is not individualistically or "supernaturally" conceived;[31] rather it is a fully historical process in which the church attains concrete self-conscious expression as the community of God's people, established by God's revelation in Christ.

The problem of canonicity, how the church recognizes the inspiredness of the Bible, can also be hereby resolved. There need not be any explicit revelation of canonicity since "this revelation is simply given by the fact that the relevant writing emerges as a genuine self-expression of the primitive Church."[32] Since the primary reality is not the books but the redemptive community which has been given the Holy Spirit of inspiration, the church, filled with this Spirit, can recognize that which is connatural with her nature amongst the writings.[33] There is therefore a reciprocal relation between the church's self-expression or self-understanding of the faith and the scriptures such that both need the other if the church is to continue to be the eschatological offer of God's salvific grace and revelation in

the world. This is why the inspired writings and the teaching

authority of the church need each other in the unified

process of concretely representing God's final revelation.

For the scriptures are the canonical and hence normative

expression of the authoritative teaching of the early church,

and the teaching office of the post-apostolic church proclaims

the authoritative interpretation of the Bible.[34] Here again

we are confronted with Rahner's fundamental conviction that

the mediation of revelation is ecclesial:

> The Church possesses the Scripture, not only as a
> book, approaching it as it were from the outside like
> an unbelieving historian or exegete, in order to
> investigate what she can use out of it in regard to
> this or that question. The Church possesses the
> Scripture as something written and always read and
> accomplished in her own life.[35]

As we have seen, therefore, Rahner's more social and

historical understanding of inspiration is better able to

speak to the dogmatic problems of the doctrine of inspir-

ation than the individualistic and "bookish" (intellectual-

ist) approach of instrumental causality. It would also

appear to provide the dogmatic articulation of a much more

biblical understanding of the doctrine insofar as the focus

is not propositional or a monolithic process, but rather

God's historical action in the community of faith, upon whom

he bestows the charism of inspiration.[36] Bruce Vawter, a

biblical scholar, states the implication of Rahner's thesis:

> Is it not proper to think of Biblical inspiration
> in this way, as continuing to reside in the belief
> and understanding of the communities of faith,
> perpetuated by the same spiritual life by which they
> live and following the natural laws and structures

which the Spirit has assumed? If we may so think,
then perhaps we have a final enunciation of what
is meant by divine condescension and adoption of
the words of man, in the full context of the
people of God. 37

From this point we must move to a more detailed con-
sideration of how the historical process of mediation and
interpretation of revelation in the church is actually car-
ried out. In the following section, then, we will attempt
to come to terms with the diversity of theological reflection
as well as the development of dogma within the church's
teaching, both of which are already found in scripture.

The Development of Dogma

We begin with the observation that there is already in
the New Testament a pluralism which derives from the variety
of cultural backgrounds, personal religious attitudes, and
ecclesial situations within which the original experience
and application of revelation took place.[38] The New Testa-
ment cannot be understood as the pure and simple objectifi-
cation of the original event of revelation, for "the state-
ments which God addresses to us exist only in the statements
which we receive with our minds,"[39] i.e. there is an unavoid-
able subjectivity inherent in all knowledge, including
revealed kowledge, which precludes the distinction between
hearing and reflection, the traditio divina from the traditio
humana: "Thus theology, in as far as it is a condition of
simple hearing, begins already in the first moment of hear-
ing itself, and then it cannot but continue on and unfold it-

self."[40] There is thus both development and diversity

within the New Testament,[41] a process of theological re-

flection guided by the Holy Spirit.

The implication of this observation, Rahner claims, is

that "since there already is theology in the New Testament

which nevertheless is dogma, such theology can also be

found in the Church of later ages."[42] By "such theology"

Rahner means binding dogma in contradistinction to mere

theological opinion. In other words, the historical process

of personally appropriating divine revelation, the object

of faith, makes necessary the constant conceptual reform-

ulation of the consent of faith within one's cultural and

historical situation, and this is "dogma".[43] There is a le-

gitimate diversity and variety in this dogmatic reflection,

since it is trying to bring the infinite depth and opulent

multiformity of God and salvation history to expression:

> Hence dogma is not merely a statement "about" some-
> thing, but one in which, because it is an "exhibitive"
> word with a "sacramental" nature, what it states
> actually occurs and is posited by its existence:
> God's self-communication in grace which is also the
> grace of its absolute acceptance(faith). In the
> proclamation and the hearing of the dogma in faith,
> therefore, what is affirmed is itself present.[44]

In the New Testament, the writers are testifying to the gos-

pel kerygma, the experience of the gracious presence of

God himself, an experience which always transcends theolo-

gical reflection and objectification and yet can be mediated

therein insofar as the hearer also participates by faith

in the transcendental reality which the propositions seek

to express. We must therefore not be enamored by the

important discovery in modern biblical scholarship of the

diversity in the New Testament to the point that we

lose sight of the reality to which these variety of ideas

refer and see only disparate themes, traditions and forms, or

search only for their external provenance and parallels.

Here the words of Martin Hengel concerning the rise of pri-

mitive Christology are particularly apposite:

> Ancient man did not think analytically or make
> differentiations within the realm of myth in the
> way that we do, but combined and accumulated his
> ideas in a 'multiplicity of approximations.' The
> more titles were applied to the risen Christ, the
> more possible it was to celebrate the uniqueness
> of his saving work. 45

Because early Christianity sought to "articulate

God's communication of himself, his speaking and acting

in the Messiah Jesus, in quite unsurpassable, final--

'eschatological'--form," it was "concerned with the <u>whole</u>

<u>revelation of God</u>, the <u>whole of salvation</u> in his Christ Jesus,

which could not remain one 'episode in salvation history'

among others."[46] To do this it had to use "mythological"--

or, in Rahner's terms, "mystagogical"--language, transcendent

metaphors which would "sacramentally" express the reality

of the Christ event. This was the concern of the early

church, and it continues to be the concern of the church

throughout history, a history characterized by the develop-

ment of dogma, the continuation of the dynamic process begun

by the early church which finds its source and potency

in the kerygmatic nucleus of Christian revelation, viz.
the Christ event.

We have already alluded to the fact that revelation is
closed, because it attains its unsurpassable and definitive
fullness in Christ, and our access to it is through the
apostolic deposit of faith alone, which is materially ex-
pressed in the New Testament. The development of dogma as
the history of the church's consciousness of faith must there-
fore have an inherent relation to the reality proclaimed in
scripture. However, this process of development cannot be
predicted or controlled because the truth which is mediated
is the very self-communication of God by the Spirit of God,
not the finite human statements through which this revelation
is expressed.[48] Because these human statements are culturally
and historically conditioned and therefore partial and not
perfectly adequate to the revelation, they can be surpassed--
fuller understanding and discovery is always possible. This
is so precisely because the Christ event proclaimed by the
New Testament constitutes the closure of revelation, i.e. it
proclaims the definitive presence of God in the community of
faith through Christ. All subsequent dogmatic development is
therefore but the continued unveiling of the Truth present in
the church.[49] In other words, the Word of revelation which is
heard and reflected upon by the church is not merely a logical
propositional activity, but rather "a reflection in the propo-
sitions heard in living contact with the thing itself,"[50]

a _fides quaerens intellectum_. There is thus what in Thomistic terms may be called a "connatural" knowledge of the object of faith in the light of faith which provides the element of continuity in the development of dogma.[51]

This connatural growth in understanding, the explication of what is implicit in the revelation, must be examined more closely. Rahner contends that dogmatic development is not only the explication of that which is implicit formally in earlier propositions (and which can be analytically produced as a result of strict hermeneutical or exegetical exposition), but it also takes the form of explication that which is "virtually" implicit in prior dogmatic propositions (employing a deductive procedure). As stated above, God's self-communication is in excess of that finite historical appropriation of revelation which is explicitly stated in the New Testament, so that the starting point of dogmatic explication is not always "propositional" in the proper sense. The "global experience" which the apostles had of Christ, preceeded in an unreflexive and unthematic way the propositional reflexion and explication of this experience, and the latter could never bring to explicit expression all of the content and implications of the original lived experience. The very words of Jesus are heard in the context of this concrete experience so that "these sayings are not in themselves explicit enough; rather they require the complete experience, which in turn becomes continually more explicit and reflexively intelligible as the

content of these sayings is unfolded."[52] In this process, the
starting point is the original unthematic knowledge which the
propositional formulation seeks to illuminate in a reflexive,
self-explicating way. The connection here is not between
two propositions:

> . . . it is rather a connexion between what becomes
> partially explicit in a proposition and the unre-
> flexive, total spiritual possession of the entire
> res, so that the explicit proposition is at the same
> time more and less than its implicit source. More,
> because as reflexively formulated it elucidates the
> original, spiritually simple possession of the reality
> and in this way enriches it. Less, because it never
> does more than express reflexively and remotely a
> part of what was spiritually possessed before.[53]

The reflexive development and conceptual thematization of
this original experience is what takes place in the history
of faith or dogma in the church.[54] This form of dogmatic
development is not restricted to the apostolic era because
the apostles not only pass down propositions, but the very
reality of what they have experienced, namely the Holy Spirit
of God who is present in the church. The propositions are
therefore not reified packages to be analysed and handed down
intact, but rather "the proposition is always a kind of win-
dow through which a view may be gained of the thing itself."[55]
In addition to what is formally stated (the definable minimum
content), there is the implicit communication (mit-teilen)
of the inexhaustible reality to which the proposition refers.
This "virtually" implicit content can therefore be part
of the original deposit of faith as part of its unobjective
horizon which is only brought to reflexive awareness at a

later time, under the guidance of the Spirit.

Rahner's theory of dogmatic development can and should be brought into a more explicit propinquity to the biblical evidence which supports it. Oepke asserts that the transmission of revelation is biblically understood as a "living interchange rather than mere didactic formulation," the essence of which is not so much learned and psychically understood as confessed.[56] Although revelation is therefore not to be directly identified with the human words which pro-claim it, "they are in a sacramental sense the instruments of revelation; they point beyond themselves to the word of God which is living(Heb. 4:12)," and "as testimonies of faith they can become the media of the life-giving Spirit (II Cor. 3:6)."[57] The Pauline understanding of this transmission and appropriation of gospel tradition is expounded by G.E. Ladd:

> To receive gospel tradition does not mean merely to accept the truthfulness of a report about certain historical facts, nor does it mean simply to receive instruction and intellectual enlightenment. To receive the tradition means to receive (παρελάβετε) Christ Jesus as Lord(Col. 2:6). In the voice of tradition, the voice of God himself is heard; and through this word, God himself is present and active in the church (I Thess. 2:13). . . . The tradition handed on is in the form of preaching (εὐηγγελισάμην , 1 Cor. 15:1), and the reception of the message involves a response of faith (ἐπιστεύσατε , 1 Cor. 15:2). The tradition about the resurrection of Jesus must be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth (Rom. 10: 8.9), and issues in salvation. Such confession is possible only through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). 58 Thus the tradition has a two-fold character: it is both historical tradition and kerygmatic-pneumatic tradition at one and the same time.59

The redemptive meaning of the historical events of salvation and revelation, then, is contained in the form of a historical kerygmatic-pneumatic tradition which is at once fixed (insofar as it is normative - Gal. 1:8-9) and yet growing (insofar as it is open to the outworking of the redemption accomplished in Christ which continues in history by the Holy Spirit). Ladd indicates that the source of this development lies in Paul's use of the term mysterion, by which he refers to the total meaning and universal implications of God's salvific will definitively expressed in Christ (Rom. 16:25-26; cf. Eph. 3:3f.).[60] This total eschatological meaning is still in the process of historical objectification and realization through the hermeneutical appropriation of tradition informed by the action of the Holy Spirit.[61]

From this brief examination of the internal understanding of the New Testament regarding the development of dogmatic tradition or confessional formulae[62] (having left aside a scrutiny of the discoveries and hypothetical reconstructions of critical biblical theology regarding the development of New Testament theology itself), it would appear that Rahner's view of dogmatic development does indeed express its basic thrust. For Rahner too, the gospel kerygma is not primarily abstract doctrine but an event of kairos-- the presence of the kingdom of God, God's definitive self-communication, and this historical revelation requires the participatory engagement of one's whole being, conversion and not just intellectual assent.[63] The word which ex-

presses this event and its appropriation is active and
sacramental —-it gives what it promises, but stands open
only to faith and is alive to the future; it seeks actual-
ization in existence.

Here again, it is vital to attend to Rahner's all-
important ecclesial understanding of this process of dog-
matic development. Only the church, by its teaching magis-
terium, can decide which theological developments or hypo-
theses are binding for faith as a dogma, and which are but
theologoumena.

> For it was only to the Church as a whole that the
> promise was made that she should possess the original
> faith entire and unclouded. She alone, and not every
> isolated individual, has the organs which, without
> fear of error, can bring this reflection to completion
> with universally binding authority. In the last
> resort this is why it is only in the Church that
> there is a secure guarantee of a permanent
> connection between the original faith (in part
> global and implicit) in contact with the reality
> itself by grace and the light of faith, and the
> "new" explication by theological means.64

This statement must be more carefully investigated with
special reference to the relation between exegesis and
dogmatics, and of both to the teaching office of the
church.65 Firstly, although scientific reflection and his-
torical certainty can never adequately include or replace
the global concrete experience of faith, one cannot dispense
with the historical content and foundation of faith. And
it is the task of exegetical theology to carry out an his-
torical investigation which seeks to establish the historical
words and works of Jesus as well as the process of its

interpretation and transmission in early Christianity.[66]
However, it must be remembered that the objectivity of
revelation, even in Jesus, occurs in the subjectivity of
human consciousness; and therefore "the history of revel-
ation and the history of faith are ultimately speaking two
sides of one and the same process."[67] There is thus an
ineluctable dogmatic element present in exegesis which
cannot be eradicated. The dogmatic theologian begins with
the historical a posteriori of exegetical theology and the
teachings of the church, bringing them into dialogue with
the questions of the contemporary situation so that the
historical articulation of truth (the history of revelation
and faith) may continue through its personal appropriation
in the present. There must therefore be a close working
relationship between exegesis and dogmatic theology, because
exegesis itself is always dealing with dogmatic presuppositions
and tradition (both from the side of the biblical texts and
from the modern perspective of the exegete) and yet these
dogmatic perspectives are rooted in the historical event--
the object to which the original kerygma refers. A proper
theology consists of both existence (God's action in history)
and essence (the systematic unity and coherent structure of
that salvation history).

This complementary interrelationship and cooperation
between exegesis and dogmatics finds its focus in the church,
for it is the church to whom God has entrusted his revelation
and it is the church which individual theologians must serve

(cf. the New Testament writers). The authoritative function
exercised by the church in proclaiming binding dogma, however,
must be understood differently in the present than it has in
the past.[68] Rahner identifies two major epochs in this process
of dogmatic development:[69] 1) The development of the church's
self-understanding in its own history of development, in
which it loosed itself from identifying its message with any
particular point in the evolution of human consciousness, any
particular mental horizon (such as Judaism or Hellenism or
scholasticism), and became free to engage in global dialogue.
2) The second epoch is precisely the global dialogue with
the world, a world which is no longer under the tutelage of the
church's dogma and authority. It is a situation characterized
by an irreducible pluralism which renders the articulation
of universally binding dogmatic propositions impossible.[70]
Rahner claims that we are now at the end of the first period
and entering the second epoch of the church. This transition
presents the church with the following problem: how is the
creedal unity of the church to be maintained in our plural-
istic setting, and what is the role of the teaching magisterium
in this context?

Rahner argues that the church must by and large leave
the responsibility of assenting to the common creed to the
individual theologies, because there is no longer a common
theological language by which to positively express the ac-
tual meaning of the creed itself in an all-embracing form-

ulation. In this situation the teaching authority assumes a more pastoral function, i.e. the protection and encouragement of individual theologies which enrich the corporate life and faith of the church in various ways.[71] This also makes possible a greater appreciation for the "hierarchy of truths" both in scripture and in dogmatic pronouncements, so that individual propositions are not understood in an isolated way, but only in relation to the totality of revealed truths in faith. This analogia fidei is the hermeneutical principle for the correct interpretation of all linguistic mediation of revelation and it attains to the immediacy of God in the church:

> A Christian lives in the church's total consciousness of the faith because his own consciousness of the faith depends on it not only on the level of external, formal teaching authority, but also in the interior reality of the very thing which is believed in, and which as believed in is found in the church, namely, in God's grace.[72]

The assurance of unity, therefore, is not to be found on the level of conceptual awareness, but rather in that which is mystagogically communicated by the word-event and which can only be mediated within the total experience of the ecclesial community. Rahner describes it as follows:

> If we want to bring the unity of the creed to its ful- ness and to assure ourselves of this unity . . ., then we must express this one creed in common, celebrate the Death of the Lord in common in the physicality belonging to this, celebrate the sacraments in their physicality, serve the world in common in action, and then through all this process community of creed is achieved in the midst of all the pluralism of the theologies.[73]

Conclusion

Our investigation of Rahner's view of scripture and tradition--the original inspiration of the normative tradition and its development in the subsequent history of the church's faith--demonstrates Rahner's serious attempt to bring them both into a living unity. He displays an openness to the results of modern critical exegesis,[74] seeking to ground his dogmatic reflections on a proper biblical base, while at the same time emphasizing the indispensable role of the community of faith for a proper understanding of revealed truth.[75] This latter emphasis, indeed, is also in full accord with the internal witness of the biblical texts[76] which do not attempt to provide a detached, historical-critical description of events but rather the participatory expression and faith-full thematization of their believing experience, an experience which entails the revelation of a _mysterium tremendum_. The only way, then, to gain a truly "objective" understanding of the New Testament texts and the Christian tradition which it has generated, is to appropriate the meaning of that revelation in one's own community-centered experience, thus completing the hermeneutical process and mediating the revelation in one's own life situation. One therefore gains access to the events of revelation by way of one's tradition (which constitutes the pre-understanding or horizon of the interpreter); and yet openness to the claim of these events, to transcendence--the real reference of scripture and tradition--

will illuminate the tradition of the community of faith
and bring it to greater conscious clarity and self-presence.
All of this is a fully historical process:

> Our place is in history and it is only in its
> forward-moving course that we possess the eternal
> truth of God, which is our salvation. This
> saving truth is the same within history, but,
> while remaining the same, it has had and still
> has a history of its own. This 'sameness' com-
> municates itself to us continually, but never in
> such a way that we could detach it adequately
> from its historical forms, in order thus to step
> out of the constant movement of the flow of his-
> tory on to the bank of eternity, at least in the
> matter of our knowledge of truth. We possess this
> eternal quality of truth in history, and hence we
> can only appropriate it by entrusting ourselves
> to its further course. If we refuse to take this
> risk, the formulations of dogma wrongly claimed
> to be 'perennial' will become unintelligible, like
> opaque glass which God's light can no longer
> penetrate. 77

Rahner's dogmatic understanding of the central revelatory
event in Christian tradition, namely the Word become flesh,
is the point at which his transcendental anthropology
(chapter two above) and his hermeneutical appropriation
of the word-revelation mediated by the church (the above
chapter) converge and intersect. In Rahner's view, Christo-
logy provides the definitive expression of the supernatural
existential, the transcendental orientation of human beings,
and therefore constitutes the salvific event sought by man
in history. Rahner's Christology thus furnishes us a
coign of vantage from which to evaluate the hermeneutical
results of his transcendental approach, both from the
standpoint of biblical studies and the modern situation
which dogmatic theology seeks to elucidate.

After critically evaluating Rahner's Christological
"window" in chapter four, we will more closely survey
his view of the sacramental life, the ecclesial participa-
tion in and representation of the self-communication of
God.   This impact of revelation on the church's commitments
and praxis will constitute the focus of chapter five.

CHAPTER IV

THE PINNACLE OF REVELATION: JESUS CHRIST

Christology, we have said, is the focal point of the
correlative structure of Rahner's theology at which transcen-
dental anthropology (or theology) and its historical con-
cretion converge and culminate. What remains to be seen,
however, is Rahner's method of procedure and reflexive
conceptualization of the Christ event and its significance.
The first problem to be addressed is that of a proper
starting point and suitable criteria from which to construct
a meaningful and orthodox Christology. Does one begin with
the "historical" Jesus, examining the New Testament docu-
ments according to the historical-critical methods in a
Christology of ascent, or with the Christ of faith as arti-
culated by the church? And if the latter, does one proceed
from the "late" New Testament Christologies of the Pauline
or Johannine variety, or from the "classical" Christologies
of Nicea or Chalcedon? Or should one rather first examine
the questions and self-understanding of modern man and then
relate the Christ event to the philosophical frameworks
and existential situations of contemporary communities?
Rahner, of course, wishes to avoid the reductionist dis-
tortions of both the historicist/immanentist approach and the
mythological, speculative understanding of Christology by
combining a Christology from above with a Christology from
below in a mutually clarifying tension.[1] This does not,

however, absolve him from the arduous and painful responsibility of beginning at a specific point and articulating a particular Christological vision which, no matter how comprehensive and thorough it seeks to be, cannot express the whole of biblical Christology.[2] This brings us to the heart of our concern in this chapter, i.e. is Rahner's Christology at least congruent with biblical Christology, and can its biblical foundations be clearly identified?

This is no easy question, for it is patently obvious in Rahner's writing that the classical Chalcedonian Christology informs the whole of this thought:

> We shall never cease to return to this formula, because whenever it is necessary to say briefly what it is that we encounter in the ineffable truth which is our salvation, we shall always have recourse to the modest, sober clarity of the Chalcedonian formula. [3]

According to Rahner, the central Christian affirmation is "God became man,"[4] and therefore the essential task of Christology is to elucidate the meaning of the incarnation of the Word of God (John 1:14) as classically defined at Chalcedon in a manner acceptable to the modern world[5] and in accord with biblical theology, which is its ultimate source.[6] In other words, Rahner proceeds from dogma to the problems and discoveries of biblical theology via a transcendental hermeneutic in the attempt to understand the Christ event, the meaning of the unity of divinity and humanity in Jesus, which is also the foundation for the unity of nature and grace, creation and redemption, the

God-world relationship.

Having said this, we must acknowledge a certain ambiguity in Rahner's use of scripture.[7] While he maintains that scripture is the inexhaustible source for Christology,[8] Rahner nonetheless assumes dogma as the starting point and norm for his transcendental theological reflection on the Christ event. There is also a paucity of references to scripture in most of Rahner's work,[9] and this may be explained in part by the fact that Rahner is not a biblical scholar and does not wish to engage in naive proof-texting. There may be a built-in wisdom in letting others who, as professional biblical scholars, know more about the texts, do the explicit interpretative work with the biblical literature. This is also in keeping with what we discovered earlier about Rahner's view of the relationship between dogmatic and exegetical theology,[10] namely that the dogmatic theologian builds on that which exegesis establishes a posteriori as its results,[11] attempting primarily to integrate those results with classical Christology and contemporary reality in a coherent, cogent manner.

In order to clearly understand Rahner's Christological approach, it is necessary once again to remember the importance which the primordial and unthematic global experience has in has in his theology.[12] Indeed the true Christological starting point is ultimately not scripture or dogma but the actual faith relationship to Jesus as the Christ.[13] Rahner gives this faith relationship the following phenomeno-

logical description:

> This relationship to Jesus Christ is present
> in and through the "faith" that in the encounter
> with him in the unity and totality of his word,
> his life and his victorious death the all-
> encompassing and all-pervasive mystery of
> reality as a whole and of each individual
> life, the mystery which we call God, "is
> present" for our salvation, offering for-
> giveness and divine life, and is offered to
> us in such a way that God's offer in him is
> final and irrevocable. 14

In this faith relationship to Jesus Christ which precedes

and makes possible theological reflection, we have the

original unifying experience which brings together objec-

tive historical reality and transcendental subjective

reality, and provides the foundation for all authentic

Christological models, whether biblical, classical, or

modern. And making possible and explicit this basic faith

experience, which constitutes the inner truth and authority

of scripture and Chalcedonian dogma, is the paramount

concern of Rahner's Christology. Because this personal

faith relation to Jesus is not a purely individualistic

affair but rather is related to the faith of the church

which mediates the gospel of Jesus Christ,[15] the classical

Christology of church dogma cannot and must not be ignored.[16]

I would therefore advance a two-fold reason for Rahner's

concern with Chalcedonian Christology: 1) he is a dogmatic

theologian who must therefore reflect upon the dogmatically

authoritative pronouncements of the church; and 2) related

to this is the fact that Christianity is quite likely

represented in the average person's understanding by some

form of the doctrine of the Incarnation or the classical
Christological formulae, (which also predetermine his or
her reading of scripture), and since these formulae are
vulnerable to mythological misunderstandings, they require
restatement and reinterpretation in the modern setting.[17]
Our purpose in this chapter is first to sketch the salient
features of Rahner's "transcendental Christology" and then
to establish and evaluate its biblical foundations with
greater care.

Searching Christology

Because virtually any Christological affirmation--as
a confession of faith--is laden with potential mythological
overtones, a context must be provided wherein the proclama-
tion of the God-man, Jesus Christ, can be taken seriously,
i.e. non-mythologically. True to his transcendental
approach, Rahner's Christological reflection therefore
begins by making possible a genuine capacity to hear the
historical message of Jesus.[18] To accomplish this, Rahner
proposes what he calles a "searching Christology" (suchende
Christologie), in which he seeks to demonstrate that the
person who understands and accepts human existence as mys-
tery and thus seeks a global understanding of existence which
gives meaning to his or her particular experience, is sub-
ject to three universal claims: the demand for an absolute
love of neighbor, the demand to be prepared for death, and
the demand for hope in the future.[19]

Rahner then proceeds to point out that each of these demands implicitly seeks Christ as the possibility of its fulfilment. In the first claim, absolute love cannot be realized by one's own limited resources, for unconditional self-giving to another requires a unity of love of God and love of neighbor in which, given the unity of mankind, love of neighbor is love of God. Thus the first claim seeks for the God-man who can be loved with the same absolute commitment as is proper to God, not as an idea but as a concrete reality.[20] Secondly, Rahner points out that in a theology of death the event of Jesus' death can be more radically linked to the basic structure of human existence.[21] Death is the one act pervading the whole of life in which man as a free being experiences total self-determination. If one is to accept this radical powerlessness experienced in death without accepting the absurd, then one must look forward to death as reconciliation with expectant hope, a concrete hope which is found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, a hope which is attainable as an absolute future but yet does not involve the swallowing up of the finite in God's absolute being, i.e. that God's absolute future is our future and this is the goal of history because history already bears within it the irrevocable promise of the goal--such a hope is provided by Jesus Christ as the definitive beginning of God's coming as the absolute future of the world. This "searching Christology" is summarized by Rahner:

> . . . man is on the look-out for the absolute
> bringer of salvation and affirms, at least
> implicitly, in every total act of his nature
> directed by grace to the immediate presence of
> God as his goal, that he has already come or
> will come in the future. 22

The above "searching Christology" is the reflexive

articulation of what Rahner refers to as a "transcendental

Christology" which, by beginning from universal human

experience in which man is understood as self-transcendent

being oriented towards the absolute mystery (God) who thus

dares to hope for the absolute saviour and seeks him in

history, provides an <u>a priori</u> ontological structure and

hermeneutical framework in which Christological reflection

can meaningfully take place. This "transcendental anthro-

pological" background in which Rahner propounds his under-

standing of the God-world relationship, the unity of nature

and grace, has already been discussed above, in chapter

two. From here Rahner can proceed to develop a Christology,

which, contrary to the more mythological Monophysitic

tendencies of traditional dogmatics,[23] in which human

nature is viewed as a disguise or "livery" of the divinity,

ascribes an active redemptive role and primary significance

to the humanity of Christ as the "real symbol" of the

Father. That is, Rahner can point to the person of Jesus

Christ as the one in whom the God-world relationship

comes to perfection and fulfilment, and therefore also mediates

and defines this relationship historically and ontologically.

In order to understand this, we must begin with the paradigm

Rahner employs to concretize his discussion, viz. Christo-
logy within an evolutionary framework.[24]

The starting point of Rahner's evolutionary framework
is the fundamental unity of matter and spirit (nature and
grace) in man "as the being in whom the basic tendency of
matter to find itself in the spirit by self-transcendence
arrives at the point where it definitively breaks through."[25]
From this perspective it becomes possible to consider the
essential nature of man within the total conception of
the world and to attempt to arrive at that self-communica-
tion of God which fulfills this self-transcendence (which
is gratuitously bestowed on him by God). This fulfilment,
in other words, must bring about the essential unity between
spirit and matter in an absolute and definitive way. Hence
this fulfilment is the goal of history, for history is none
other than the dynamic matter-spirit relation in man in
which matter becomes spirit through the process of human
self-transcendence. Fulfilment is therefore found in God
who, as the absolute fullness of being, grounds this
evolution.

Here we are at the core of the God-world relationship
as understood by Rahner, namely that the self-transcendence
of the world in human being is made possible by the immanent
self-bestowal of God himself to humanity in grace, i.e. the
supernatural existential. This uncreated ontological ground
makes it possible for man to accept in principle the ultimate
self-communication of God, and in this sense man has a

potentia oboedientialis for the Incarnation or the hypostatic

union. Rahner is thus able to refer to man as the "grammar

of God's possible self expression"[26] who has the capacity

for being assumed by God while at the same time retaining a

self-identity and personal autonomy:

> This is precisely an attribute of his [God's]
> divinity as such and his intrisic creativity:
> to be able, by himself and through his _own_ act
> as _such_, to constitute something in being which
> by the very fact of its being radically dependent
> (because _wholly_ constituted in being), also acquires
> autonomy, independent reality and truth (precisely
> because it is constituted in being by the one,
> unique _God_), and all this precisely with respect
> to the God who constitutes it in being . . . .
> There lies the mystery of that active creation
> which is God's alone. Radical dependence upon
> him increases in direct, and not in inverse, pro-
> portion with genuine self-coherence before him. 27

This basic formula regarding the relationship of the dependence

and autonomy of man _vis-à-vis_ God concisely represents

Rahner's understanding of the relation between Creator

and creature, the transcendence (God, by quasi-formal

causality, remains God)[28] and immanence (God is the inner

ground of the self-transcendent historical process of

"becoming")[29] of God which unfolds in an evolutionary

historical process towards its perfection. Such a para-

digm makes possible a less mythological understanding of the

Incarnation and hypostatic union insofar as these terms

seek to expound the event in which this independence and

dependence (or radical proximity) is perfectly realized and

related: hence the God-man.[30]

It may now be more clearly stated that the goal of

the world is immediacy to God, an immediacy which is

ultimately realized in God's self-communication and the
world's acceptance of this offer "to such an extent that he
[God] himself becomes its [the world's] innermost life."[31]
Insofar as human beings live in formal anticipation of
this divinization of the world, the infinite goal, they
also anticipate and indeed search for the irrevocable
historical inauguration of this absolute self-communication
of God, i.e. the absolute saviour who is in himself both
the offer and the acceptance of this self-communication.
This context ("from below") enables us to comprehend the
"descending" ontic Christology articulated in the classical
dogmas, in which "God has become man" is seen as the
primary axiom.

Before going on to examine Rahner's ontological
reinterpretation of the ontic categories of the classical
Christological model, we must take proper note of his
emphasis on the historicality of God's self-communication
via the Incarnate Word. Christology and the notion of an
absolute saviour is not a transcendentally deduced abstract
idea but rather the subsequent transcendental reflection
on the concrete historical event of this God-man in the
person of Jesus.[32] Indeed, in accord with the unity of
spirit and matter and the conversio ad phantasma of all
knowledge and self-consciousness (which makes transcendental
reflection possible in the first place), the historical
source of Christological proclamation is utterly basic to
Rahner's thought. As Rahner so emphatically declares,

"the fundamental assertion [Grundaussage] of Christology is precisely that God became flesh [Fleischwerdung Gottes], became matter"[33] (John 1:14), that God assumes and thereby fulfills human history in its spiritual-material and inter-subjective reality. The basic dynamic of history, then, is its movement toward "divinization," a movement consisting of human self-transcendence (grounded by God himself in creation) and God's self-communication (redemption, salvation, the fulfilment of creation) as two phases of one process which attains to its absolute culmination in the Incarnation or hypostatic union, to which we now turn.

Theology of the Incarnation

In discussing the classical formula, "the Word became man,"[34] Rahner begins by rejecting the traditional Augustinian theory that any person of the Trinity could have become incarnate, which precludes the need for any particular understanding of the "Word" of God. Rahner rather follows the pre-Augustinian (primarily Cappadocian) tradition which taught that only the Word could have become man, in which case the link between subject and predicate is radically deepened to the point that the Logos is the possibility of God offering his own self to us in history. We have already seen that man is essentially mystery and as such strives towards the infinite mystery of fullness, so that to say that God became man is to say that man's essence is fulfilled:

> God has taken on a human nature, because it is
> essentially ready and adoptable, because it

alone, in contrast to what is definable without transcendence can exist in total dispossession of itself, and comes therein to the fulfilment of its own incomprehensible meaning. 35

The second part of the assertion is to say that God has become man, and this raises the problem of reconciling God's immutability with his taking on the changing human history as his own. Rahner proposes that this dilemma is resolved only by saying: "God can become something, he who is unchangeable in himself can himself become subject to change in something else."[36] At this point, Rahner says, ontology must orient itself to the message of faith rather than try to lecture it,[37] and thus he propounds an "ontological ultimate" which states that God, in the pure freedom of his infinite unrelatedness, possesses the possibility of becoming the finite by giving himself away in an act of absolute love. Thus when God empties himself or "utters" himself by becoming another thing, what is constituted is man. The difference between the Incarnate Logos and other human beings is not human nature, but the fact that in him human nature is the self-expression of God and hence the fulfilment of human nature and history.[38]

This point regarding the difference between the hypostatic union and other human beings is exceedingly important to understand, for here Rahner seeks to preserve the tension between the uniqueness and underivability of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Jesus' "divinity") and the fact that the Incarnate Logos is fully human, i.e. created

reality. If human beings are in their mysterious essence
the paradigm of God's possible self-communication, "the
material of a possible history of God," this does not yet
define what that is or means. Not until that <u>possible</u>
self-communication becomes <u>actual</u> in history does the
"what" of human being and its supernatural telos find
expression and fulfilment, and this is precisely the signi-
ficance of the Christ event. Thus Rahner can say, "Christo-
logy is the end and beginning of anthropology. And this
anthropology, when most thoroughly realized in Christology,
is eternally theology."[39] Christ is therefore the para-
digm of the God-creature relationship and is most radically
man precisely because his humanity is created as God's
self-expression. We therefore find God, not by going
around or escaping the human, but rather by going through
the perfected humanity of the God-man.[40]

In this way the Incarnate Logos may be viewed as the
"real symbol" of God. Rahner asserts that all beings are
essentially symbolic because they "express" themselves in
order to attain their own nature.[41] A real symbol (as
opposed to symbolic representation) is "the self-realization
of a being in the other, which is constitutive of its
essence."[42] Because being is plural in itself (it expresses
itself variously), it cannot be essentially known, either to
itself or to others, except through its appearance outside
of itself--in the "real symbol." Thus we can say:

> The Father is himself by the very fact that he
> opposes to himself the image which is of the

> same essence as himself, as the person who is
> other than himself, and so he possesses himself.
> But this means that the Logos is the "symbol" of
> the Father in the very sense which we have given
> the word: the inward symbol which remains distinct
> from what is symbolized, where what is symbolized
> expresses itself and possesses itself. [43]

The Incarnate Word as the absolute symbol of God expresses

what God is in himself, as well as what God gratuitously

wished to be to the world in a final and irrevocable way.[44]

However, this means that to say "Jesus is God" must

be qualified or understood in a manner which recognizes the

"inconfused and inseparable" nature of real symbol,[45] such

that the copula "is" does not involve an interchange of

predicates based on real identification, but rather signifies

a unique and mysterious unity "between realities which are

really different and . . . at an infinite distance from

each other."[46] What then is meant by the Christological

formula "Jesus is God and man," i.e. if Jesus is the self-

communication of God and thus the entelechy and goal of

history as the bearer of immediacy to God, how is this to

be conceived? Rahner, in reflecting on this question,

makes two preparatory observations:

1) Human consciousness is an infinite, multi-dimensional

sphere which therefore contains many layers of knowledge,

not all of which are objectified and conscious. Indeed,

the knowledge which constitutes the basic condition and

orientation of the spiritual subject is an a priori,

unobjectified self-kowledge.

2) The Greek view of human perfection as the absolute

fullness of knowledge and the absence of ignorance, i.e.
nescience, cannot do justice to an anthropology in which
perfection is located in human freedom, the power of self-
determination in which nescience serves a positive function.[47]
These two insights preclude any thought of Christ possessing
a beatific vision or any objective knowledge of the divine
essence, and thus protect the humanity of Christ from
mythological distortions, while providing a way to conceive
of his direct presence to God in an implicit visio immediata.

Beginning with the Thomistic axiom of knowledge that
being and consciousness are simultaneous as two elements of
one reality, Rahner points out that Jesus' subjective
self-consciousness bore the ontological determination of
the Logos in an absolute way. Thus the hypostatic union is
ontologically the highest actualization of human nature--
not as something given from without or which has perfect
knowledge, but which absolutely grounds the spiritual
creature. Just as the supernatural existential provides
the unthematic horizon which determines the whole spiritual
life of a creature, so the divine sonship of Jesus con-
stituted the ground of Jesus' self-consciousness, which he
came to know objectively and reflexively during his human
history. In this way the human Jesus is the quasi-sacra-
mental presence (Anwesenheit) of God in the world, which is
the finally decisive event in the evolution of the world.[48]
Rahner thus describes the hypostatic union as follows:

> . . . if the reality in which God's absolute
> self-communication is pledged and accepted for

the whole of humanity and thus becomes "present"
for us, i.e. Christ's reality is to be really
the final and unsurpassable divine self-communi-
cation, then it must be said that it is not only
posited by God but is God himself. The pledge
itself cannot be anything else than a human reality
which has been absolutely sanctified by grace. 49

The Historical Jesus and Soteriology

If Jesus history is the history of the hypostatic

union in which God absolutely gives himself to and is

accepted by the world and thus becomes its inner dynamic,

then it becomes important to examine the life and death--

the history--of Jesus as the concrete absolute salvific

event. Indeed, if the meaning of the Christ event is the

radical union of spirit and matter where matter becomes

fully present to itself in spirit and thus reaches its

transcendental goal, then the relationship of transcendent

and historical is uniquely realized in this particular

historical event which has universal implications.[50]

Rahner states his thesis as follows:

> . . . although the hypostatic union is a unique
> event in its own essence, and viewed in itself
> it is the highest conceivable event, it is never-
> theless an intrinsic moment within the whole
> process by which grace is bestowed upon all
> spiritual creatures. If this total event of
> the bestowal of grace on all mankind finds its
> fulfillment, it must have a concrete tangibility
> in history. It cannot be sudden and acosmic and
> purely meta-historical, but rather this fulfill-
> ment must take place in such a way that this
> event emanates in time and space from one point. 51

Upon examining the historical Jesus, Rahner propunds

the two theses essential to a proper understanding of

that history: 1) Jesus saw himself as the eschatological

prophet, the absolute saviour, insofar as his message pro-
claimed God's offer of salvation in a new and unique way,
not only in his words, but also in his personal filial
relationship fo God.[52]

2) This claim was confirmed in the event which mediates the
saviour in his totality, i.e. his death and resurrection.[53]
Of course, it should already be obvious that for Rahner
there can be no sharp dichotomy between a functional and
an ontological Christology, or between Christ's soterio-
logical and ontological significance--insofar as Jesus
is the absolute saviour, he in his person embodies and
mediates salvation. It is in this context that the
unity of Jesus' death and resurrection as the final and
definitive salvific event provides us with an understanding
of soteriology and redemption, i.e. how the person of
Jesus (which cannot be separated from his cause)[54] mediates
the salvation of the world.

Rahner, in asserting that the possibility of forgive-
ness comes from the power of God's self-communication--
that God's will to forgive sin causes Christ's actions and
thus the cross is the consequence, not the cause, of God's
redemptive will--rejects the satisfaction theory of atone-
ment. The juridical theory of satisfaction presupposes
that it is the personal dignity of the one who performs
the work of satisfaction which gives the act its moral value.
In this view an angry God decrees that compensation for human

sin can only be brought about by the obedient death of the incarnate one, and God might as well have prescribed any other moral act because of Jesus' infinite value.[55] Hence because the Incarnation is viewed as willed by God only in view of the obliteration of sin, the resurrection and permanent mediation of salvation by Christ is obfuscated, and even the death of Jesus is given insufficient attention as the act of totality in which the self-offer of God to the world as its ultimate goal and gracious fulfilment is definitively accepted.

In the attempt to develop a more adequate understanding of the relation between soteriology and the cross, Rahner appeals to a more Eastern theology of redemption as an ontological process beginning with the Incarnation and ending not so much in the expiation of sin on the cross as in the divinization of the world through the resurrection of Christ.[56] Rahner argues that the death of Jesus must be more profoundly viewed within a theology of death insofar as its redemptive efficacy is constituted not in its moral quality but precisely in its character as death.[57] Insofar as death is the supreme act of man in which the totality of one's life enters into an integrated and "real-ontological" relationship to the world as a whole, "it is through his death that man in some way introduces as his contribution the result of his life into the basic, real oneness of the world."[58] Thus, in his death, Jesus offers up the whole of his history and existence (his "cause") to God, and in the

resurrection God irrevocably accepts and adopts this creature as his own reality, thus confirming his absolute self-communication in Christ and inaugurating the divinization process (salvation) of the whole world.[59]

Because of the universal solidarity of mankind in death, i.e. the history of man is also the history of the inter-communication of all people, the death of Jesus as God's self-communication in grace becomes a part of the history of the world and is thus universally mediated. Consequently, Jesus' mediation of the immediacy of God becomes an ontological reality in the universal history of mankind.[60] In this way Rahner is able to preserve both the emphasis on the humanity of Jesus as decisive for the universal mediation of salvation (and thus guards against mythological Mono-physitic concpetions) as well as the emphasis on God's self-communication through the Logos in the hypostatic union which becomes a part of human history, thus divinizing the world insofar as God gives himself to it as its inner dynamic and destiny.[61] In this way also the cross (which cannot be separated from the resurrection) of Jesus becomes the "real symbol" of universal salvation, the primary sacramental sign of the victorious and irreversible activity of salvific grace in the world. In Rahner's words:

> The life and death of Jesus taken together . . .
> are the "cause" of God's salvific will (to the
> extent that these two things are regarded as dif-
> ferent) insofar as this salvific will establishes
> itself really and irrevocably in this life and
> death, in other words, insofar as the life and
> death of Jesus, or the death which recapitulates
> and culminates his life, possess a causality of

> a quasi-sacramental and real-symbolic nature.
> In this causality what is signified, in this
> case God's salvific will, posits the sign, in
> this case the death of Jesus along with his
> resurrection, and in and through the sign it
> causes what is signified. 62

Rahner thus facilitates an interpretation of Christ's

death and resurrection which goes beyond an individualistic

and moralistic interpretation of the redemptive work of

Christ to a view better able to explicate the universal

significance of Jesus' mediation of salvation. On this

view, it can be clearly perceived, in contrast to the

"sacrifice" and "ransom" imagery of the New Testament and

the satisfaction theory, that the universal significance

of Jesus' cross and resurrection derives from God himself

and his universal salvific will.[63] It is true that Rahner's

soteriological focus is on the fulfilment of human life by

the mediated immediacy to God through Christ which promises

the future resurrection of us all, rather than on the

blotting-out of sin and guilt. The reason for this is

Rahner's Scotist understanding of the Incarnation as that

which fulfills God's primary intention as the summit of

creation and not primarily the restoration of the fallen

order.[64] This does not deny the reality of sin and guilt in

the evolutionary process' involving creation and incarnation,

but sin and guilt are overcome in God's acceptance of the

history of the world in the Incarnation. That is, "sin is

from the outset embraced by the will to forgive,"[65] and the

possibility of forgiveness originates from God's self-

communication which was proleptically effective from the
origins of creation. On this view, redemption is not under-
stood as a moral or juridical transaction, but as occrring
"in the ontological reality of God's self-communication" which
is the entelechy of the intersubjective and self-transcendent
process of human history.[66] The question to be asked of
Rahner's soteriology, as with his whole Christological
structure, is whether it has an adequate biblical founda-
tion, that is, does it accurately represent the New Testa-
ment experience of Jesus as the Christ, the crucified and
risen saviour of humanity?

Rahner's Christology and the New Testament

Perhaps the best way to orient our evaluation of
Rahner's Christology from a New Testament perspective is
to introduce certain criticisms made of Rahner's approach to
Christology by those whose Christological reflections are
more explicitly rooted in New Testament exegesis. We
begin with Walter Kasper, who, in the foreward of his book
Jesus the Christ,[67] acknowledges his methodological indebted-
ness to the Catholic Tübingen school, which focused on the
origins of Christianity in Jesus Christ as historically
accessible through biblical and church tradition.
Affirming the Tübingen emphasis on the intelligibility
and underivability of history,[68] Kasper is wary of approaching
Christology from a pre-determined frame of reference which
might philosophically or ideologically reduce the Christ

event. Although he seeks to relate the historical as-
cending Christology with the incarnational Christology of
descent and therefore takes both biblical and classical,
functional and ontological models into consideration, and
although influenced by Rahner at many points in his work, he
nonetheless criticizes Rahner's transcendental Christology
as a "metaphysicizing" of historical Christianity "largely
within the bounds of the idealistic philosophy of identity
and its identification of being and consciousness." [69]
According to Kasper this results in an attenuated view of
the intersubjectivity of history in that Rahner takes too
little notice of the fact that the transcendental conditions
of understanding are themselves determined by the true
reality of history--that being addressed, approached, and
asked to respond precedes questioning.[70]

Kasper, on the other hand, wishes to assert an in-
escapable tension between being and consciousness which
cannot be abstractly resolved, but which depends for its
resolution on the possibility of the underivably new appear-
ing in history "from above," not from the inherent pos-
sibilities of history itself.[71] On this basis Kasper
rejects Rahner's attempt to articulate Christology within an
evolutionary framework, arguing that it is too triumphal-
istic, that it ignores the continuing tension which the
power of the negative, i.e. inexplicable and meaningless
suffering, produces in our world.[72] In Kasper's view, the

transition from anthropological to theological ("from below" to "from above") cannot be made without a break, that we know man and God only from history (rather than an abstract ontology), and "ultimately in fact only from the history and fate of Jesus of Nazareth".[73] This condemns a Christology "from below" to failure because Jesus understood his whole existence in theocentric, "from above" terms,[74] that is, as one whose life is completely dependent upon and in union with God the Father. The problem with the more abstract Chalcedonian and Rahnerian articulation of this is that it focuses not on the historically personal unity between Jesus and God as Father (which is the biblical focus) but on the ontological hypostatic union between Jesus and the Logos.[75] Kasper consequently seeks to return to the earlier biblical pneuma-sarx Christology which is more amenable to an historical Christology than the classical logos-sarx Christology which distorted its historical meaning as found in its biblical sources in John 1:14.[76] Interestingly enough, Kasper virtually repeats Rahner's understanding of the meaning of the hypostatic union as the perfection of the God-creature relationship as well as Rahner's view of mediation of salvation, in his explanation of Jesus' unity with God the Father and Jesus' role as mediator. Therefore, although Kasper criticizes Rahner for his ahistorical and abiblical "metaphysical" ("transcendental") approach to Christology, we must ask to what extent this disapprobation is justified.

Before we return to a reexamination of Rahner's thought, however, let us examine the similar concerns expressed by two other scholars, Wilhelm Thüsing[77] and Alexander Gerken.[78] Although open to the possibility of deriving a transcendental Christology from the New Testament, Thüsing offers a number of criticisms of Rahner's view which are similar to Kasper's critique. Arguing that Rahner's Christology is too conditioned by the abstract and formalized classical model, Thüsing claims that it is not as rich and full as New Testament Christology, especially as it pertains to the cross and soteriology.[79] What Rahner lacks is the relational biblical emphasis on the theocentric self-understanding of Jesus, which results in an ontic Christocentrism abstractly conceived in isolation from the concrete faith and obedience of Jesus, his filial relationship with the Father.[80] Thüsing argues that the idea of mission, which preserves the theocentric orientation, since it points to Jesus' obedience and faith, is much more prevalent in the New Testament than the idea of Incarnation, which has mythological tendencies. Basically, then, Thüsing is concerned that Rahner's somewhat formalized and abstract Christological concepts (such as "absolute saviour") be supplemented with the more dialogic and relational theocentric categories of New Testament Christological thinking.[81] Alexander Gerken expresses his concern for Rahner's transcendental Christology by employing the categories of (historical-dialogic) election (geschichtlich-dialogischer

Erwählung) and intersubjective personalism (zwischenpersonaler Bereich), arguing that without these concepts, Rahner cannot do justice to the concrete historical revelation in Christ as represented in the Bible.[82]

It is clear that one of the central criticisms of Rahner's Christology is that his transcendental approach is too abstract and ahistorical, and that it thereby fails to do justice to the relational historical Christology of the New Testament.[83] Now it is undoubtedly true that Rahner's Christology requires supplementation from New Testament exegesis (and to this extent the work of Kasper and Thüsing is superior to Rahner's "first level" approach), but in my opinion this criticism is not entirely justified. First, it is not the case that Rahner's Christology is "ahistorical" or that he proceeds according to an "eisegesis" of the Christ event based on a predetermined, idealistic philosophical framework. As was stated in the introduction to this chapter, Rahner is concerned to examine the possibility of faith in Christ as the absolute bringer of salvation, the pinnacle of revelation. This faith is of course rooted in the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth; it is not directed toward some Idea.[84] As Rahner says of transcendental reflection upon Christology:

> . . . we can only reflect upon and explicitate
> the implications inherent in our own position
> when a posteriori the historical situation is
> given, and also some concrete stimulus from with-
> out impelling us to do this. But this does not
> alter the fact that given these conditions we can
> then recognize implications of this kind pre-
> cisely as such. 85

Hence Rahner does recognize the historical determination

of transcendental conditions, but he points out that this

does not invalidate reflection upon the latter. Indeed the

very intelligibility of history is dependent upon

transcendental reflection:

> Without transcendental theology historical facts
> cannot be shown to be existentiell, that is, to
> affect man's salvation. This is because the
> reality of such salvific events cannot be known
> simply a posteriori. If they are to address
> man as man, he must address himself to them with
> his whole being, that is, he must discover that
> he is by his very nature forced to turn to them.
> But if he approaches them with his whole being,
> his theology is transcendental. 86

Furthermore, in view of Rahner's theology of symbol,

evolutionary framework, mediation of Christ, theology of the

body, and anonymous Christianity, it is quite apparent that

intersubjectivity plays a crucial role in his Christology.

And the tension between being and consciousness which Kas-

per espouses is certainly present in Rahner's identification

of being and consciousness, an identification which is

thoroughly dialectical and analogical, and which seeks its

resolution not abstractly but in historical actuality. The

difference is quite evidently in the way Rahner articulates

it, i.e. transcendentally and ontologically rather than in

the language of biblical theology. Although this is an

important difference, does it mean that Rahner's evolutionary

framework and Logos-Christology cannot be integrated into

a biblical understanding of Christ? And does it lack a focus on the theocentric self-understanding of Christ, focusing rather on an abstract and formal Christocentrism?

First, regarding the evolutionary paradigm, it must be remembered that this is not viewed by Rahner as a purely immanent unilateral movement of historical progress but as a model for understanding the God-world relationship expressed in the unity of creation and Incarnation. It is therefore informed by a theocentric orientation at its very core, but this theocentric dimension is not something which comes in a purely external fashion "from above" (senkrecht von oben) through an underivable particular history.[87] Rather, it is already part of the human constitution through being created by God as the potentia oboedientialis for God's possible self-utterance, the hypostatic union, and it is this which makes the Christ-event meaningful and intelligible as the fulfillment of human nature and the mediator of salvation. In Christ, God and man are reconciled, the original Creator-creature relationship is restored and the world's salvation as God's ultimate self-communication and loving self-giving is revealed.[88] This is ultimately the message of Rahner's Christology, and it would certainly appear to have biblical support, as we shall see.

In the New Testament, we are confronted with a number of images which have been associated with the doctrine of the Incarnation: Son of God, Logos, Last Adam, Wisdom.

These diverse formulations and titles are employed by the
biblical authors in the common attempt to express the
exalted significance of Jesus Christ,[89] but the important
consideration for us is what they understood these terms to
mean and whether Rahner's Christology truly represent that
meaning. Perhaps the most significant Christological
image for us to consider is the title "Son of God" which in
classical Christology became the most exalted expression
and confession of Jesus' divine ontological status, and
yet is also found in the Old Testament and was therefore
probably an important concept in the earliest stages of
Christological reflection, indeed in Jesus' own self-
consciousnes.

When we look for background to the term in pre-
Christian Judaism we find no clear evidence that "Son of
God" had any messianic meaning.[90] What we do find in the
Old Testament are several references to the King as the
Son of God[91] and Israel as God's son,[92] but the context
here simply carries the idea of election to participation
in God's divine work through the execution of a particular
commission and the correlative obligation to obey the God
who elects. We may then ask, what was Jesus' own con-
sciousness of sonship?[93] Even on the basis of an "implicit
Christology"[94] it is possible to demonstrate Jesus' self-
awareness as a unique agent of God's kingdom which was
imminent, that is, he was convinced that he in his person
announced the new eschatological closeness of the kingdom

which demanded conversion.[95] On this basis it is possible
to say that "Jesus experienced a relationship to God which
he experienced as new and unique in comparison with other
men,"[96] and this relationship appears to have been regar-
ded by Jesus as a filial relationship.[97] Following Joachim
Jeremias' work on Jesus' use of "_abba_" when addressing
God (the Aramaic equivalent to the English "daddy"), it is
possible to ascribe to Jesus a uniquely intimate filial
consciousness in the sense "that God has graciously en-
dowed him with the full revelation, revealing himself to
him as only a father can reveal himself to his son. _Abba_,
then, is a word which conveys revelation. It represents the
center of Jesus' awareness of his mission (_Sendungsbewusst-
sein_)."[98] This mission was conceived as bringing others to
participate in the kingdom to which he already belonged
(Mark 12:6; Luke 22:29f.).

In the earliest of the New Testament writings (pre-
Pauline and Pauline), Jesus' status as Son of God is linked
to the resurrection, i.e. Jesus' sonship is viewed es-
chatologically.[99] However, in two important Pauline
passages we also find Jesus the Son of God as being "sent"
by God (Romans 8 and Galatians 4:4f.) and here again we
have the themes of election and obedience surfacing, since
the sending of God's Son focuses on the soteriological will
of God to redeem mankind. In both of these passages the
Son of God shares our human condition[100] in order that we
might share his, namely that we too might become sons of

God who enjoy the intimate "abba" relationship with God.[101] The focus therefore is not on the idea of pre-existence and the "divinity" of Christ but on that which unites Jesus with God and also with men and women. Jesus as Son of God both reveals the Father's nature and purposes while at the same time expresses what mankind is meant to be, namely obedient and faithful. The Son of God is therefore the one who brings about reconciliation between God and man, a mission which is verified and accepted by God in the resurrection. Therefore all those who live in solidarity with Jesus as sons (via the Spirit of the Son: Romans 8:9f.; Gal. 4:6) also live in union with God (by that same Spirit) and have the hope of salvation by resurrection, just as our first-born and preeminent brother.

In the later post-Pauline writings of the New Testament there is a fascinating process of pushing back Jesus' declared identity as Son of God to the pre-resurrection Jesus.[102] Mark relates Jesus' sonship to his mission, particularly the death of Jesus (Mark 15:30), and locates the annointing of Jesus as Son at the baptism, as the beginning of Jesus' mission. Matthew and Luke identify Jesus' divine sonship already in the birth narratives in which Jesus' conception by the power of the Spirit is expressed as the beginning of Jesus' sonship. Finally, in John's gospel we have more clear references to Jesus' pre-existent sonship where the Son is pictured as having been "sent into the world" (3:17; 6:33,38,62), which goes beyond

the notion of divine commissioning. Also, in John the
abba-intimacy between Jesus and God is extended to explicit
claims to oneness with the Father (5:19f.; 7; 16f.; 8:16,
29; 10:17-18,30) and yet in a clear subordinationist manner.
Here we would appear to have the perfection of the God-
creature relationship, in the sonship of Jesus, [103] and
Rahner provides the following reflections:

> . . . the man Jesus exists in a unity of wills with
> the Father which permeates his whole reality to-
> tally and from the outset, in an "obedience" from
> out of which he orients his whole human reality; he
> is someone who continually accepts (empfängt)
> himself from the Father and who in all the dimensions
> of his existence has always given himself over to
> the Father totally; in this surrender (Übergabe)
> he is able to accomplish due to God what we are not
> able to accomplish; he is someone whose "basic
> constitution" ("Grundbefindlichkeit") as the ori-
> ginal unity of being and consciousness is to have
> his origins (Herkünftigkeit) in God radically and
> completely, and to be given over to God (Übereignet-
> heit an Gott) radically and completely. [104]

In other words, sonship Christology, especially as found
in John's gospel, provides a legitimate foundation for
Rahner's ontological consciousness Christology.

Another related image used in the New Testament (bas-
ically by Paul) to elucidate Christ's significance is that
of the second or last Adam.[105] Paul's anthropology is
heavily influenced by the Genesis account of creation and
the fall,[106] and he therefore views salvation as a reversal
of Adam's fall whereby the image and glory of God are re-
stored in man.[107] The indispensable model or paradigm for
this process is Christ, so that salvation is attained
through conformity to the Christological pattern,[108] and

this is conceived as an Adamic role.[109] The contrast between the first and last Adam focuses on the contrast between the old creation (the man of dust and death) and the the new creation (the man of living Spirit, resurrection and exaltation). Here again, as II Corinthians 15 makes clear, the resurrection is of central importance since it marks the beginning of a new representative humanity in Christ. Jesus, as the last Adam, fulfills and mediates God's original intention for man, i.e. resurrection glory, but he does so only after wholly sharing the condition and situation of the first Adam. Whereas Adam in his hubris disobediently "grasped equality with God," Christ emptied himself in humble obedience even to the point of freely accepting his death, the lot of fallen Adam.[110] As a result Christ is exalted to a new divinized life and henceforth mediates the perfection of the God-creature relationship in a new humanity.

Thus the logical implication of the Adam Christology would also appear to be a Christology of Incarnation in which Adam/man, as created in the image of God, when endowed with prevenient grace (as the self-communication of God) to the point of total obedience and openness for God, reflects the very glory of God himself. And this evaluation does not imply the ascription of a Gnostic redeemer myth or _Urmensch_ speculation as the background to the Adam passages in the New Testament.[111] Rather, Rahner's

theology of death and resurrection in which Jesus freely,

obediently and trustingly accepted his death as the will of

God and was then exalted to a new divinized status viewed

as the fulfilment of humanity, represents such an incarna-

tional Adam Christology. The point here is that the resur-

rected Jesus as representative of the new creation is the

culmination of his earthly life, so that Jesus also represents

the new creation as last Adam in his earthly life.[112]

Rahner's view of Christ's mediation of the new humanity

after his resurrection in a new corporate solidarity also

indicates an implicit Adam Christology:

> . . . the world is such a unity, physically,
> spiritually and morally, that the decision of
> the man Christ, as a real component of the physi-
> cal world, as a member of the biological family
> of humanity (born of a woman as a child of Adam),
> as a member of the human community in its his-
> tory of light and shadow, is ontologically, and
> not merely by a juridical disposition of God,
> the irreversible and embryonically final begin-
> ning of the glorification and divinization of
> the whole reality. 113

This mediation theme, and the inseparable link between

creation and Incarnation, is given even more lucid expres-

sion in the cosmological speculation applied to Christ

in the Wisdom and Logos Christologies of the New Testa-

ment.[114] The eschatological salvific significance of

Christ is here given a protological thrust, a phenomenon

which Martin Hengel describes as follows:

> Only the one who has control over the beginning
> has the whole matter in his grasp. The begin-
> ning therefore had to be illuminated by the end,
> and ultimately the idea of pre-existence was a
> favourite means of bringing out the special signi-
> ficance of particular phenomena for salvation. 115

In the Old Testament and pre-Christian Judaism,[116] Wisdom functioned as a personification of Yahweh's wise creative and redemptive purposes, an expression of "God's immanence, his active concern in creation, revelation and redemption, while at the same time protecting his holy transcendence. . . ."[117] Because in Christ the divine intention for creation is fulfilled, i.e. salvation is achieved, the functions of Wisdom can be transferred to Jesus (Colossians 2:3), in this way expressing the unsurpassibility and finality of God's revelation in Jesus, as the complete embodiment of divine Wisdom.[118]

The Logos Christology of John 1 functions in a similar manner. Just as Wisdom, the "word of Yahweh", in the Old Testament functions at times as the active will and self-utterance of God in creation, judgement, and salvation, a way of speaking of God's immanence without compromising his transcendence.[119] Word and Wisdom therefore represent the purposes of God in a perfect way and they are therefore pre-existent because God's purposes preceeded creation. For Christians it is Christ who reveals the character of the creative power behind the world, the purposes of God. He represents the salvific destiny of humanity and creation and therefore he must have been there at the beginning,[120] since salvation is not an afterthought to creation. There is a close continuity between the wisdom and power of God and Christ, and this is what the early church sought to proclaim: that the wholeness of creation reaches its full-

ness of expression in Christ; therefore he is the agent of creation and salvation according to the predetermined plan of God (Ephesians 1:9-12).[121] It is of course apparent that Rahner's Christological emphases are closely related to Wisdom and Logos Christologies, particularly his concepts of the real symbol, the God-creature relationship, and the evolutionary paradigm.[122] All of these aim at expressing the unsurpassable and ultimate character of the revelation of God in Christ, in whom the original intention of creation comes to fulfilled expression and universal mediation, not only in his message but in his person which has been definitively accepted by God in the resurrection.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be said that Rahner's transcendental Christology finds a solid basis in the New Testament and the experience of the historical Jesus, to which it constantly turns to achieve intelligibility. Rahner's approach, when correctly understood, is not purely formal and abstract, but is a reflection on the inner meaning of the Christ event carried on in the context of a faith relation to Jesus as the bringer of eschatological salvation. This means that he is not interested in simply repeating the formulae of scripture and tradition, but in elucidating that to which they refer within the context of the modern world. Time and again Rahner asserts that Jesus' destiny, death, and resurrection provide the historical

basis of all Christological models, including the classi-
cal model of Incarnation which the church has adopted as
her own and which therefore continues to have a normative
value.[123] Yet for all this, the ultimate mystery of the
Christ event and its meaning remains, and all descriptions
remain abstract and formal if carried on outside the
context of a faith-full and relational participation in
the reality to which they point.

CHAPTER V

REVELATION AS PRAXIS: THE SACRAMENT OF SALVATION

In the last chapter, we attempted to show that Rahner's
Christology, which seeks to retrieve the meaning of Chal-
cedonian incarnational Christology in the modern setting,
is informed by the New Testament sources and ultimately by
the actual history of Jesus. In other words, Rahner's
Christology does provide a certain kind of convergence of
traditional, biblical, and contemporary theology which
addresses the contemporary problem of meaning. It seeks to
elucidate the Christ event in a way that restores unity and
meaning, freedom and purpose to a fragmented world, and
which makes salvific faith in Christ a genuine historical
possibility. To this extent we argued that the criticisms
of Kasper, Thüsing, and Gerken were not entirely justified,
that Rahner is indeed concerned with the historical Jesus,
and that he seeks to make possible the contemporary access
to that historical meaning through faith. This is also the
attempt of, for example, Kasper's Christology, and insofar
as Kasper's work exegetically delineates the historical and
biblical foundations for his innovative interpretation of
Chalcedonian Christology, it goes beyond Rahner's "first
level" approach, and he rightly criticizes Rahner for not
supplying this. We have attempted to understand why Rahner
has not done so. However, we have also observed that
Kasper's articulation of the faith relation which mediates

the universal significance of the Christ event in history, is quite similar to (and perhaps dependent upon) Rahner's transcendental Christology.

In this chapter on revelation as praxis, however, we must introduce the outlook of another modern critique of and alternative to Rahnerian (and most other "European") Christology. I am referring to the recent development of "political" or "liberation" theologies. Two of the most significant contributions on Christology which have issued from this theological perspective are made by Jürgen Moltmann[1] and Jon Sobrino.[2] Although Moltmann and Sobrino have much in common, I will here briefly set forth only Sobrino's view, insofar as he, like Rahner, is a Jesuit theologian who writes from within the Roman Catholic tradition, but from a very different ecclesial situation, viz. the church in El Salvador.

Although Sobrino is also concerned to establish a historical starting point for Christology, he does so for a very different reason than Kasper (or Gerken), for he does not wish to address a merely intellectual crisis of meaning, but also the practical crisis of meaning experienced in Latin America as social injustice and oppression.[3] He articulates a three-fold suspicion of much of contemporary Christological reflection: 1) the reduction of Christ to a sublime abstraction, separated from the concrete history of Jesus; 2) the undialectical affirmation of Christ as the embodiment of universal salvation, which ignores the

conflictual aspects of Jesus' own life and ministry; and 3) the ahistorical absolutization of Christ, which de-emphasizes the important role of historical mediations of the kingdom of God.[4] Sobrino views these Christological approaches with suspicion because they can be ideologically used "to evade the challenges of history or to cover up its real misery,"[5] to avoid the concrete transformative implications flowing from the actual life history of Jesus. In contrast to these approaches, Sobrino identifies the problem to which a liberation Christology must be addressed as "the practical problem of building up and realizing the kingdom of God in the face of captivity,"[6] and to that end he employs a Christological hermeneutic of praxis: Jesus Christ must be apprehended as the way to liberation, the source of a concrete, transforming orthopraxis.

In his search for a more concrete starting point for Christological reflection,[7] Sobrino rejects traditional dogmatic formulations such as Chalcedon, as well as any a priori priciple of selectivity which is subsequently applied to Jesus' history. In Sobrino's view, the only adequate approach is the chronological one, and we must therefore begin with Jesus' history; more specifically, with the history of Jesus' faith, as that which most comprehensively represents Jesus' own self-understanding and experience.[8] This focus on Jesus' faith is not concerned merely with the history of Jesus' subjectivity, but with his liberating concrete faith exercised in the "real-life

experience of conflict," and related to the kingdom of
God; hence it is concerned with the history of Jesus' sub-
jectivity "framed in the context of a sinful world which
must be transformed."[9]

Sobrino, in his reconstruction of the history of
Jesus' faith, projects a two-part division of Jesus' minis-
try, separated by the crisis in Galilee where Jesus realized
the failure of his mission to establish the kingdom and
turned to the path of suffering and ultimately death on
the cross. In calling his disciples to follow him to the
cross, Jesus exhibited a deep faith, a hope against hope
that this was the will of the Father and the way of the
kingdom. Thus, discipleship required an epistemological
break with accepted notions of the kingdom of God, and total
faith that the concrete historical path of Jesus is truly
the way to God. In Sobrino's view, Jesus taught that

> Access to God is to be found in making contact
> with the very people that the religious mentality
> of the Jews saw as completely estranged from God:
> the alien, the heretic, the ritually impure per-
> son, the sinner, the disinherited, the poor, the
> orphan, and the enemy. [10]

Thus the oppressed represent the mediation of God; going
to God means going to the poor and the suffering.[11]

Furthermore, the fact that Jesus died abandoned by the
Father calls into question all "natural" theological under-
standing, for inasmuch as it can only be understood as the
crucifixion of God himself, this event cannot be compre-
hended through categories of power, perfection, and beauty;

nor does it offer a comprehensive explanation of the nature

of God or the meaning of reality. Rather,

> On the cross we find a process within God' him-
> self . . . . It is God himself who questions
> God. . . . God 'bifurcates' himself on the cross,
> so the transcendence (the Father) is in conflict
> with history (the Son). 12

Only a dialectical theological understanding can express the

truth of the cross, namely that here God's love for humanity

is expressed in historical terms, both as criticism of and

solidarity with the world. Sobrino expresses this dia-

lectical process within God in trinitarian language:

> God is a trinitarian "process" on the way toward
> its ultimate fulfilment (1 Cor. 15:28), but it
> takes all history into itself. In this process
> God participates in, and lets himself be affected
> by, history through the Son; and history is taken
> into God in the Spirit. What is manifest on the
> cross is the internal structure of God himself. 13

The meaning of discipleship is therefore participation in

the liberating dialectical process of God, following Jesus

by "taking the love that God manifested on the cross and

making it real in history."[14]

The resurrection as "an eschatological event in which

the final reality of history makes its appearance in the

midst of history"[15] requires a proper hermeneutic, one

which will serve as the foundation for faith in Jesus rather

than in an understanding which allows for the disappearance

of faith. According to Sobrino, whenever the church loses

sight of the historical crucified Jesus and focuses one-

sidedly on the risen Christ, it reduces the Christian faith

to an idolatrous, merely noetic religion.[16] The resurrection

of Jesus, the crucified and abandoned one, releases an

eschatological hope (against hope) for the future vindica-

tion of God's justice, that is, the establishment of the

kingdom of God in which all oppressive structures, all suf-

fering and injustice are overcome. The reality of the

resurrection thus escapes historical verification except

as a promise that opens up the future, and laying hold of

history as a promise means the consciousness of a mission.

Therefore the resurrection sets a mission in motion and

thus founds a history which is open to the future of God.

This means that the resurrection can only be understood by

participating in the mission it founds, namely the estab-

lishment of a new history in which the eschatological ideals

of justice, peace and community are realized:

> Given the fact of a world that is presently unre-
> deemed, the resurrection can be understood only
> through a praxis that seeks to transform the
> world. This means that our approach to the resur-
> rection is continually in process of formation. 17

This praxis inspired by love concretizes Christian hope in

the midst of the dialectical and conflictual realities of

an unredeemed world, thus making the resurrection com-

prehensible and meaningful today.

At this point, having reflected on the concrete history

of Jesus and on the doxological Christological affirmations

of the New Testament writers concerning their perception of

the universal significance of Christ,[18] Sobrino offers a

contemporary reinterpretation of the Chalcedonian dogma.

In contrast to the descent-Christology and ontic categories

employed in the Chalcedonian formula, Sobrino emphasizes the
proper chronological order of Christology and thus speaks,
in historical, relational terms, of Jesus, through the
historical process of filial obedience, <u>becoming</u> the Son of
God and revealing the way to the Father. Such an emphasis
safeguards against the abstraction of Christological lan-
guage from concrete historical (conflictual) reality, and
calls not only for noetic self-surrender,[19] but for the
authentic self-surrender of the entire ego to the following
of Jesus. As Sobrino declares:

> If Jesus is the Son, then human beings can be
> children of God. But Jesus went on to reveal
> a very concrete sort of filiation, with a con-
> crete path all its own; hence human beings have
> been shown the path to filiation. Herein lies
> the ultimate importance of analyzing the figure
> of Jesus in historical categories, in terms of
> concrete becoming. Otherwise our abstract state-
> ments about filiation may remain abstract and
> wholly inoperative. [20]

Sobrino thus affirms that the essential meaning of Christo-
logy, and therefore the mandate of the church, is the con-
crete following of Jesus to the Father, to participate in
the historical process of God which calls for the trans-
formation of present alienating structures into the ful-
filling and liberating reality of the kingdom of God, the
eschatological community of love and justice.

How does Sobrino's Christological vision relate to
Rahner's view? We have seen that Rahner, as a dogmatic,
"church" theologian, seeks to articulate a contemporary
understanding of faith by way of the Chalcedonian Christo-
logy. Sobrino, on the other hand, <u>because</u> he is a church

theologian, but in a radically different ecclesial context,
rejects the Chalcedonian starting point as an abstract pro-
nouncement which has too long been used in an ideological
and oppressive manner by a church which has ignored the
concrete socio-historical implications of faith in Jesus
Christ. The proper epistemological approach, asserts Sobrino,
in not just a noetic or subjective surrender to the mystery
of God in Christ, but the faithful knowledge of God in
Christ which comes from following the concrete process of
Jesus' way to the Father, and making the requisite histori-
cal commitments which that brings.[21] This is also why
Sobrino places such great emphasis on the historical
realization of Jesus' faith and mission, for it is there
that the concrete way to God is definitively realized.

Although Rahner also affirms that access to Christ is
possible through the unconditional love of one's neighbor,
and although this is not just individualistically conceived,
it is nonetheless true that Rahner's approach to Christology
is primarily pastoral and doctrinal rather than historically
transformative. This is clearly evident, for example, in
Rahner's theology of death, where Jesus' death is viewed as
the supreme act of consummation whereby the total meaning
and "cause" of Jesus' life is made ontologically definitive.
Rahner employs this understanding of death to develop a
more adequate connection between soteriology, which is
necessarily universal, and the cross, which is historically
particular, thus forging an important link between

transcendence and history, God and the world. In focusing on this doctrinal problem, Rahner ignores the concrete historical circumstances which brought Jesus to the cross and the implications of the socially conflictual "cause" of Jesus for the meaning of salvation. In other words, the "cause" which resulted in Jesus' death and which he surrendered to God in his death, and which God accepted in the resurrection, must be more clearly and concretely defined so that it may be continued by the church in history.[22]

Rahner discusses this practical mission of the church, not so much in the context of Christology as in his more recent reflections on ecclesiology, and particularly on the relation between church and world.[23] In Rahner's view, the church, as the social and historical manifestation of salvation, "confronts me in a mission, a mandate and a proclamation which really makes the reality of salvation present for me."[24] It is the concrete and practical participation in this salvific reality which constitutes the sacramental lifestyle, the socio-historical praxis of revelation. In this chapter, then, our primary concern will be to examine critically the kind of practical theology which flows from Rahner's basic theological vision, to understand how the church continues to actualize revelation in the world.

The Relation Between Church and World

Rahner's view of the relation between church and world

has of course been articulated in an ever-changing process
of theological development and dialogue with both the church
and the world.[25] A certain watershed, however, can be
identified in Vatican II which, as Rahner points out, gave
"the Church the courage to face the modern world in a way
that was not true before the Council."[26] This resulted in
a new, more open and positive attitude of the church to
the world, the goal of which is seen by Rahner to be "the
realization of a more living and vital unity between . . .
the Christian's relationship to God and his relationship to
the world."[27] The central issue of theology is thus shifted
from "ecclesiology" to "God . . . in Jesus Christ . . . in
one's neighbor,"[28] and it is the implications of this
orientation in Rahner's thought which concern us here.

One of the predominant images or "models"[29] of the
church which derives from Rahner's incarnational theology is
that of the church as the Ursakrament or fundamental sacra-
ment of salvation for the world.[30] Rahner defines it as
follows:

> . . . the Church is the concrete historical mani-
> festation, in the dimension of a history that has
> aquired an eschatological significance, and in the
> social dimension, of precisely that salvation
> which is achieved through the grace of God through-
> out the entire length and breadth of humanity.
> . . . The manifestation of grace which achieves
> this objective reality in the Church is a mani-
> festation and a sign of that grace wherever it may
> take effect. In other words the Church as mani-
> festation of grace is a sacramental sign of the
> grace that is offered to the world and history
> as a whole. 31

As the historical continuation of Christ's redemptive

function and task, the church is the efficacious sign of the God-world relationship as revealed and irrevocably established through the Incarnation.[32] Consequently, it is the sacramental sign of salvific grace which extends far beyond the visible sociological boundaries of the church to include the world in an open and dynamic eschatological dynamism. Of course, the church is not thereby conceived of by Rahner as a purely transcendental or mystical communion, for a sacramental sign is always an empirical and historical phenomenon. Therefore the church is to be a world church in more than a theoretical or inwardly subjective way; it must be so in a practically and sociologically concrete sense as well.

Rahner understands the salvific and sacramental relation between church and world in the context of an eschatological orientation toward the mysterious and absolute future of the world, which, as its goal and ultimate fulfilment, transforms the present. Rahner's conception of eschatology, which derives from his theological anthropology and Christology, constitutes the critical perspective which gives shape to his practical theology.[33] However, in contrast to the eschatological theology of Metz (and Moltmann and Pannenberg),[34] Rahner focuses not on the projection of the future into the present but rather on the ontological meaning of the present human experience of itself and of God, as it approaches an open future.[35] On the other hand, Rahner does not existentially "de-mythologize" eschatological assertions as simply challenging individual

persons to decide now to live authentic human lives for the future.[36] Rather, for Rahner, eschatology is the definitive fulfilment of human historical existence, "the perfection of the salvation already assigned and granted by God in faith to man and humanity in Jesus Christ."[37] Eschatology is therefore understood as the consummation of man and the world in its single unitary history, a history which God has entered, made his own, and seeks to perfect.[38]

This eschatological vision consequently imparts a radical responsibility for the "this-worldly future" which is planned and shaped by mankind. Rahner speaks often and in positive terms about the fact that modern man is the active and creative subject of his/her environment, a development which he attributes to the impetus of Christianity, insofar as man is viewed as the partner of God who achieves salvation in free history.[39] This environment in which salvation is sought through free action involves not only a moral or theoretical self-creation of the world, but also a biological, pharmacological, psychological, sociological, and political self-determination.[40] This means that the church must address its eschatological perspective not only to the moral, theoretical, or "spiritual" dimensions, but also to those other more "worldly" and secular dimensions of human self-determination. Because nature and the world are not just a stage for human spiritual salvation but are also vitally involved in the whole historical process of salvation, it becomes important to recognize the

irreversibility of a false manipulation of history,[41] and the importance of intra-mundane future planning to increase rather than diminish the sphere of human freedom.

Since the sphere of salvation is conditioned by social freedom--indeed salvation is not individualistic but social, the "kingdom of God," the absolute future of humanity as a whole[42]--Christianity cannot be indifferent to social history and politics. Human beings share a common sphere where their freedom to determine themselves is exercised, and this involves the use of power, whereby this social sphere is altered.[43] The exercise of power, as the condition of the possibility of freedom, is not in itself evil, but it can, and inevitably does, become evil when it is used to impinge on the sphere of another's freedom without that person's consent. Power in such circumstances ceases to serve human freedom (destiny) and becomes manipulation (fate), and this manipulation is inevitably institutionalized in social structures which prevent certain people from realizing their destiny through free expression, resulting in the struggle for power.[44] The Christian response to this power struggle is not intransigent pacifism or withdrawal, but rather the realistic and humble exercise of power (which recognizes the limits and irreversibility of history) with the aim of increasing the sphere of human freedom so that the power struggle is humanized and eventually (eschatologically) eliminated.[45]

The commitment to future planning in Rahner's theology

is therefore rooted in his theological anthropology and theology of history. Human beings, who constitute the question of the future, must not be content to find the answer in any merely finite ideology or program which restricts human freedom and calls a halt to the process of salvific fulfilment short of the absolute future, which is God. It is the task of the Christian, therefore, to preserve the openness of history and the future by constantly pointing out that we do not know the future, nor are we able to fully plan and predict its course.[46] This introduces the element of ideology criticism into future planning, which relativizes all finite systems and rejects the absolutization of any particular or individual reality of the pluralistic "whole."[47] Christianity thus has a fundamental responsibility to participate in the task of planning the future, but it has no concrete ideological directives or political program which it undertakes to realize in history. Rather, recognizing human finitude and limitations (ultimately experienced in death), the Christian will endeavor in a realistic and loving manner to preserve the free future of mankind, the consummation of which has already begun in the Incarnation:

> When a person does not succumb to an absolute banality of *carpe diem* in face of the finite scope of his freedom, he will not endure the unresolved hiatus between the absolute claim of freedom and its finite opportunities of realization within history unless he believes and hopes in what Christianity calls the eternal kingdom of God. . . . Hoping for an absolute fulfilment he can place himself at a distance from his finite

present; he does not need to make this absolute.
But, as a result of this very realism, he can
approach more frankly and courageously even a
future that is possible in this world. . . .
Christian realism in the face of the opportuni-
ties of freedom within history, rightly under-
stood, does not paralyse man, forcing him to a
passive acceptance of the present, to sterile con-
servatism, but gives him as a human being and a
Christian the right to take a risk without the
assurance of certain success, since success and
failure are embraced together by the one promise
of a definitive liberation of freedom for its
immeasurable consummation. 48

Rahner's eschatological vision thus provides the per-
spective from which the church-world relationship is under-
stood, namely as the concern for the ultimate fulfilment
of humanity, the divine consummation of history, the per-
fection of the God-world relationship. We move now to a
more explicit consideration of Rahner's practical theology
which, in his own words, "is concerned with the Church's
self-actualization here and now."[49] Although the church is
the eschatological sacrament of salvation, she is nonethe-
less a historical pilgrim church which is not yet finished
and "must always understand herself as still provisional,
as still looking for her fulfilment, as overcoming herself,
since indeed we call the fulfilment which she seeks no
longer Church, but the kingdom of God."[50] Practical theo-
logy is therefore the creative and critical prophetic
reflection on the relationship between the church and
world, criticizing the church from within and thus enabling
the self-critical church to become an authoritative critic
of society.[51]

One misconception of the relation between church and
world which Rahner vehemently opposes is a false integralism,
in which the world is simply subsumed by the church as the
place where the church's universal principles are developed
and put into practice.[52]   Not only does such a view fail to
recognize the element of autonomy in the practical intellect
and erroneously assumes that concrete problems are solvable
through abstract moral theology, but it also ignores the
pluralism and secularity of modern society in which the
church is but one voice.   In contrast to this, Rahner pro-
poses that the church perceive her task vis-à-vis society
to be "prophetic," that is, calling the world to its sal-
vific and humanistic future through creative and imaginative
programs of action devised by the practical intellect.[53]
The creative exercise of this practical intellect is not
so much the task of the "official church," but of the
people of God, who in a variety of ways devote themselves
to the humanization of the world with the encouragement of
the "official church."[54]   In this sense the church as the
sacrament of salvation, the de-ideologizing and relativizing
eschatological proclamation of salvation, and the church
as the people of God, as Christians who practically live out
the task of salvation in the world through creative and
critical planning and concrete programs, combines--as a
whole--to manifest the relation between church and world
in dialectical tension.

The Shape of the Church

In order to understand concretely this relation between church and world, and between the church as sacrament of salvation and as people of God, we will first examine Rahner's view of the theology of revolution and then discuss his understanding of the structure which should characterize the contemporary world church.

The church, as we have already seen, is committed to acting as a social critic which tries to preserve social freedom because of the unity of the salvific relationship to God and the love relationship to fellow human beings.[55] Because of this Christian commitment to the world, there must be the possibility of a theology of revolution as a means

> of changing social conditions, structures and
> institutions to man's advantage--in other words
> a factor which manifestly must of its very nature
> be present in any social commitment, which must
> be undertaken first and foremost by the man of
> Christian hope, the man committed to striving
> for a future that is absolute, the man inspired
> by love of neighbor in the true sense. [56]

The definition of revolution in Rahner's meaning is the bringing to bear on society decisive forces which are not immanent within, but come from outside the system, and the goal is "a greater scope for freedom and an increase in justice and harmony among all."[57] Thus the revolutionary process has both a negative, critical function which seeks to eliminate unjust, oppressive conditions, and a positive, creative function, namely to introduce more just and

liberating social conditions. The church of eschatological

hope is not to be a conservative force which preserves the

inherited relationship of freedom and manipulation, but

must be a force for social freedom, and this includes the

recognition and support for justified revolutions. Although

Rahner rejects the interpretation of Christianity as an

imperative for "permanent revolution,"[58] since revolution

cannot be institutionalized or made immanent within a

system,[59] he does nonetheless recognize the justified global

revolutionary situation which exists as a result of the

unjust economic and social relationships between northern

and southern hemispheres.

In this revolution, the "official church" as such is

not the primary or proper subject who provides the answer

and concrete strategy for the situation. The decision to

participate cannot be made at the theoretical level by

church authorities, but is made by the peoples' practical

reason, enlightened by faith and guided by charismatic

inspiration. However, the motivation and ultimate goal of

this practical is provided by the church, as a community

in which human freedom is constantly sought and affirmed in

a non-ideological, critical manner; where the safeguarding

of the dignity of persons precludes exploitation; and where

"experiments in concrete social living" are carried out so

that the church "be made aware of the ever-fresh forms in

which this service of man can and must be fulfilled . . . "[60]

In other words, the dialogic relationship between church

and world involves not the application of revelation to specific historical situations, but rather a practical and creative interpretation of the social "worldly" situation through which also the church reinterprets revelation. This also means that in a world which has become globally inter-dependent, pluralistic and secular, the church must articu-late--structurally and theologically--a new self-under-standing which will relate to the world situation in a pub-lic and practical way, as befits the sacrament of salvation for the world.[61]

Comparing it to the Pauline thrust toward a universal Christianity (which included both Jews and Gentiles) in the early church, Rahner describes the necessary transition of Christianity from a basically western church to a world church, a transition which began to be recognized at Vatican II. This means not only that the Christian message must be creatively reshaped according to the particular cultural and historical contexts in which it is proclaimed, but also that the church recognize its diaspora situation, in which authority cannot be grounded hierarchically in a Volkskirche sustained by a homogeneous Christian society, nor faith rooted in socially accepted objective expressions. Rather the church must be sustained, in its institutions and ministry, "by living basic communities built up from below, formed by a free decision of faith on the part of indi-viduals," a decision which involves a critical attitude toward society.[62] Such a voluntaristic church will shift

the focus away from formal clerical and centralized authority to the democratic, declericalized, charismatic authority of basic communities committed to the public and worldly mission of the church.[63]

This world church must therefore be open and pluralistic with regard to theological expression and structural organization. A celibate, male only, or even officially ordained church leadership must not be assumed a priori,[64] and there must be a greater collaboration with and participation by the laity in the decision-making processes in the church.[65] This pluralistic diaspora church is also an ecumenical church, but not in the sense that is seeks or achieves unity at the level of controversial dogma.[66] This is not the focus of world church ecumenism, for its dialogue partners are no longer primarily those of other Christian confessions, but rather come from the secular world--militant atheism, the modern natural and social sciences, and so on. Today's theological questions, frontiers and methods are no longer traditionally defined as they were in a homogeneous Christian culture, but cut across denominational boundaries.

Consequently we have what Rahner calls a "third church," namely Christians who do not perceive denominational or confessional differences to be theologically relevant or important, especially in view of the existing pluralism in all denominations. Yet institutional differences and differences in terms of religious sociology do exist, and Rahner argues that the "third church" ought not to bypass

the traditional institutions but to "draw even closer to the institutional Churches . . . until they, too, represent and embody the one Church of Jesus Christ, in spite of all their local and particularist differences."[67] Thus, while recognizing important differences of opinion, the diaspora church must acknowledge a pluralism of tasks and theologies, in relation to its common worldly witness to the liberating grace of God as the absolute future, by which all ideologies are evaluated in theory and in practice.[68]

A church such as this could, in Rahner's view, have certain practical consequences for secular society in terms of modelling transformative structures and convictions which might be analogously incorporated in society.[69] The question of how to forge basic (shared) social convictions, while preserving freedom of opinion and the dignity of human persons, is a fundamental problem in both church and society. Modern pluralistic society requires new patterns (or common social "ideologies" in the neutral sense) for the coexistence of freedom and authority, rooted in foundational common convictions, and here the church could provide an example. Just as traditional structures and institutions must be changed in a world church, so also changes are required in the modern world, where "the relationship between the mass, the base, the people, on the one hand, and the élitist controlling bodies on the other seems to be disturbed,"[70] resulting in the breakdown of the basic shared convictions which are so necessary for social order and

harmony. If inhuman totalitarian domination is to be avoided, new models of participation from below by the people in the decisions of leadership must be sought, in the church and in the world. The church, as Rahner envisions it, can provide forms and structures for such participatory leadership which have exemplary significance for society if it will exercise boldness and creative imagination in its planning.[71] Only so does the church take on the sense of responsibility for secular society in keeping with her function as the sacrament of salvation for the world.

In Rahner's view, then, it would be correct to say that the most important task facing the church is its world responsibility in the light of the eschatological message of salvation. The task of loving one's neighbor, in which the love of God and Christian hope is expressed and realized,[72] cannot be a mere private relationship, but a socio-political commitment aimed at changing social institutions. Rahner describes it thus:

> For both authority and the people of the Church . . . are charged with the task of active love: a love that goes out to the other person in the 'world' and is not understood as a means to something else, however sublime; a love that carries with it as its condition and ultimate ground God's love for us as it became eschatologically irreversible and victorious in Jesus Christ and our love for God in Jesus Christ. But this is a love that can become so 'worldly' precisely because it has to be given to our neighbor purely and simply, and not only to those who belong to the household of the faith, because it must be extended as widely as God's love for man is itself extended.

> In a word, it is love seen from the Christian
> standpoint: not merely an inward disposition,
> but something that must be realized in action
> in which alone a person really gets away from
> himself. 73

The church will not be a conservative force providing ideological substructures for existing orders, but will allow the desire for freedom to become more effective in her internal life; propose plans, models and ideas for a future society; and exercise a responsibility to the Third World which goes beyond charitable aid toward a mental and material solidarity with those who are working for radical social and economic change and liberation.[74] The church, energized by eschatological hope which relativizes existing realities and frees people for the future possibilities of history and society, will thereby help society to come to a realistic self-understanding which is neither utopian ideology (which sacrifices man today for the "freedom" of man tomorrow) nor status quo conservatism (which keeps things the way they are--closed to the future), but is a just and humanizing openness to the uncontrollable future.[75]

Critique

In this chapter we have uncovered certain resources in Rahner's theology--drawn primarily from his recent writings-- for articulating a practical theology in which the church functions as the eschatological sacrament of salvation for the world. The church has a socio-critical task in history which impels it to become a diaspora world church con-

cretely addressing the social situation through the exercise of a practical imagination, which sets forth analogical and exemplary models of liberating social structures, criticizes the present, proposes plans for the future, and participates in the struggle for human freedom and destiny.

Beyond these theoretical directives for a practical theology, we are left with a number of unanswered questions. How does Christology relate to this concept of praxis? Does Jesus' life of freedom, characterized by solidarity with the poor and oppressed, his rejection of institutional pretension regarding the possession of truth and access to God, his concept of leadership as servanthood rather than glorious power, his denunciation of corrupt religious and political authorities which led him to the cross--does this life represent the praxis of the Incarnation which proclaims salvation, the perfection of the God-creature relationship? How is Jesus mission carried on by the church? These questions become most palpable when we consider that most of what Rahner has to say about practical theology is directed to the "grass roots church" as opposed to the "official church," which is only to pastorally encourage and accomodate (structurally and theologically) the prophetic actions and witness of the "grass roots church." How does this relate to Rahner's defense of the authoritative role of the "official church" and the teaching magisterium? Is the "official theology" of the church made and defended at the theoretical level by church authorities

while the praxis of revelation is carried on concretely and prophetically by "the people"?

It would seem that Rahner's convergence, which is ecclesially-centered, threatens to break down at precisely this point, for the question of "faith" suddenly becomes ambivalent, i.e. different in the "official church" (where faith is mediated via the noetic surrender to revelation transmitted through scripture and tradition and meaningfully interpreted in the modern world) from the basic communities "from below" (where faith is concretely and practically defined, involving not only the pastoral retrieval of revelation which addresses the intellectual crisis of meaning, but also the transformative praxis of revelation in the world). However, if faith is thus bifurcated, then the sacramental unity of incarnational theology breaks down and the profound link between transcendence and history--which makes possible Rahner's convergence between traditional, biblical, and contemporary theology--is threatened.

In my opinion, it is Rahner's attempt to defend and preserve the authority of the "official church" which occasionally results in inconsistencies in his otherwise modern and anthropocentric approach to revelation theology. We saw this in chapter two where, by trying to protect the neo-scholastic "double gratuity" Rahner felt compelled to speak of nature as a Restbegriff, thus threatening the unity of God's action and human nature in the world, and

stripping "nature" of its concrete meaning. In chapter

three, Rahner's description of Jesus "founding" the church,

his defense of the Roman Catholic church as the one true

Christian church, and his protection of papal infallibility

and the authority of the magisterium, all illustrate this

same weakness--i.e. they do not follow from his transcenden-

tal anthropological foundation but are appealed to out of

deference to the official church and its authoritative

teachings. So too, it would appear that the weakness of

Rahner's Christological position and his practical theology

derives from his unwillingness to decisively challenge the

ecclesial hierarchy. His Christology, while it is cer-

tainly a brilliant modern interpretation of Chalcedonian

dogma and is also grounded in and open to the insights of

the New Testament, nevertheless remains at a doctrinal and

pastoral level, addressing only the crisis of meaning

which faith faces in our day. As such, it is subject to

"suspicion" (in Sobrino's sense), i.e. it could be

ideologically used by the official church and the status

quo to ignore as "theologically" irrelevant the costly call

to discipleship issued by the actual history of Jesus.

Although Rahner's theology is open to such a supplementa-

tion and development, and indeed his ecclesiological and

socio-critical reflections have moved in this direction in

recent years, this connection has never been made, and

his apparent willingness to protect the "official church"

prevents the radical implications of such a development

from being realized in his theology.

CONCLUSION

In chapter one of this thesis, we considered St.
Thomas' view of revelation as delineated in his "prophetic"
model, a view which focused on revelation as a cognitive or
intellectual act of knowledge. We must in this chapter
make clear, however, that the convertibility of knowledge
and being, or knowledge of God as participation in the
being of God, implies a correlative convertibility of
being and the good (S.T., I,5,a.1; I,6), and the unity of
intellect and will insofar as both are moved by their end,
i.e. Truth or the Good, both of which have their being in
God. This means that revelation is not only speculative
knowledge, that is, "an act of faith is related both to
the object of the will, i.e. to the good and the end,
and to the object of the intellect, i.e. to the true"
(II-II,4,a.1).[76] Therefore, St. Thomas asserts, because
faith is directed to the good as its end, which is the
proper object of charity, "charity is called the form of
faith" (II-II,4,a.3). Living faith is thus a virtue,
directing human life to a good end, namely participation
in the being of God, the unifying and living principle,
the telos to which all creation aspires.[77] It is in
this context that we must understand Thomas' assertion
that sacred doctrine "is not a practical but a speculative
science" (I,1,a.4)--not that action is less important than

thought, but rather that action is directed not to a human end, and is therefore not valued for its own sake, but is meaningful only insofar as it is united to the purpose and substance of God, which is the primary focus of theology.

Having said this, however, we must reiterate the critique offered in the first chapter, namely that Thomas' articulation of revelation theology, constricted as it is in an individualistic and ahistorical prophetic model, cannot do justice to the biblical texts nor to modern experience, without significant revision. It is an evaluation of Rahner's attempt to retrieve Thomas' unified and participatory vision regarding revelation in a manner more congruent with and relevant to the contemporary world that constitutes the burden of this thesis. We perceived in chapter two how Rahner defined the prophetic experience as the meaningful and existentially correct expression of transcendental reality, i.e. referring human experience and history to its ultimate salvific end--the source of the True and the Good. In Rahner's transcendental model, this revelatory insight cannot be reduced to this or that particular science, concept, or event, but must be apprehended through the participatory surrender of faith. History is that which results from this human quest for fulfilment and salvation, and prophecy is the profound articulation of revelatory insight into this teleological meaning of history.

For Rahner, the ultimate expression of prophetic insight, of divine revelation, is found in the Christ-event and the unfolding of its meaning in the Christian tradition, the church. It is here that human being is addressed in its wholeness, and it is therefore to scripture and its developing interpretation in the church's tradition that we must turn to discover the meaning of humanity and history. In chapter three we argued that Rahner's concept of inspiration and the development of dogma provides a social and community-based perspective which is able to account much more adequately than Thomas for the diversity of theological models found in scripture and tradition, relating all of them to the "global experience" of faith which precedes conceptual or reflexive formulation. The transmission of revelation is therefore not to be understood as a hierarchical and authoritarian passing-down of propositions or static ideas, but rather as a sacramental representation through which the living Logos of God can be participated and actualized in each new moment of history.

The originary faith relation finds its source and historical focus in the Christ-event, the Incarnation of the divine Logos in history (chapter four). Rahner's evolutionary paradigm for Christology seeks to represent a theological anthropology and theology of history which restores a unity and purpose, a harmony to contemporary experience. Rahner's focus on Christ as the "real symbol"

of God, as the perfection of the God-world relationship,
communicates an understanding of salvation as the unity
of creation and redemption which reveals the origin and
destiny of mankind. Rahner points to the Logos as the
inner dynamic of history toward God in whom all things find
their end and meaning. In so doing, we have argued that
Rahner's thought faithfully reflects the inner meaning of
the New Testament, where Christ is represented as the
bringer of a new vision and consciousness in which all
humanity is united through its relation to God, insofar as
God has become the innermost reality, the hidden telos,
of the world. Of course this consciousness, this new
human identity, is not finally established or fulfilled and
is therefore still in dialectical process, but Rahner sees
it as the essence or fundament of revelation.

It is in this context that chapter five on "revelation
as praxis" acquires its significance. It might be described
as the outworking or practical realization of the originary
faith relation which lies at the heart of revelation
theology as Rahner, following Aquinas, perceives it.
Thomas Aquinas defines faith as "a habit of the mind,
whereby eternal life is begun in us . . . ." (II-II,4,a.1).
A correlative of this habit of faith is the gift of under-
standing, a gracious bestowal of divine light which
"penetrates into the heart of things" (II-II,8,a.1), [78]
and this gift of understanding extends not only to specula-

tive but also to practical affairs and human actions "since
faith worketh through charity, according to the Apostle
(Gal. v.6)." (II-II, 8,a.3).[79] In my view, Rahner has
sought to exercise and reflect upon this habit of faith
as it relates to modern experience, trying to reawaken an
understanding or vision which penetrates to the heart of
things in participatory union with the source and end of
humanity and history. Thus, as we saw in the last chapter,
the church as bearer of this consciousness must con-
tinually, in Rahner's view, exercise a prophetic creative
imagination which reshapes the world out of this charity,
this habit of faith, this inner union with God.

However, we have also pointed out, in this last
chapter, that Rahner's failure to link Christology with the
praxis of revelation in an explicit way threatens the unity
of this habit of faith which grounds the convergence of
traditional, biblical and contemporary theology in Rahner's
concept of revelation. His refusal to acknowledge the
important connection between dogma and praxis as they relate
to the actual history of Jesus and therefore also to the
historical faith relation to Jesus by Christians, enables
Rahner to separate the official church (which concerns
itself with doctrinal faith and the pastoral task of
helping people believe) from the grass roots basic com-
munities, (where the prophetic creative imagination is
actively transforming the world). In our view, the church
will only be the sacrament of salvation extending the

Incarnation in history if this dichotomy between official church and basic communities, between dogma and practical theology is overcome. Rahner's anthropological foundation and procedure is certainly a helpful tool in this regard, for it opens the way to new, more adequate formulations of revelation (scripture and tradition) which move beyond traditional authoritarian formulae. But the global faith relation which sustains this procedure and development-- this convergence--must be rooted, both theoretically and practically, in the actual life of Jesus as representative of the perfection of the God-world relationship; and it must not be afraid to pursue the radical implications of such a relation. Only then will the new shape of the church be realized and fulfill its function as the sacrament of salvation for the world.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1 Cf. Paul Ricoeur, "Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation," <u>Harvard Theological Review</u>, 70, No. 1-2 (Jan. - Apr., 1977), pp. 1-37.

2 Cf. Paul D. Hanson, <u>Dynamic Transcendence</u> (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), especially ch. 2.

3 For a more precise definition of our understanding of the relation between scripture and tradition, cf. below, ch. III.

4 For an excellent account of the developments of nineteenth century Catholic theology and its impact on and parallels to twentieth century theological evolution, cf. Gerald A. McCool, <u>Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method</u> (New York: Seabury Press, 1977). Also Mark Schoof, <u>A Survey of Catholic Theology, 1800-1970</u>, trans. N.D. Smith (New York: Paulist Newman Press, 1970).

5 McCool, pp. 187f.

6 <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 203, 213.

7 Schoof states: "In retrospect, it is possible to say that the nineteenth-century theologians who revived scholasticism understood it in accordance with the spirit of their own times--concentrating to such an extent on the separate details of the building that they were too close to be able to see the whole structure of the medieval synthesis." <u>Op. cit.</u>, p. 34.

8 Cf. Schoof, pp. 45f.; 180f. McCool, pp. 245f.

9 The breakdown of a monolithic Thomism was not due to the pressures of modernity alone, for, ironically enough in accordance with Pope Leo's injunction, the dramatic increase of historical study into the sources of scholasticism revealed a plurality of systems and frameworks in the medieval period as well.

10 Cf. Schoof, pp. 235f. Also Gregory Baum, "Vatican II's Constitution on Revelation: History and Interpretation," <u>Theological Studies</u>, 28 (1967), pp. 51-75.

11 St. Thomas Aquinas, <u>Summa Theologica</u>, trans.
Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns,
Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1920), I, 1, 1; cf. II-II, 2, 4.
Hereafter all references to the <u>Summa</u> will appear in
abbreviated form in the text.

12 Indeed, as Avery Dulles points out, "revelation
did not emerge as a major theological theme until after the
Enlightenment . . . . In most of the early theologians, as
in the Bible itself, there is no systematic doctrine of
revelation." <u>Revelation Theology: A History</u> (New York:
Herder & Herder, 1969), p. 31. In Ray Hart's terminology,
before it acquired its modern technical meaning (its
categorical status), revelation functioned as "fundament,"
the implicit presupposition of theology which came to
thematic expression in many different categories (other
than revelation itself, which was not viewed as problema-
tical). <u>Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an
Ontology and Rhetoric of Revelation</u> (New York: Seabury
Press, 1968), pp. 83f. & 369f. It was not until the pre-
critical participatory relation to the truth of revelation
was eroded by the critical rationalism of the Enlightenment
that supernaturalism and God's relation to the world
became problematic.

13 This is clearly stated in I, 1, 8 ad 2: "This
doctrine is especially based on arguments from authority,
inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation:
thus we ought to believe on the authority of those to
whom the revelation has been made."

14 I, 1, 6. Sacred doctrine is wisdom (the knowing
of things in their ultimate cause) <u>par excellence</u> since it
"considers absolutely the highest cause of the whole uni-
verse, namely God," not only as he can be known through
natural reason, "but also so far as He is known to Himself
alone and revealed to others."

15 I, 1, 7. "But in sacred science all things are
treated of under the aspect of God; either because they are
God Himself; or because they refer to God as their beginning
and end."

16 Otto Pesch, in his illuminating comparison of
Thomas and Luther and their similar understanding of God
as vitally related to the question of salvation, speaking
of Thomas, says, "God alone must manifest himself to man as
salvation and must show to man the ways that lead to him-
self, otherwise, notwithstanding all his philosophical efforts,
man knows only about an anonymous <u>principium</u> of the world,
but nothing about God who is the fulfilment of man's life."
<u>The God Question in Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther</u>, trans.
G.G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 29.

17   "Since everything is knowable according as it is actual, God, who is pure act without any admixture of potentiality, is in Himself supremely knowable" (I, 12, 1). We note here the convertibility of knowledge and being, and we may further note their relation to perfection in I, 4, 1: ". . . a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality, because we call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its perfection." Without engaging in a discussion of the complex metaphysical explanations of these relations, we might simply say that, given this understanding, the primacy of the intellect follows as a natural consequence.

18   On the unity of God's essence and existence, cf. I, 3, 4.

19   II-II, 173, 2; I, 12, 13. See also F.C. Copleston, Aquinas (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 178f.; and Ray Hart, pp. 319f.

20   This is given clear expression in I, 12, 11 ad 3: "All things are said to be seen in God, and all things are judged in Him, because by the participation of His light we know and judge all things: for the light of natural reason itself is a participation of the divine light; as likewise we are said to see and judge of sensible things in the sun, that is, by the sun's light."

21   The gift of understanding is discussed in detail in II-II, 8, where we read that it is a "supernatural light" given so one may know that which surpasses rational knowledge; hence understanding perfects reason.

22   II-II, 171, 2 ad 1: "For just as, in natural knowledge, the possible intellect is passive to the light of the active intellect, so too in prophetic knowledge the human intellect is passive to the enlightening of the Divine light." A parallel discussion of prophecy is found in De veritate, XII, 1-14. My quotations from this work are taken from St. Thomas Aquinas, Truth, trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), II.

23   Here Ray Hart appears to be guilty of a serious misreading of the text, when he interprets Thomas to say that the formation of images or representations is of primary import for prophetic knowledge. Op. cit., p.331. Cf. Per Erik Persson, Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas, trans. R. Mackenzie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), p. 24; A. Dulles, op. cit., p.43; and Rene Latourelle, Theology of Revelation (New York: St. Paul Publications, 1966), p. 164.

24   Cf. De veritate, XII, 3 & 4.

25 Cf. De veritate, XII, 1.

26 Cf. Ibid., XII, 6: ". . . we understand that the mirror of eternity is not itself eternal, but represents eternity."

27 Cf. Ibid., XII, 14. The idea that God's revelation to Moses was qualitatively different from (and superior to) all other prophetic revelations is derived from Moses Maimonides: "It is clear to me that what Moses experienced on Mount Sinai was different from that which was experienced by all other israelites, for Moses alone was addressed by God . . . ." The Guide for the Perplexed, 2nd ed., trans. M. Friedländer (New York: Dover Pub., Inc., 1956), II, XXXIII. In contrast to this direct vision, all other prophets "receive the prophecy through an angel." Ibid., XXXIV. Cf. Deut. 34:10.

28 Cf. De veritate, XII, 7; XIII.

29 "Now two things are proposed to us to be seen in eternal life: viz. the secret of the Godhead, to see which is to possess happiness; and the mystery of Christ's Incarnation, by Whom we have access to the glory of the sons of God, according to Rom. 5:2" (II-II, 1, 8).

30 The substance of these truths was implicitly affirmed by all revelation, but proximity to these revelatory events (and in an ultimate sense to Christ) determined the extent to which these truths were explicitly known. According to Thomas, revelation came about progressively because "the master, who has perfect knowledge of the art, does not deliver it all at once to his disciple from the very outset, for he would not be able to take it all in, but he condescends to the disciple's capacity and instructs him little by little" (II-II, 1, 7 ad 2).

31 Cf. De veritate, XII, 8; Maimonides, II, XXXIV.

32 I, 1, 8 ad 2: ". . . sacred doctrine . . . properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable. For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets . . . ." Also II-II, 2, 6 ad 3: "The simple have no faith implied in that of the learned, except in so far as the latter adhere to the Divine teaching . . . ." In Thomas' view, then, scripture is the norm to which the teaching magisterium must conform if it is to retain its genuine authority in the hierarchical scheme.

33 Even Paul, who in his rapture had an immediate vision of God's essence, formed "in himself the similitudes

of what is seen in the divine essence, which remained in
Paul even when he had ceased to see the essence of God"
(I, 12, 9 ad 2). These similitudes (which are usually all
that is revealed in the prophetic vision) must then be
verbalized in order to be communicable; hence, even the
purest form of revelation can only be transmitted and
understood analogically and propositionally.

34 I, 13, 7: ". . . there is nothing to prevent
these names which import relation to the creature from
being predicated of God temporally, not by reason of any
change in Him, but by reason of the change in the creature;
as a column is on the right side of an animal, without
change in itslef, but by change in the animal."

35 On enlightenment by faith, cf. II-II, 1, 4; 6, 1.

36 Thus the rational sciences function in sacred
doctrine as "handmaidens" which clarify the teaching of
theology (I, 1, 5 ad 2).

37 Faith was also required by man before the fall
because, although not tainted by sin, by not possessing the
beatific vision, "there was a certain natural obscurity
in the human . . . intellect . . . ." (II-II, 5, 1).

38 Thomas asserts: "Individual facts are treated of
in sacred doctrine, not because it is concerned with them
principally: but they are introduced rather both as examples
to be followed in our lives . . ., and in order to establish
the authority of those men through whom the divine revela-
tion, on which this sacred scripture or doctrine is based,
has come down to us" (I, 1, 2 ad 2).

39 Indeed, this remains fundamentally true in every
act of knowledge insofar as the human intellect can never
comprehend any being, and this does not belong to the desire
or perfection of the intellect. "But to know other singu-
lars, their thoughts and their deeds does not belong to the
perfection of the created intellect not does its natural
desire go out to these things. . . . Yet if God alone were
seen, Who is the fount and principle of all being and of all
truth, He would so fill the natural desire of knowledge that
nothing else would be desired, and the seer would be com-
pletely beatified" (I, 12, 8 ad 4). This thought is expanded
in I, 12, 9, where Thomas states that knowledge "in God"
is not comprehension of the things in themselves but rather
knowledge of their "similitudes pre-existing in God."

40 As presented in his book, The Word as Truth: A
Critical Examination of the Christian Doctrine of Revelation
in the Writings of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth (London:
Lutterworth Press, 1944), chs. II & III.

41 _Ibid._, p. 27. Per Erik Persson similarly argues that Thomas' metaphysical outlook is grounded in the causality of Greek philosophy, which is most compatible with the biblical doctrine of creation (the doctrine which therefore lies at the center of Thomas' thought), and that this hinders Thomas from doing full justice to biblical revelation, particularly the doctrine of the incarnation: ". . . he discusses these biblical ideas in continuity with a metaphysics which is alien to the Bible, but he does so in such a way that he fails to express--or, at least, expresses with the greatest difficulty--other central thoughts and motifs of scripture since if these were really allowed to speak their own distinctive word, they would destroy the structure of thought which in the last resort gives Thomas' synthesis its unity and cohesion . . . . He defines the nature of God in such a way that it becomes impossible for him to express it [the incarnation] in terms of a self-giving or a being made man--any such ideas, Thomas holds, would disrupt and ultimately destroy the causal relation between God and man." _Op. cit._, p. 290.

42 _Ibid._, p. 35.

43 _Ibid._

44 _Ibid._, p. 38.

45 A few examples: Fairweather seems to lack an appreciation for the various degrees of prophetic vision and the distinction between the imaginary vision and the light of glory. He also fails to draw Thomas' important contrast between faith and revelation in his discussion of certainty regarding the objects of faith. And besides the obviously questionable designation of Thomas' thought as a "static causality," Fairweather also blatantly ignores Thomas' important equation that God's essence is the same as God's existence, failing to understand that by separating them as uncritically as he does in his own view, his critique does not answer Thomas. These and other possible criticisms can be answered, I think, by the fact that Fairweather draws his representation of Aquinas from neo-scholasticism, which did not take adequate note of the act of existence in Thomas' metaphysics but placed all of his thought in the context of a static Aristotelianism, which focuses on essence rather than existence. Basing his comments on the important work of Etienne Gilson on this issue, Persson points out that "despite his use of Aristotelian terms Thomas has a conception of God which is qualitatively different from that of the Greek philosopher" (p. 124). For Aristotle God was only the final cause of _what_ the world is, but not the efficient cause of _that_ the world is, i.e. the cause not only of the essence but the existence of the creature, as Thomas believed. "The

crucial difference between the metaphysics of Thomas and
Aristotle's metaphysics of essence is that Thomas gives an
added dimension to the question by extending the reference
to the plane of existence. To Thomas, esse--or more precisely,
ipsum esse--does not mean 'that which is,' but the very act
by which a thing is, its existence. This existence does not
belong inherently to the nature of a thing, as in Aristotle,
that is, the existence of a thing is not equivalent to its
essentia, but is distinct realiter from its nature, since
the thing does not exist in and of itself." Ibid., p. 126.
Thus Thomas introduces the distinction between essence and
existence (cf. Copleston, Aquinas, pp. 99f.), the latter of
which must constantly be given to creatures by God, in whom
alone essence and existence are one. Again quoting Persson:
"Thomas' metaphysics of existence, which . . . distinguishes
him from Greek philosophy, is in the last resort nothing
more than an attempt to translate into the language of
metaphysics the statements made in Hebrew thought about
the living and active God. The world, as Thomas sees it,
is not static but filled with movement, life, and force.
And all that happens in the world is a direct expression of
divine causality; nothing is done apart from God. . . . In
Thomas's view God may indeed be inexorably transcendent in
relation to the world, but this does not mean that he reigns
far away from his creation. By the very fact of their
existence things are brought into direct and intimate
association with God who immediate in omnibus agit (acts
in everything without intermediary)." Ibid., pp. 156-7.
Cf. S.T., I, 8, 1.

46 Cf. Karl Rahner, "Thomas Aquinas on the Incom-
prehensibility of God," in Celebrating the Medieval Heritage:
A Colloquy on the Thought of Aquinas and Bonaventure, ed.
David Tracy, The Journal of Religion, vol. 58 Supplement
(1978), hereafter J.R. Also, "The Hiddenness of God,"
T.I., XVI, 15; and "An Investigation of the Incomprehensi-
bility of God in St. Thomas Aquinas," T.I., XVI, 16.

47 Rahner, J.R., p. 109.

48 For what follows, cf. J.R., pp. 110f.; "An
Investigation," T.I., XVI, pp. 248f.

49 J.R., p. 112.

50 Ibid., p. 114.

51 The incomprehensibility of God is given in an
excessus which is the "ultimate and fundamental movement of
the spirit and its activity (intellectus agens) toward the
infinite being of God in his incomprehensibility, and this
is the ground of all knowing. Only when and insofar as man
accepts this excessus in a free act of his thought, and

accepts this _excessus_ as what is most proper and ultimate
in his self-realization, does he know the incomprehensibility
of God as his beatifying fulfilment." _Ibid_., p. 116.
This is also, _contra_ Fairweather, the true source of the
moral dynamic. As one freely accepts one's own "being
ordered in grace to the incomprehensibility of God, and
surrenders himself unconditionally to this incomprehensi-
bility," then "we find the reality we call faith, hope,
and love, assuming only that the _excessus_ is taken to be
direct and immediate encounter with divine incomprehensi-
bility brought about by God himself." "An Investigation,"
_T.I._, XVI, p. 254.

52 "As long as the free decrees of God are not
related to his intrinsic reality of incomprehensible glory,
then they are necessarily linked to those realities which
he freely creates. . . . Such realities belong to the
finite realm and cannot be more incomprehensible to a man
with a finite capacity for knowledge than other realities
in the world . . . . It would then be a matter of indif-
ference to us what he might perhaps keep hidden . . . . .
At any rate this is how it seems until it becomes clear that
the actual content of God's free decisions in relation to
us consists precisely in the presence of his incomprehensi-
bility." "Hiddenness," _T.I._, XVI, pp. 232-3.

53 Cf. above, note 34. This is, of course, not to
deny the influence of Jewish thought, through Maimonides,
and Islamic thought, particularly Averroës, through whom,
in part, Thomas interpreted the classical Greek tradition.

55 Persson, _op. cit._, pp. 254f.; 285f. Although
he argues that Thomas' theology is thoroughly dynamic
(_contra_ Fairweather), "this does not mean that this
dynamic character is merely an adaptation of the bibliccal
view any more than his characteristic theological concept
of finality could in any way be said to conform to the
movement of redemptive history in the Bible to an eschato-
logical goal . . . ." P. 292.

56 Cf. Paul Ricoeur, _art. cit._, who cites five
different types of "originary expressions" (prophetic,
narrative, prescriptive, wisdom, and hymnic), various
modalities of revelation discourse which have important
theological meanings that should not be reduced to _one_
form of biblical revelation, or subsumed under one (e.g.
prophetic) model.

CHAPTER TWO

1 Rahner asserts that in his earlier (student) days, there was a common and unified theological framework (neoscholasticism) to which particular questions were referred and assimilated. Rahner argues that this "Denzinger theology" is entirely inappropriate for contemporary Catholic theology. "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," T.I., XI, 3, pp. 70f. Cf. Foundations, pp. 5f. On the distinction between the "early" and the "later" Rahner, cf. E. Vacek, "Development within Rahner's Theology," The Irish Theological Quarterly, 42 (1968), pp. 36-49; and Anne Carr, "Theology and Experience in the Thought of Karl Rahner," The Journal of Religion, 53 (1973), pp. 359-77. Vacek claims (p. 36): "The most fundamental change in Rahner's thought . . . has been to go from a highly focused and somewhat narrow view to a more expansive, inclusivistic perspective." Anne Carr similarly asserts (pp. 372f.): "In Rahner's early theology prior to Vatican II, his emphasis on human historical experience is concerned chiefly with the subjective dimensions of the meaning of Christianity and with man conceived primarily as knower . . . . Since Vatican II, however, this emphasis broadens in an important way. Rather than a retrieval of dogma and exploration of its intellectual significance for the individual believer, the changing and increasingly secular context of the human subject is Rahner's concern." There is no doubt about the development in Rahner's thought, but in my view this development is consistent with Rahner's original method, i.e. his "transcendental anthropology." This both Carr (p. 359) and Vacek (p. 48) affirm; hence we will assume this continuity, and although the transitions are there, they will concern us only insofar as they result in contradictions in Rahner's thought.

2 "Philosophy and Philosophising in Theology," T.I., IX, 3, pp. 48 & 52f.

3 Ibid., pp. 60f. Cf. "On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology," T.I., XIII, 4, pp. 72f. This is in keeping with Rahner's insight that theology's first concern is not for "formal" metaphysics (where traditional philosophy is the primary dialogue partner) but rather for "man in the conditions of life in which he actually lives at present . . ." (T.I., XIII, p. 75), which actually shape the forms which future metaphysical reflection takes.

4 "Reflections on Methodology," T.I., XI, pp. 70f.

5 Foundations, pp. xi f.; p. 9. As Rahner states in "Reflections on Foundations of the Christian Faith," Theology

Digest, 28, 3 (Fall, 1980), p. 209; "idea" "presupposes Hegel's Anstrengung des Begriffs (expansive power of an idea)," and thus "strains" to reflect on the basic unity of the whole of Christianity in the totality of existence, the ultimate source of the pluralism.

6 "By the term 'gnoseological concupiscence' I mean the fact that in human awareness there is a pluralism between the various branches of knowledge such that we can never achieve a full or comprehensive view of them all together, and that they can never be integrated in a unified system by man in a way which makes then fully controllable or comprehensive to him." "On the Relationship Between Theology and the Contemporary Sciences," T.I., XIV, p. 95. Theology, claims Rahner, must defend the situation of gnoselological concupiscence and guard against the danger—in itself and in the other sciences—of according a particular finite perspective absolute value. This is possible for theology only if, "while indeed keeping the totality of knowledge in view," it avoids "the trap of claiming a universality of scientific knowledge for itself, or of regarding all other sciences merely as its handmaids or as branches springing from its own roots." "Theology as Engaged in an Interdisciplinary Dialogue with the Sciences," T.I., XIV, p. 90.

7 Here we might cite the three examples of reductionism which Rahner offers in the Foundations, pp. 13f.: 1) a too narrowly Christological approach, because today Christ is himself a problem—why have faith in a man who lived two thousand years ago?; 2) a too exclusive formal hermeneutical approach where the historical facts of salvation are too quickly translated into a purely transcendental or formal structure; and 3) a "mere biblicism" which ignores the contemporary secular setting. Cf. "Philosophy and Philosophising," T.I., IX, pp. 48f.

8 Rahner uses the term "foundational" theology rather than "fundamental" theology because the latter has too often been understood as a purely formal reflection upon the possibility of faith and revelation, without reference to the content of Christian dogma itself, which speciously divorces faith and reason, subject and object, theology and philosophy. Foundations, pp. 10-12. Elsewhere Rahner criticizes Thomas' formal separation of the an Deus sit from the quid sit Deus (S.T., I, 2, 2 ad 2 & 3), i.e. the "whether" and the "what" of God. In contrast, Rahner argues that the question about the existence of God concerns the real God, that "in the case of God possibility and actuality can only be grasped in a single act of knowledge." "Observations on the Doctrine of God in Catholic Dogmatics," T.I., IX, p. 139. Hence the meta-

physical problem cannot be divorced from the theological question in the original experience.

9 For a more extensive treatment of the philosophical bases, see Kenneth Baker, A Synopsis of the Transcendental Philosophy of Emerich Coreth and Karl Rahner (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1965); Helen J. John, The Thomist Spectrum (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), Part Three; Otto Muck, The Transcendental Method, trans. W.D. Seidensticker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968).

10 "Reflections on Methodology," T.I., XI, p. 86.

11 This assertion regarding the mutual and intrinsic relation between nature and grace is of course familiar to us from St. Thomas, but, as we shall see, this unity is radicalized in Rahner's anthropological approach to theology. Nature and grace cannot be distinguished or separated in concrete human experience, and so neither can philosophy and theology in human reflection. For the relation between philosophy and theology in Rahner's thought, see Foundations, pp. 24f. and passim; "Philosophy and Theology," T.I., VI, 6; "Philosophy and Philosophising," T.I., IX, 3; "Reflections on Methodology," T.I., XI, 3; "On the Current Relationship," T.I., XIII, 4. This question also concerns Rahner's first two works, Geist in Welt and Hörer des Wortes.

12 For a discussion of Marechal and the various German-speaking members of his "school," cf. Johannes B. Lotz, "Zur Thomas-Rezeption in der Marechal-Schule," Theologie und Philosophie, 49 (1974), pp. 374-94.

13 Both the neo-scholastic Thomists and those in the Gilson-Maritain stream emphasized that the intelligibility of being grasped in the universal concept is the contingent intelligibility of the sensible singular thing itself. Both were agreed, then, that knowledge is aquired in an a posteriori "intuition of being" through the conversio ad phantasma, i.e. abstracted from sense experience. The difference in Gilson's representation of Thomas' epistemology is his awareness of the act of existence in Thomas' thought--that the intelligibility of esse is grounded in the contingent act of existence of sensible singulars. The Marechalian Thomists, in contrast, hold that the intelligibility of esse is grounded in the Infinite Act of Existence which is the a priori horizon or term of the agent intellect, grounding all cognition, but which of course can only be reflected and discovered in the conversio ad phantasma. We have here the results of a dialogue with the transcendental philosophy of Kant, Hegel and Heidegger which asserts the participation of the subject and its a priori "existentials" in all objectification, a notion repudiated by (a substantialist, deductive) philosophical realism.

14 It should be noted here that Marechal and Rahner approach the Kantian problematic differently. "But where Marechal and his followers at Louvain centered their attention on the object actualized in the judgement, Rahner grounds his doctrine of Being in reflection upon man, the being who must question Being." Helen John, op. cit., p. 167. As F.P. Fiorenza, in his prefatory essay in Spirit in the World, entitled "Karl Rahner and the Kantian Problematic," points out, this reflects a Heideggerian influence which is not present in Marechal. Cf. Muck, op. cit., who entitles his chapter on Rahner and J.B. Lotz, "Dialogue with Heidegger" (pp. 181f.).

15 Karl Rahner, Spirit in the World, trans. W. Dych (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), p. 142.

16 The extended German text reads: "Es ist also zu fragen, wie der intellectus agens anzusetzen sei, damit er die Form als begrenzte, ein geengte, und damit als an sich weitere Möglichkeiten in sich befassend, als Gegrenztes auf einem weiteren Feld der Möglichkeiten erkennen könne. Offenbar is das nur so möglich, dass er zur Erfassung der einzelnen Form vorgängig dazu von sich aus das ganze Feld dieser Möglichkeit umgreift und so an der sinnlich konkretisierten Form die Konkretheit als Begrenzung dieser Möglichkeiten erfährt, wodurch er die Form selbst als auf diesem Feld vervielfältigbare erkennt. Dieses übergreifende Erfassen der weiteren Möglichkeit, durch das die in der Sinnlichkeit in concretione gehabte Form als begrenzte erfasst und so abstrahiert wird, nennen wir "Vorgriff." Ist dieser Terminus auch so nicht unmittelbar bei Thomas zu finden, so ist er doch sachlich in dem enthalten, was Thomas "excessus" (Überschritt) nennt unter Verwendung eines ähnlichen Bildes." Geist in Welt, p. 153.

17 "But that means nothing other than that the pre-apprehension [Vorgriff] (and its "whither")[Worauf] known insofar as knowledge, in the apprehension [Erkenntnis in der Erfassung] of its individual object, always experiences itself as already and always moving out beyond it, insofar as it knows the object in the horizon of its possible objects in such a way that the pre-apprehension reveals itself in the movement out towards the totality of the objects. Thus the pre-apprehension has a being which makes it apprehendable, without the totality of the possible objects in their own selves having to be apprehended by the pre-apprehension. [GT So hat der Vorgriff ein Sein, das ihn erfassbar macht, ohne dass er eines vorgestellten Gegenstandes bedürfte über den Gegenstand hinaus, zu dessen Vergegenständlichung er geschieht, ohne dass das Ganze möglicher Gegenstände in seinem Selbst vom Vorgriff erfasst zu werden bräuchte.]" Spirit in the World, p. 145 (GT, p. 156).

18   Revised J.B. Metz, 3rd ed. (München: Kösel, 1957).

19   Gilkey's verdict: "The whole relation to Thomas's thought illustrated in this work thus seems to me arbitrary, if not actually spooky . . . ." "Spirit in the World," a review in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 7 (1970), pp. 138-44 (quote from p. 140). Gilkey offers a similar criticism to Bernard Lonergan's attempt to establish a continuity between Aquinas and modernity in Celebrating the Medieval Heritage, op. cit., pp. 19-23.

20   This Rahner himself acknowledges in his introduction to Spirit in the World: "Our concern, then, is not with the Thomas who was conditioned by his times . . . and the philosophy of his day" (p. xlix). Rather his concern with Thomas is "conditioned by the problematic of today's philosophy" (p. lii). This dialogue between the modern Kantian problematic and Thomas is present implicitly in the title of the book, which Rahner exegetes as follows: "By Spirit [Geist] I mean a power [Vermögens] which reaches out beyond the world and knows the metaphysical. World [Welt] is the name of the reality which is accessible to the immediate experience of man. How, according to Thomas, human knowing [Menschliche Erkennen] can be spirit in the world, is the question which is the concern of this work." Ibid., p. liii (GT, pp. 14-15).

21   "The A Priori in St. Thomas' Theory of Knowledge," The Heritage of Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of Robert Lowry Calhoun, ed. R. Cushman and E. Grislis (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), pp. 41-63. For another positive evaluation of Rahner and transcendental Thomism, see Gerald A. McCool, "Is St. Thomas' "Science of God" Still Relevant Today?" International Philosophical Quarterly, 14 (1974), pp. 435-59.

22   Cf. Spirit in the World, pp. 211-26 (GT, 219-32). ". . . it now becomes clear how Thomas understands his Aristotelian aposteriorism: for him there are no innate ideas [S.T., I, 84, 6]. But in the intellectually known, an a priori element which spirit brings with it from itself is known simultaneously (the light of the agent intellect is seen), and this is the condition of every objective knowledge (it is not known unless it is illuminated by light)" (p. 220). Lindbeck's objection to Rahner's interpretation here is an historiographical one, regarding "the excessive ease with which this no-man's land of noncontradiction is filled with premonitions and anticipations of Kant and Heidegger." Lindbeck, p. 52.

23   Lindbeck, p. 62

24 Hörer des Wortes, revised J.B. Metz (München: Kösel, 1963); ET Hearers of the Word, trans. M. Richards (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1969).

25 Hearers of the Word, p. 22.

26 Ibid., pp. 71f.

27 On pp. 25f. of Hearers of the Word, Rahner introduces two Protestant typologies, the first of which (religion as the objectification of something intrinsic to man) would appear to be an oblique reference to Schleiermacher and Protestant liberalism, which Rahner criticizes as immanentist (and therefore subject to the Feuerbachian critique of religion as a mere human projection). John Baillie states, "What gave Schleiermacher the title of "father of modern theology" was that, steering his course between Protestant dogmatism on the one hand and philosophic rationalism on the other, he departed altogether from the old dichotomy of reason and revelation and found what seemed to be a middle way between the two. His theology rests neither on authoritatively communicated truths nor on truths excogitated by the speculative reason but on what he calls the religious self-consciousness of the Christian community. . . . his more general contention that theology takes its rise in the religious consciousness, and that all its doctrines are but explications of this consciousness, became the foundation of much Protestant thought throughout the nineteenth century." The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 12-13. Ludwig Feuerbach counters: ". . . in revelation man determines himself as that which determines God, i.e., revelation is simply the self-determination of man . . . . God is the medium by which man brings about the reconciliation of himself with his own nature. . . . The belief in revelation exhibits in the clearest manner the characteristic illusion of the religious consciousness. . . . That which comes from God to man, comes to man only from man in God, that is, only from the ideal nature of man to the phenomenal man, from the species to the individual. Thus, between the divine revelation and the so-called human reason or nature, there is no other than illusory distinction;--the contents of the divine revelation are of human origin, for they have proceeded not from God as God, but from God as determined by human reason, human wants, that is, directly from human reason and human wants. And so in revelation man goes out of himself, in order, by a circuitous path, to return to himself! Here we have a striking confirmation of the position that the secret of theology is nothing else than anthropology--the knowledge of God nothing else than a knowledge of man!" The Essence of Christianity, trans. G. Eliot (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), pp. 206-7. On Rahner's criticism of the Catholic

equivalent, i.e. modernism, see <u>Revelation and Tradition</u>
(Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1966), pp. 10f. In modernism,
"revelation was another word for the inevitable development,
immanent in human history, of man's religious needs, in
the course of which these needs find objective expression
in the manifold forms taken by the history of religion . . . ."
<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 10. Mark Schoof has this to say about modernism:
". . . it was almost inevitable that, in their attempts to
bring the gospel into harmony with the results of historical
research and to restore its relevance for man of their own
times, the modernists went astray . . . and became the
victims of the one-sided pragmatism and anti-intellectual
evolutionism of their age. Spiritual experience is cer-
tainly one aspect of faith and the Church has never thought
that it was possible for the concepts of faith to repro-
duce the reality of revelation adequately. But the
modernists gave an exaggerated emphasis to the immanence
of God and to the empirical aspects of the data of reve-
lation. This overemphasis was, however, a reaction to
the one-sided concentration on the transcendence of God
and on rational thought in the theology of that period."
<u>Op. cit.</u>, pp. 185-86.

28 Cf. <u>Hearers of the Word</u>, ch. 5, for what follows.

29 The other Protestant typology in <u>Hearers of the
Word</u> views revelation as the "Absolute Other," "God as
revealer actually becomes the dialectically necessary cor-
relative of that which is radically ungodly in man, and
is basically incapable of being revealed except as the
judgement of God upon all that is finite" (pp. 25-26).
The unnamed representative of this "type" could well be
Karl Barth, who so radically separated theology and
philosophy in his "kerygmatic" approach, thus evoking
Bonhoeffer's famous phrase, "positivism of revelation."
Barth, who perceived in Feuerbach's critique of religion
the fatal consequences of nineteenth century "natural
theology," employed the arguments of Feuerbach to support
his contention that the attempt to base Christian theology
in an anthropological theory of religious experience
should be abandoned. (Cf. the Foreward by H.R. Niebuhr
and the Introduction by Barth to Feuerbach's <u>The Essence
of Christianity</u>). Rather, Barth proclaims, the task of
theology is not the human science of the Christian religion,
but "the scientific self-examination of the Christian
Church with respect to the content of its distinctive
utterance concerning God." <u>Church Dogmatics: A Selection</u>,
trans. G.W. Bromiley (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers,
1961), p. 84. Hence the self-revelation of God which pro-
cedes from above to below in the kerygma is the distinctive
and unique province of the science of theology, a subject
matter which is autonomous from the methods and findings
of the other human sciences. Rahner points out that such

a view is in the end another (negative) form of the liberal fallacy: God as the contradictory complement of human nature (which is therefore subject to the same Feuerbachian critique). From the Catholic side, the "extrinsicism" which neo-scholastic theology propounds "regards revelation as a divine intervention coming purely from outside, speaking to men and conveying to them through prophets truths in the form of propositions which would otherwise be inaccessible to them . . . ." "Revelation," S.M., 6, p. 349.

30 On the fundamental historicality (as specific form) of the human spirit and the receptive nature of human knowing, cf. Part IV ("The Place Where the Free Message is Found") of Hearers of the Word.

31 As Rahner points out in ch. 13 of Hearers of the Word, God as "supra-mundane," whose being is not separated from his existence (who is absolute "having being"--cf. pp. 47-48, note 1; pp. 121f.), cannot be known via receptive cognition, for God does not exist as a material existent. Therefore God can be known only via the "word," for he is known only through the negation which human language alone can bear in analogy.

32 Ibid., p. 160.

33 Though this is not explicitly articulated in Rahner's original version of Hearers of the Word, the supplementary notes in the revised ed. by J.B. Metz point this out: cf. pp. 22, note 6; 67, note 10; 73-75, note 3; and passim. Here we might note Anne Carr's tripartite sketch of Rahner's development from Geist in Welt (metaphysics of knowledge) through Hörers des Wortes (philosophy of religion) to the explicit articulation of the "super-natural existential" in Rahner's subsequent work. Art. cit., pp. 361f.

34 As the title of ch. II would suggest: "Man as Hearer of the Message." These observations are taken from this chapter in Foundations, pp. 24f.

35 Ibid., p. 34

36 "Theology of Freedom," T.I., VI, p. 179.

37 Foundations, p. 38. This understanding of freedom is developed in the context of a metaphysics of knowledge and Thomistic ontology in Hearers of the Word, chs. 7 & 8. This discussion is on the whole more noetic and abstract than the statement in the Foundations and "Theology of Freedom," but it profoundly states the unity of being and knowledge, freedom and love: ". . . the finite has its foundation (Grund) . . . in the free luminous act

of God. This free act which is present to itself is <u>love</u>.
For love is the self-luminous act of movement towards a
person [<u>gelichtete Wille zur Person</u>] in his underived
uniqueness. It is this very inclination [<u>Willen</u>] which
God manifests in the delimitation [<u>Setzung</u>] of a finite
existent thing. In such action he desires to enter into
his own free creative act as into the "power" ["<u>Vermögen</u>"]
of the gift of being, and in this he selflessly endows the
other with his own "having being." The finite contingent
thing is illumined in the free love of God for himself and
therein for his freely delimited work. In this, love
appears as the lamp of the knowledge of the finite and,
because we know the infinite only through the finite, as
the light of our knowledge in general. In its ultimate
essence [<u>letzten Wesen</u>] knowledge is but the bright
radiance of love." <u>Hearers of the Word</u>, p. 100 (GT,
pp. 123-24). This relation of love to knowledge (as parti-
cipation in the divine light of glory) is reminiscent of
the Thomistic doctrine of deiformity, <u>S.T.</u>, I, 12, 6.
It also indicates the importance of one one Rahner's
paramount doctrines, namely the identity of God "in
himself" and "for us," cf. the immanent and the economic
trinity; <u>Foundations</u>, pp. 133f.; <u>The Trinity</u>, trans. J.
Donceel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

38 "Theology of Freedom," <u>T.I.</u>, VI, p. 186.

39 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 178.

40 "Experience of Self and Experience of God,"
<u>T.I.</u>, XIII, 8.

41 "Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and
Grace," <u>T.I.</u>, I, 9; "Some Implications of the Scholastic
Concept of Uncreated Grace," <u>T.I.</u>, I, 10; "Nature and Grace,"
<u>T.I.</u>, IV, 7; "Grace," <u>S.M.</u>, 2, pp. 415f.

42 This view is spelled out in the Vatican I docu-
ment, <u>Dei Filius</u>, described by Gerald McCool as follows:
"The baroque scholastic theology of the state of "pure
nature" not only affected the wording of <u>Dei Filius</u> and
its interpretation by the prelate who approved it, it also
encouraged the development of a nonhistorical Aristotelian
scientific theology in the post-conciliar Church. The theo-
logy of "pure nature" focused attention upon the metaphysi-
cal possibilities of an abstract human nature, prescinding
from its elevation to its supernatural end through God's
free decree. As an Aristotelian theology of nature, it was
not concerned with the historical order in which concrete
man actually encountered the personal God of creation and
revelation. Human knowledge was considered <u>in abstracto</u>
and divided into two distinct metaphysical orders according
to the ontological capacities of abstract "nature" and

abstract "supernature." According to the Aristotelian theo-
logy of "pure nature," philosophy should concern itself
with the knowledge of God which "pure nature" could acquire.
Theology, on the other hand, would deal with the knowledge
of God which the believing mind, elevated to the super-
natural order through the ontological habits of grace and
faith, could aquire through historical Christian revelation."
Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 221-22.

43 Cf. "Some Implications," T.I., I, 10; "Revelation,"
S.M., 6, pp. 353f.; and Foundations, pp. 117f.

44 Foundations, p. 121.

45 "Some Implications," T.I., I, p. 331.

46 "Our whole spiritual life is lived in the realm
of the salvific will of God, of his prevenient grace, of his
call as it becomes efficacious; all of which is an element
within the region of our consciousness, though one which
remains anonymous as long as its is not interpreted from
without by the message of faith." "Nature and Grace,"
T.I., IV, p. 180. In Foundations Rahner gives this descrip-
tion: ". . . we can describe this experience along with the
essence of this spiritual dynamism adequately only by saying:
in grace the spirit moves within its goal (because of God's
self-communication) toward its goal (the beatific vision)"
(p. 130). As Rahner asserts in "Revelation," S.M., 6, p.
354: "Grace and beatific vision form a unity, in which grace
initiates and has the same formal character as the vision
of God, so that grace and glory are two historical phases
of the one grace."

47 Foundations, p. 132.

48 "Nature and Grace," T.I., IV, p. 176. Regarding
the difference between Duns Scotist and St. Thomas:
". . . in the Thomist system knowledge and reason hold the
first place, whereas Duns Scotus gives the primacy to love
and will. Thus he holds that the natural flow depends
wholly on the will of God and not, as St. Thomas teaches,
on His mind, and that it is therefore not absolutely
immutable; also that the beatitude of the souls in heaven
does not formally consist in the intellectual vision, but
in the act of love for God . . . . He also held, in common
with other Franciscan theologians, as against the Thomists,
that the Incarnation would have taken place irrespectively
of the Fall." The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,
2nd ed., ed. F.L. Cross, revised F.L. Cross & E.A. Living-
stone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 431.
In the Scotist understanding of nature and grace, then,
"a natural inclination is advocated on the part of the
will for a specified object, God." William Shepherd,

<u>Man's Condition: God and the World Process</u> (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), p. 54. This natural desire for God on the part of man is not mediated by an intellective object but rather "has to do . . . with a transcendental relation of finality on the part of the will to its proper and specific term." <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 55. The unity of will and knowledge in Rahner's transcendental ontology (cf., e.g., note 30 above), makes it possible to affirm a natural desire (<u>Vorgriff</u>) for God which is both cognitional and volitional, thus providing a unique synthesis of Scotist and Thomist views. For an extensive discussion of this question, cf. <u>Ibid.</u>, Part One.

49 This "double gratuity" is found in "Concerning the Relationship," <u>T.I.</u>, I, pp. 303f.; 313f.; "Nature and Grace," <u>T.I.</u>, IV, pp. 185f.

50 Rahner's polemic here is directed against Henri de Lubac and his belief that the natural desire for God in man is unfrustratable, i.e. cannot be thwarted. "Concerning the Relationship," <u>T.I.</u>, I, pp. 297f.

51 William Shepherd, <u>Man's Condition</u>.

52 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 249.

53 As a profound example, I cite the following paragraph on gratuity from <u>Foundations</u>: "Therefore this self-communication of God to spiritual creatures can and must be called supernatural and gratuitous even prior to sin, without thereby introducing into man's single reality a multi-leveled [<u>stockwerkartiger</u>] dualism. In the one and only concrete, real order to human existence [<u>menschlichen Daseins</u>], what is most intrinsic to man is God's self-communication at least as an offer, and as given prior to man's freedom as the condition of its highest and obligatory actualization. Moreover, this very thing which is most intrinsic and which alone is self-evident is God, the mystery, the free love of [<u>in</u>] his divine self-communication, and hence the supernatural. This is so because in the concrete order man is himself through that which he is not, and because that which he himself is, inescapably and inalienably, is given to him as the presupposition and as the condition of possibility for that which in all truth is given to him as his own in absolute, free and unmerited love: God in his self-communication." <u>Foundations</u>, p. 124 (GT, p. 130). We also note Rahner's remark that theology's primary concern is to "keep its attention fixed upon man in the conditions of life in which he actually lives in the present." "On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology," <u>T.I.</u>, XIII, p. 75.

54 <u>Foundations</u>, ch. V; "History of the World and Salvation History," <u>T.I.</u>, V, 5; "Christianity and Non-Christian Religions," <u>T.I.</u>, V, 6; "Philosophy and Theology," <u>T.I.</u>, VI, 6; "Theology and Anthropology," <u>T.I.</u>, IX, 2; "The Historicity of Theology," <u>T.I.</u>, IX, 4; "Anonymous and Explicit Faith," <u>T.I.</u>, XVI, 1; "Observations on the Concept of Revelation," <u>Revelation and Tradition</u>, ch. 1; "Revelation," <u>S.M.</u>, 6, pp. 348f.

55 <u>Revelation and Tradition</u>, p. 13.

56 ". . . there is for Christianity no separate and sacred realm where alone God is to be found. Even though a categorical objectivity is in the first instance explicitly profane, it can be adequate for the mediation of our supernaturally elevated experience which we are rightly calling revelation." <u>Foundations</u>, p. 152 (cf. p. 154).

57 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 153.

58 "It is . . . to be expected . . . that this divinized ground of man will everywhere and always (although with varying force and very differing success) try to become the object of reflection, driven to this by the very dynamism of grace under a supernatural, saving providence of God." "History of the World," <u>T.I.</u>, V, p. 105.

59 <u>Foundations</u>, p. 157.

60 These saving acts are "special interventions" by God, but are not to be conceived in an extrinsicist way; rather "every real intervention of God in his world, although it is free and cannot be deduced, is always only the becoming historical and becoming concrete of that "intervention" in which God as the transcendental ground of the world has from the outset embedded himself in this world as its self-communicating ground." <u>Foundations</u>, p. 87.

61 Rahner's definition of "prophets" here, it will be noted, is quite different--less intellectualist or psychologistic, and more historical--than St. Thomas' view. It opens the way to a broader and more pluralistic concept of revelation which is hermeneutically more true to the biblical texts.

62 <u>Foundations</u>, p. 159. Here we may insert a reference to Edward Schillebeeckx's discussion on "the authority of new experiences" as disclosive of the meaning and possibilities of human experience. ". . . experience is interpretive and interpretation also makes experiencing possible; the authority of experience is therefore an authority <u>from</u> experiences and <u>for</u> new experiences" (p. 38). "Religious language only becomes valid in the full context

of experience of this language . . ." (p. 54). <u>Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord</u>, trans. J. Bowden (New York: Seabury Press, 1980).

63 "History of the World," <u>T.I.</u>, V, p. 107.

64 <u>Foundations</u>, p. 167.

65 This being the pitfall of the Barthian school, "Theology and Anthropology," <u>T.I.</u>, IX, pp. 40f.

66 We might here indicate the equation of the supernatural existential with the <u>Vorgriff</u> (<u>excessus ad esse</u>) of the human intellect which makes knowledge and freedom (human self-transcendence) possible. Rahner declares: "The whole of the history of revelation and salvation of mankind can and should be understood as the <u>history in which</u> the radical reference of human rationality and freedom to the direct presence of God as abiding mystery comes to ever clearer expression under the guidance of God's saving providence. The history of revelation is the history of human rationality, in as much as through . . . God's self-communication in the Holy Spirit, rationality is laid open in its innermost being to the immediate reality of the incomprehensible mystery and comes to full self-realization in and through history. The history is the history of rationality under the influence of grace in which reason grasps ever more plainly this mystery as its foundation and master and freely accepts it." "Faith Between Rationality and Emotion," <u>T.I.</u>, XVI, pp. 68-69.

67 "On the Theology of the Incarnation," <u>T.I.</u>, IV, p. 107.

68 <u>Theology and the Philosophy of Science</u>, trans. F. McDonagh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 26.

69 "If 'God' is to be understood as the all-determining reality, everything must be shown to be determined by this reality and to be ultimately unintelligible without it." <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 302.

70 "Anthropology and the Question of God," <u>Basic Questions in Theology</u>, vol. 3 (London: SCM Press, 1973), p. 97.

71 <u>Revelation as History</u>, trans. D. Granskou (London: The Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 136.

72 Perhaps Rahner's second caveat (<u>Foundations</u>, pp. 13-14; cf. note 7 above) regarding starting points which are too narrow to do full justice to a foundational theology might be applied to Pannenberg's approach.

73   Vincent Branick, <u>An Ontology of Understanding:</u>
<u>Karl Rahner's Metaphysics of Knowledge in the Context of</u>
<u>Modern German Hermeneutics</u> (St. Louis: Marianist Communi-
cations Center, 1974).   "The core meaning of humanistic
truth as it appears finally in this work is that of the
manifestation of <u>to be</u>, the light of every reality because
it is real, shining or tending to shine for itself and for
others capable of receiving that light.   Truth is the
manifestation of the ontological density of a matter."
P. 246.

74   Cf. "Reflections on Methodology," <u>T.I.</u>, XI,
pp. 101f.   Branick calls Rahner's hermeneutics "a her-
meneutics of the "heart," as that inexhautible source in
the core of the human person, that source which gives the
manifold orientations of the person their unity, from
which the dimensions of body and soul arise."   <u>Op. cit.</u>,
p. 208.   The art of understanding involves the will (love)
to self-engagement as much as the intellect (knowledge),
and "because this self-engaging love of the matter is
governed by the incomprehensible creative love of God or
by the inconceivable fullness of human subjectivity in its
freedom, this self-engagement involves a reverence for
mystery."   <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 213.   It is this encompassing mystery
(which at once gives and conceals itself) which unites the
interpreter, the matter being interpreted, and the original
author.

75   It must be remembered, of course, that Pannen-
berg is not propounding a positivistic rationalism or
historicism, i.e. his method is hermeneutical and dia-
lectical.   But the following quotation illustrates what
I mean: "Precisely by means of interpretation, to the
extent that interpretation really intends to understand
the author, <u>everything</u> must be turned into assertion;
everything that was involved in the formulation of a
text--nuances, or frames of reference, of which the author
himself was partly unaware--must be made explicit.   The
interpreted text is precisely the text which has been
<u>objectified</u> with respect to the previously unanticipated
proportions of its horizons of meaning."   "Hermeneutic
and Universal History," <u>Basic Questions in Theology</u>, vol.
1, pp. 126-27.

76   I borrow this distinction between truth as
verification and manifestation from Ricoeur, <u>art. cit.</u>,
pp. 19f.

77   Branick states: "The transcendental method of
hermeneutics means above all looking at the matter, letting
the matter appear and announce itself, but letting it appear
and announce itself to a spirit whose thirst for under-
standing is as vast as reality itself.   Transcendental

hermeneutics as method means letting a matter present itself precisely as slaking that thirst." Op. cit., p. 243.

78 Avery Dulles sums up our critique of Pannenberg well when he states: "Important though history may be as a medium of revelation, it is doubtful whether an academic historian, unmotivated by religious concerns, could be convinced by the biblical accounts, contemplated in the light of universal reason, that revelation has in fact occurred. Nor does it seem that the biblical authors themselves regarded historical events, apart from any inspired interpretation or prophetic commentary, as a sufficient channel of revelation." "The Symbolic Structure of Revelation," Theological Studies, 41 (1980), p. 53.

CHAPTER THREE

1 Cf. Rahner, "Transcendental Theology," <u>S.M.</u>, 6,
p. 288.

2 ". . . transcendental revelation is always his-
torically mediated, and . . . man's historical reality can
never be without language. It never merely consists of dead
facts; the interpretation of the facts is itself a constitu-
tive factor of any histor of any historical event." Revela-
tion," <u>S.M.</u>, 6, p. 350. Cf. <u>Revelation and Tradition</u>,
op. cit., p. 17.

3 "Tradition," <u>The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian
Church</u>, op. cit., p. 1388.

4 Wolfhart Pannenberg states: "The fundamental prin-
ciple of the sufficiency of Scripture for the content of all
theological statements stood in the foreground of the theo-
logical controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries. The point in question was whether Holy Scripture
contained the word of God in its entirety or whether its
contents were capable of or in need of supplementation by
oral tradition. The polemical situation seems to have
changed on this point. The substantive sufficiency of
Scripture seems no longer to be or to need to be the chief
thesis in the evangelical doctrine of Scripture which the
Catholic side is compelled to dispute, nor is there any
fundamental objection on the Protestant side today to the
inter-twining of Scripture and tradition." <u>Basic Questions
in Theology</u> (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), 1, pp. 187-88.

5 It must be pointed out that the Vatican II document
<u>Dei Verbum</u> does not deny the two sources theory of revelation
either, as Walter Abbot points out: "The question was much
debated in the Council, and the majority of the Fathers pre-
ferred not to decide it one way or the other." <u>The Documents
of Vatican II</u> (New York: America Press, 1966), p. 115 note
15. The document itself speaks of scripture and tradition
(articles 9 & 10) in an ambiguous way: ". . . it is not
from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her cer-
tainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore
both sacred tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted
and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence"
(article 9, p. 117). Commenting on this Abbot says, "This
careful formula was one the the last additions to the text,
made at the Pope's request. It does not exclude the opinion
that all revelation is in some way . . . contained in
Scripture. But this may not suffice for certitude . . ."
(p. 117 note 21). Gregory Baum sums up the situation:
"The intention of the second chapter, repeatedly acknow-
ledged, is to leave open the question of the quantitative

relationship between Scripture and tradition. . . . The question remains unsolved whether the tradition is essentially only interpretive or is also constitutive for the Christian faith. The second chapter teaches that Scripture and tradition are ordered to one another." Op. cit., p. 67. Suffice it to say that Rahner denies the two sources theory and affirms the sufficiency of scripture, and the Vatican II statements would appear to allow for this position.

6 Dei Verbum, ch. 2, article 10, makes this clear: "Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the Church . . . . It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others . . . ." Ibid., pp. 117-18. George Lindbeck points out that doctrinal development, because it is so stringly linked to sola scriptura and eschatological reserve, is not thought of by Protestants in the strong sense of the Roman Catholic view, i.e. the declaration that dogmas are infallible, irreversible and irreformable. Although Protestants recognize the necessity of making dogmatic decisions, these cannot be given a juridical status of infallibility: "The sola scriptura, as well as the eschatological lordship of the coming Christ to which it bears witness, forbids the formal attribution of irreversibility to even the most necessary dogmatic developments." "The Problem of Doctrinal Development and Contemporary Protestant Theology," Man as Man and Believer, Concilium, vol. 21 (New York: Paulist Press, 1967), p. 146. Cf. Lindbeck, The Future of Roman Catholic Theology (London: S.P.C.K., 1970). pp. 97-118.

7 Foundations, pp. 361-62.

8 Instrumental causality "properly . . . applies to a special type of efficient cause that is itself moved and elevated by the power of a principal efficient cause to produce an effect proportionate to the nature and power of the principal cause." "Instrumental Causality," New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol 7, p. 599. At times this model was pressed beyond the use given to it by St. Thomas, so that it degenerated into a mechanical dictation theory of inspiration, when really what Thomas intended to convey is that the scriptural writings surpassed the human powers of their conscious and free authors, insofar as they may not have fully understood all that God intended in the events of whichthey treated and in the words they used." "Bible, Inspiration," ibid., vol. 2, p. 384. Cf. note 9 below.

9 This traditional theory, therefore, was never intended to teach mechanical dictation where the human author has but a secretarial function, as Rahner points out:

"Inspiration does not restrain what is man's own, but frees
it; it implies no act of unimaginable compromise, but an
application of the basic relationship between God and man:
both dependence from God and full individuality grow in the
created reality, as well as in the history of redemption in
even and not in reverse proportions." Inspiration in the
Bible (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1961), pp. 14-15, note 4.
Indeed we know that St. Thomas himself used the concept of
instrumental causality in a very careful and qualified way
rather than in a proper, formal sense in his statement on
prophetic inspiration. It is true that the supernatural
elevation of the prohet's intellect is accomplished by the
Holy Spirit (II-II, 171, 1 ad 4) and that the prophet does
not see the very essence of God but only mirror images or
"likenesses" (II-II, 173, 1); so it can be said that "since
the prophet's mind is a defective instrument, . . . even
true prophets [those who are conscious and sure of their
prophetic knowledge, as opposed to those with mere "prophetic
instinct"--171, 5] know not all that the Holy Ghost means by
the things they see, or speak, or even do" (173, 4). In
this sense, because there is an excessus in the prophetic
revelation, a knowledge which cannot be fully known or
explained and which therefore cannot come from the prophet
as principal cause, the prophet is the instrumental cause
of the revelation. Yet this must not be pressed too rigor-
ously, for it is the prophet's intellect which is raised in
a manner not contrary to human nature as created in the
divine image (175, 1; cf. ch. 1 above).

Pierre Benoit draws a distinction between the charisms
of prophetic and scriptural inspiration, arguing that whereas
the former is an intellectual charism of knowledge, the latter
is a practical charism of the will. Paul Synave and Pierre
Benoit, Prophecy and Inspiration: A Commentary on the Summa
Theologica II-II, Questions 171-178, trans. A. Dulles & T.L.
Sheridan (New York: Desclee Co., 1961), pp. 84f. We may
here briefly trace his argument, since it attempts to present
a modern Thomistic solution to the problematic relation
between divine revelation and its human mediation (the dual
authorship of scripture), but which fails to extricate itself
from the perduring limitations and deficiencies of the
instrumental causality model. Rather than projecting the
notion of authorship as the terminus a quo for excogitating
a conception of divine and human authorship (cf. Franzelin
below), Benoit ruminates the Thomistic conception of inspira-
tion as the divine communication of an inner light.
Ackowledging that for St. Thomas inspiration and revelation
were interpenetrating ideas and therefore not distinguished
in the technically formal manner of modern theology, Benoit
nonetheless believes that a distinction can be made--even in
St. Thomas, in an incipient way (174, 2 ad 3)--between the
nature of prophetic and scriptural inspiration. Benoit
develops a distinction between speculative judgements, whose

purely intellectual object is always truth, and practical
judgements of the will. whose object is primarily the good.
In prophetic (or cognitive) inspiration it is the former
category which occupoes the foreground, a process of
intellectual illumination which raises the mind to a super-
natural mode of knowledge and impels the prophet to repeat
a divine oracle. In scriptural inspiration, the latter
category of practical judgement is preeminent, involving a
supernatural stimulation of the will which directs the
sacred writer to compose a book in order to move the hearts
and minds of people by effectively communicating truth.

Benoit's understanding of inspiration thus allows for
a more differentiated understanding of biblical inspiration
since the focus is not on the speculative act of knowledge
and can therefore take cognizance of the "sometimes con-
siderable relativity which is introduced into the act of
knowledge by the pursuit of practical objectives other than
instruction" (p. 112). Avoiding both the "error by excess,"
where the object of inspiration is univocally focused on the
speculative judgement and inevitably tends toward a dictation
theory, and the "error by defect" which restricts inspiration
exclusively to the practical judgement and has only a nega-
tive function vis-à-vis the speculative intellect (keeping
it from error), Benoit steers a middle course which protects
the dual authorship: ". . . scriptural inspiration penetrates
and specifies the writer's cognitive inspiration; his practi-
cal judgement commands and moderates his speculative judge-
ments. The result is an inspired thought which exhibits all
the nuances, restrictions, and limitations characteristic
of human thinking, and which is nonetheless God's thought,
precisely as he wishes to make it known to the children
of men" (p. 117). This understanding of inspiration points
in the direction of a social theory of inspiration, and can
even to a degree be accommodated to such a view. But it is
still too psychological an explanation and too oriented to
"authorship" to do full justice to the complex literary
processes and models of revelation which stand behind the
biblical literature. Rahner's ecclesial starting point,
in contrast, frees theology for a more biblical understanding
of the principle of unity in the scriptural texts, as well
as of inspiration and authorship.

10 Bruce Vawter, Biblical Inspiration (Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 70f.; 97f. Cf. Synave and
Benoit, op. cit., pp. 91f., who represent Franzelin's view
thus: ". . . in order that God be legitimately called the
author of Sacred Scripture, it is necessary for him to have
conceived and willed all the ideas; as for their verbal
formulation, he has entrusted that to the care of the human
authors, leaving to them a certain latitude in the matter"
(p. 91). Of course, this separation ofthe communication of
ideas from their verbal mediation is a most questionable

abstraction which is unacceptable both philosophically (thought requires verbal images) and theologically (this is not concurrent authorship of God and man; it merely divides up the duties of authorship into divine/human categories).

11 Ibid., pp. 98f.

12 These problems are discussed in ch. 1 of Rahner's Inspiration in the Bible.

13 See especially Luke 4:1-4, the prologue to the third gospel in which the author gives a statement of his purpose and reason for writing, but nowhere makes mention of any divine authority or insight, his emphasis being rather on historical accuracy and orderliness.

14 "Illumination" here can only mean that God acts effectively in such a way that the human author's reason receives a certain sure knowledge willed by God, and only this alone . . . . The human author perceives something because God effectively wills him to do so by such a will, which is not only permissive, passive and cooperative, but also predetermining, in scholastic terminology a pre-determinatio formalis." Rahner, Inspiration, pp. 21-22.

15 Ibid., p. 29.

16 Ibid., pp. 37-8.

17 Such a diversity is to be found even within texts written by the same author, such as in the letters of Paul. Indeed, J. Christiaan Beker has recently argued the radical thesis that the fundamental contingency of Paul's thought cannot be overcome, for it is required by the coherent center of Paul's theology, namely the apocalyptic inter-pretation of the Christ-event which "searches necessarily for its contingent expression in history" (p. 19). Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

18 John L. McKenzie, "The Social Character of Inspir-ation," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXIV, 6 (April, 1962), p. 117. See also Bruce Vawter, op. cit., pp. 5f.

19 The Greek reads: πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος....

20 Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), II, pp. 145-6. This second volume of Heschel's major study of Hebrew prophecy provides bril-liant insight into the unique phenomenon of biblical pro-phetic inspiration in relation to other forms and interpre-tations of the prophetic experience, both ancient and

modern.

21 _Biblical Inspiration_, p. 18. Quoting Vawter further: "But whereas in most of our modern languages and to most modern men 'word' means the oral or literary means whereby some reality finds expression, this is not the case in the Semitic framework of the Bible . . . . Here 'word' is rather the reality itself, always the reality primarily, regardless or even in spite of the inadequacy of its expression by mouth or pen."

22 Pierre Benoit argues that the writing of scripture must not be separated from the events and proclamations of which it writes: "To isolate the inspiration of the Bible from its inspired preparation in Action and Word is to run the risk of sterilizing the Bible by reifying it, to make it as barren as an abstract textbook, a collection of terse, private 'truths' which, torn from the soil that nourished them, can only deceive; again, it is to reify the Bible as though it were a preexistent Torah derived from a branch of Judaism, or an Islamic Koran, a book fallen from the sky, whose human origins and appointments have been lost . . . . Before being written, the message was first lived and spoken: this experience of life and this concrete speaking still reverberate in the text. They are concentrated there, by God's will, in an astonishing terseness; but they precede the text, accompany it, follow it, overflow it and explain it. For all this richness comes from the same Spirit." "Inspiration and Revelation," _The Human Reality of Sacred Scripture_, _Concilium_, vol. 10 (New York: Paulist Press, 1965), pp. 13-14. John L. McKenzie (who cites his indebtedness to both Benoit and Rahner) states " . . . the spokesman of God speaks for his society; when he speaks, he speaks not only in virtue of his own personal experience and knowledge of God, but in virtue of the faith and traditions in which his experience occurs and without which his experience would not have meaning." _Op. cit._, p. 121.

23 What follows is based on ch. 2 of Rahner, _Inspiration in the Bible_.

24 _Ibid._, p. 39.

25 Cf. Rahner and Thüsing, _A New Christology_, ch.2, and Foundations, pp. 326f. As regards Rahner's arguments for the "founding" of the church by Jesus, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza has provided a cogent critique and hermeneutical expansion of Rahner's basic position. "Seminar on Rahner's Ecclesiology: Jesus and the Foundation of the Church--An Analysis of the Hermeneutical Issues," _The Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention_, vol. 33 (1978), pp. 229-54. Rejecting Rahner's historical arguments as exegetically

weak and his indirect anthropological (transcendental) argument as insufficiently comprehensive to deal with the historical data, Fiorenza augments Rahner's thesis with recent insights of hermeneutical theory. As opposed to focusing on the "intention" of Jesus (implicit or explicit) and the spiritual "founding" of the church, Fiorenza argues that there is an autonomy of meaning in Jesus' words and actions which transcends "intention" and can have consequential meaning derived from future horizons and forces. This view "allows Jesus to have a representative and communicative significance within the New Testament writings that may transcend the intention of the historical Jesus" (p. 251). Fiorenza's conclusion: ". . . the mission of Jesus and the mission of the Church have a continuity in so far as Jesus' preaching and activity is continued by the Church" (p. 253). "Theologically, the meaning of the Christian community may have transcended the specific intentions of the historical Jesus and his first disciples just as its reality and meaning transcends our own intentions and conceptions. Nevertheless, our interpretations should point to the continuity between both visions" (p. 254). This interpretation is more in keeping with Rahner's own understanding of the development of dogma. In my opinion, the reason for the weaknesses in Rahner's arguments regarding the "founding" of the church by Jesus lies in his sometimes exorbitant attempts to defend traditional claims of the church.

26 "The Church, as the eschatologically definitive, yet historical and united community of believers, is the lasting presence of God's eschatological and eschatologically victorious promise of himself to the world in Jesus Christ. . . . Jesus would not have been Jesus, if there had not been such a Church. His proclamation of the irreversible presence in the world of God's salvation would not exist if the Church were not present as the permanent community sustaining this proclamation in the world." A New Christology, pp. 26-7.

27 We prescind for the moment from the question of the constitution of the sociological self-definition of the early church and, for example, Rahner's identification of the "Petrine office" and apostolic power of binding and loosing with the papal function and apostolic succession. Cf. Foundations, p. 333f., and note 75 below.

28 Inspiration in the Bible, p. 48.

29 L. John Topel helpfully provides the German original here, which gives Rahner's more elaborate meaning of "through his absolute will": "mit absolutem, formal prädefinierendem heilgeschichtlichem und eschatologischem Willen." Topel, "Rahner and McKenzie on the Social Theory

of Inspiration," Scripture, XVI, 34 (April 1964), p. 39 note 2.

30 Inspiration in the Bible, p. 50. The immediate query to be put to Rahner's thesis is how the inspiration of the Old Testament can be explained if inspiration is so inseparably linked with God's eschatological and definitive action in the apostolic church. Rahner does acknowledge that the Synagogue did not possess the same infallible redemptive-historical witness as the early church since the absolute event of redemption had not yet occurred, i.e. there was not yet the closure of revelation. The Old Testament is therefore part of the heilsgeschichliche preparation for Christ and the church and receives its final validity and function in the light of the New Testament. Hence, Rahner avers, "inasmuch as God causes the Old Testament as the definitive image of the pre-history of the Church, he inspires the Scriptures and makes them his own as their author. In other words, because the Old Testament belongs a priori to the formation of the Church and not only of the Synagogue, as a part of her prehistory and as such remains actual forever, it can claim the same validity as the New Testament." Inspiration, p. 59.

Bruce Vawter has stated his objection to this treatment of Old Testament inspiration, arguing that it comes close to viewing it as subsequent approbation by the church. Although he admits this was not Rahner's intention, he asserts that Rahner's solution is unacceptable to biblical scholars, particularly of the Old Testament variety. A proper view of inspiration must clearly affirm the genuinely inspired authenticity of the community of God's people in the Old Testament, namely Israel. In Vawter's opinion, John McKenzie (as an Old Testament scholar) who recognizes the intrinsic value of the Old Testament society does greater justice to the biblical evidence (Vawter, op. cit., pp. 111f. and 160f.): "If we concede that in living and expressing its ethos Israel engaged in the dialogue of a history in which the word of God was revealed, then inspiration will be a term readily applicable to its sacred authors fulfilling their societal function. One need not have the Christian's view of the OT as propedeutic to the NT in order to regard its authors in this light. Quite within the confines of their own history and horizons they performed their assigned functions as part of and on behalf of a people of God whose raison d'etre was in itself" (Vawter, p. 112).

This question of the relationship between the Old and New Testament is a difficult problem for biblical theology, and perhaps any treatment of it requires supplementation. One wishes to avoid both a law/gospel dichotomy which asserts a theological discontinuity between the OT and NT,

as well the establishment of a premature unity between the
testaments which is based on reductionist typological
analogies or Christomonistic hermeneutics. [On this
problem, cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, <u>Old Testament Theology:</u>
<u>Basic Issues in the Current Debate</u>, revised ed. (Grand
Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975), ch. V]. It is
hermeneutically naive, however, to imagine that one can
approach the biblical texts--whether OT or NT--without a
certain theological preunderstanding. The texts themselves
would appear to assume that faith is necessary for under-
standing their message, and for the Christian theologian
the ultimate meaning of salvation history is revealed in
Christ. This does not mean that he/she will interpret
the Old Testament as the apostolic church did, namely as
a Christian book. However, it does mean that ultimately
the confession will be made that the OT promise and search
for salvation is ultimately fulfilled and interpreted in
Christ and the new covenant community. It is in this
sense that Rahner claims that the inspiration of the OT
is confirmed and definitively established by the NT
reality. Of course, this is already a dogmatic assertion
rather than a purely exegetical datum, but it is one that
can also accommodate the results of independent historical-
critical inquiry.

31 Nor is the Holy Spirit "psychologized" in a
subjectivist manner, since it is the "objective" meaning of
the revelation which moves the author to write.

32 <u>Inspiration</u>, p. 65.

33 This is also the basis of the unity of scripture
and tradition: "This unity, with its faith-inspiring force,
is constituted in the final analysis only by the power of
the Spirit of Christ, and is itself in fact the mediation
of this authority of Christ, in his Spirit, to the Church.
Once this is grasped, it remains only to see and accept
frankly the simple, straightforward fact that the tradi-
tion of the primitive Church (in the actual circumstances)
can only abide and hold normative sway through Scripture,
of which tradition knows that it has crystallized there,
knowing therefore that it is only in Scripture that it is
and remains itself." Rahner, "Scripture and Tradition,"
<u>S.M.</u>, 6, p. 57. On "connaturality," cf. note 45 below.

34 <u>Inspiration</u>, pp. 70f.

35 <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 72-3.

36 As G.W.H. Lampe asserts: "The Christian com-
munity is a body of those who are inspired by the Spirit.
Such inspiration is no longer the privilege of a few indi-
vidual prophets, selected to receive a special revelation

of the purposes of God; it is granted to the whole society insofar as ot os possessed by the Spirit, who mediates to it the presence of the glorified Christ. They are "taught by God," in the sense that the Spirit is given to them to bring the words of Jesus to their remembrance, to illuminate their meaning, and so to guide them into all the truth (cf. John 14:26; 16:12-14) . . . . There is thus a continuous operation of the Spirit . . . ." Lampe, "Inspiration," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, II, pp. 716-17.

37 Vawter, op. cit., p. 170.

38 On the pluralism of New Testament theology, see especially "Theology in the New Testament," T.I., V, ch. 2; "Bible," S.M., 1, pp. 175f.

39 "The Position of Christology in the Church Between Exegesis and Dogmatics," T.I., XI, p. 192. As Ricoeur says of the primordial confession of faith expressed in the New Testament: "These texts conceal a first level interpretation . . . . We are the hearers who listen to the witnesses: fides ex auditer. Hence, we can believe only by listening and by interpreting a text which is itself already an interpretation." Essays on Biblical Interpretation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 54.

40 "Theology in the New Testament," T.I., V, p. 28.

41 Rahner asserts: "The inner power of development, the dynamism of self-explanation which is present within the truth and especially within a divine truth, cannot surely have been less at the time of the primitive church than later on." Ibid., p. 27. This development assumes different trajectories shaped by the different problems, personalities, and historical situations of the writers as they faithfully reflect on the original data of revelation.

42 Ibid., p. 29.

43 A dogmatic statement, according to Rahner, has the following characteristics: 1) It consists of human words, with all the inner structures and laws, historical and cultural conditioning, literary forms appertaining to human language. These words, however, have a potentia oboedientialis for the revelatory reality they communicate, and in this sense must be viewed analogically. 2) It is a statement of faith, the reflexive articulation of one's obedient listening to the Word of God and thus includes both an objective (theoretical) and subjective (existential) dimension (which are inseparable). 3) It is an ecclesial statement, since proclamation and belief occur in a public and social, interpersonal setting (see Rahner's statement

on the essential social and institutional mediation of
Christianity in <u>Foundations</u>, pp. 322f.). This requires
a certain terminological specificity appropriate to the
common situation in which the message is to be heard and
appropriated, the valid form of which is determined by the
magisterium. 4) It leads into the mystery of God because
of its living relation to the kerygmatic reality it pro-
claims. It goes beyond the conceptual because it mediates
the gracious experience of the absolute mystery itself.
5) It is not identical with the original Word of revelation
because it cannot objectify the unsurpassable binding events
of salvation history in an unsurpassably binding way.
"What is a Dogmatic Statement?" <u>T.I.</u>, V, ch. 3. Cf. Rahner
and Karl Lehmann, <u>Kerygma and Dogma</u>, tr. W. Glen Doepel
(New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), pp. 82f.

44 "Dogma," <u>S.M.</u>, 2, p. 96.

45 Martin Hengel, <u>The Son of God: The Origin of
Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion</u>,
trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1976), p. 57. Quoting
H. von Campenhausen, " 'This abundance of "names" is no doubt
deliberate. Jesus himself in his uniqueness is the sole
content of the Gospel. Each possible title is no more than
a reference, and none can describe Jesus completely as he is
in truth' " <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 58 note 109.

46 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 90.

47 ". . . kerygma, in its fullest sense, is the
actual and historically determined proclamation of the word
of God in the Church by the proclaimer in the power of the
Spirit and in faith, hope, and charity, brings into being
and makes present what is proclaimed (the promise of God to
man) as an evangelical message of salvation and as a com-
mitting and judging power; it does this in such a way,
moreover, that salvation history, both beginning and end,
becomes present "now" in Jesus Christ, and that this word,
which has become an event in what is said and heard, can be
received by the listener in faith and love." <u>Kerygma and
Dogma</u>, p. 18. G.E. Ladd confirms this unity of event and
proclamation from the standpoint of Pauline theology:
"There exists a dynamic unity between the event and the
proclamation of the event, for the proclamation is itself a
part of the event. It is impossible to place primary
emphasis upon events as past history, or as present pro-
clamation ; the two are inseparably bound together, for
two reasons. Apart from proclamation (<u>kerygma</u>, <u>evangelion</u>),
the events in history cannot be understood for what they
are: the redeeming acts of God. Furthermore, apart from
proclamation, the events are mere events in past history;
but in proclamation, they become present redeeming events
. . . . This is why Paul can speak of the gospel as itself

the power of God unto salvation."   "Revelation and Tradi-
tion in Paul," Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical
and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on his 60th
Birthday, ed. W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (Great Britain:
Paternoster Press, 1970), p. 224.

48 On the development of dogma, cf. "The Development
of Dogma," T.I., I, ch. 3; "Dogma," S.M., 2, pp. 95f.

49 This precludes any further revelation: "Now there
is nothing more to come: no new age, no other aion, no fresh
plan of salvation, but only the unveiling of what is already
'here' as God's presence at the end of a human time
stretched out to the breaking point: the Last and eternally
the latest newest day. It is because the definitive
Reality which resolves history proper is already here that
Revelation is 'closed.' Closed, because open to the con-
cealed presence of divine plenitude in Christ . . . . That
Revelation has been closed is a positive and not a negative
statement, a pure Amen, a conclusion which includes every-
thing and excludes nothing of the divine plenitude, con-
clusion as fulfilled presence of an all-embracing plenitude." "The Development of Dogma," p. 49.

50 Ibid., p. 50. "The light of faith, the impulse of
the Spirit, do not permit of being isolated for inspection
by a reflexive process in which attention is turned back
upon itself and withdrawn from the object of faith. They
are the brightness which illuminates the object of faith,
the horizon within which it is contained, the mysterious
sympathy with which it is understood, and not properly the
object regarded. . . . But they are present and take part
in the apprehension and unfolding of the object of faith;
they form the co-operating subjectivity (God's and caused
by God) with which the Word is for the first time under-
stood in the act of hearing and understood ever anew.
Knowledge in faith takes place in the power of the Spirit
of God, while at the same time that Spirit is the concrete
reality believed . . . ." Ibid., p. 51. The circle of
faith is at the center of the historical development of
dogma, without which the propositions, whether of scrip-
ture or the present-day teaching of the church, cannot
be understood.

51 "The light of faith makes us see what we believe.
For just as, by the habits of other virtues man sees what
is becoming to him in respect of that habit, so, by virtue
os faith, the human mind is directed to assent to such
things as are becoming to a right faith, and not to assent
to others." S.T., II-II, 1, 4 ad 3. This connaturality
might also be described as a hermeneutical circle which
moves toward self-understanding. Paul Ricoeur speaks of
appropriation as the critical examination of historical

testimony by employing the medieval <u>via eminentia</u> and <u>via negativa</u>: ". . . in forming predicates of the divine we disqualify the false witness; in recognizing the true witnesses we identify the predicates of the divine." <u>Op. cit.</u>, p. 115. This provides us with a hermeneutical description of connaturality.

52 "The Development of Dogma," p. 66.

53 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 67.

54 This progressive growth in the complexity and self-consciousness of faith and theology does not necessarily presuppose a correspondingly superior faith: "Let us remember that in actual fact (if not in essential principle) greater reflexive articulateness of a spiritual possession is nearly always purchased at the cost of a partial loss in unhampered communication ('naive' in the good sense) with the reality given in faith (and which is still possessed in its entirety) . . . . God allots to every age its mode of consciousnes in faith. Any romantic desire of our own to return to the simplicity and unreflexive density and fullness of the Apostolic consciousness in faith would only result in an historical atavism. We must possess this fullness in a different way." <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 67.

55 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 69.

56 A. Oepke, "ἀποκαλύπτω," <u>Theological Wordbook of the New Testament</u>, ed. G. Kittle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), III, p. 584.

57 G.S. Hendry, "Reveal," <u>A Theological Word Book of the Bible</u>, ed. A. Richardson (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 199.

58 The famous passage in the gospels which supports this is Peter's insight into Jesus' identity, a knowledge which "flesh and blood" could not reveal (Matt. 16:16f.). As Oepke says, "revelation is not understood in terms of a fixed historical or eschatological objectivism. The making known of present revelation is itself part of the act of revelation." <u>Op. cit.</u>, p. 581.

59 G.E. Ladd, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 226. Anton Vögtle declares: "Because Jesus was for the apostolic generation not only a 'past' figure, but also and primarily a present, highly alive and active personality . . . the primitive Church also interpreted all that it had to proclaim in the way of instruction upon the details of the story of Jesus as a Word that made him present, a Word addressed here and now to the faithful by the exalted Lord in the situation that was rooted in Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost . . . . As long as we grant full validity to the progressive char-

acter of the revelation in Christ and see this as a hermeneutical principle, this strong kerygmatizing of the earthly life of Jesus not only loses any objectionable character, but is seen to be a decisive protest against all attempts to deprive the Gospel of its historical basis or to dissipate the revelation of Jesus Christ into some Gnostic mirage." "Revelation and History in the New Testament: Biblical Hermeneutics," Man as Man and Believer, Consilium, vol. 21, p. 49.

60 Ibid., p. 228.

61 On the function of the Holy Spirit as a hermeneutical principle, cf. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

62 Walter Kasper distinguishes New Testament "confessional formulae" from the (often more statically and timelessly conceived) term "dogma," arguing that the former are never given universal validity or juridical status but "remain linked to the actual confessional situation, and their accentuation and further development depend on the changing situations. There is therfore a multiplicity of such confessions, rich in tensions, within the one New Testament, the unity of which is not a static and mechanical uniformity but a dynamic and historical value. . . . The Gospel is always wider and more comprehensive than the individual formulae of the faith." "The Relationship Between Gospel and Dogma: An Historical Approach," Man as Man and Believer, p. 156.

63 As H. Richard Niebuhr declares, revelation is the "continuous conversion" of our thought: "God's self-disclosure is that permanent revolution in our religious life by which all religious truths are painfully transformed and all religious behaviour transfigured by repentance and new faith. . . . it is permanent revolution since it can never come to an end in time in such a way that an irrefrangible knowledge about God becomes the possession of an individual or a group. Life in the presence of revelation in this respect as in all others is not lived before or after but in the midst of a great revolution." The Meaning of Revelation (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1941), p. 133.

64 "The Development of Dogma," p. 76. Rahner also asserts: ". . . the later Christian will always hear the original statement in terms of its later statement by the Church's magisterium and consciousness of faith. Yet he really hears that original statement of faith itself, not although but precisely because he hears it by means of the present Church. For the ultimate guarantee of being able to hear the original statement in not the historical skill of man, (i.e. his 'being able to understand' historically

in matters of revelation and faith), but the exercise of
faith in community with the present-day Church." "What is
a Dogmatic Statement," T.I., V, p. 63.

65 Cf. "Prospects for Dogmatic Theology," T.I., I,
ch. 1; "Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology," T.I., V, ch. 4;
"Scripture and Theology," T.I., VI, ch. 8; "Scripture and
Tradition," T.I., VI, ch. 9; "Pluralism in Theology and the
Unity of the Creed in the Church," T.I., XI, ch. 1; "The
Position of Christology in the Church Between Exegesis and
Dogmatics," T.I., XI, ch. 8; "Dogma," S.M., 2, pp. 95-111;
"Bible," S.M., 1, pp. 171-78.

66 Rahner claims that the crucial question is
"whether the findings of contemporary exegesis has been
able to arrive at with regard to the pre-Easter Jesus'
awareness of himself and his own understanding of his task
and person are still sufficient as a point of departure for
the New Testament Christology to be found in Paul and John,
and for the Church's dogmatic teaching about Jesus Christ."
"The Position of Christology," T.I., XI, p. 189.

67 Ibid., p. 193.

68 Avery Dulles points out four areas where the
teaching magisterium must undergo a fundamental transition
if it is to retain the confidence of the people of the
church, i.e. if it is to preserve its authority in the
modern world: 1) It must move from an oligarchic authori-
tarian approach to a more democratic, dialogic exercise of
authority where lay participation and the charisms of the
whole church are recognized and facilitated. 2) Rather
than a static, absolutist understanding of church doctrine,
the magisterium must see itself in dynamic, historical
terms, recognizing the cultural and historical relativity
in the human situation. Indeed, "it is precisely here that
the necessity of a living magisterium becomes most evident.
A primary task of the magisterium is to see to it, in every
generation, that Christian teaching is suitably recast so
that the gospel still appears as the good news . . . ."
P. 121. 3) From an abstract and technical articulation of
dogma, it must move toward a more pastoral--i.e. personal
and concrete--kind of proclamation which stimulates people
to deeper religious understanding and participation.
4) From an anxious and repressive conservatism closed to
progress and the future, the magisterium must be oriented
toward the future, sensitive to the dynamic impetus of
Christian tradition which seeks for the signs of God's
presence in our age. Dulles points to the documents of
Vatican II and post-Vatican II developments as hopeful
indications that these transitions are ocurring. The
Survival of Dogma (New York: Image Books, 1971), ch. 7.

69 This is developed in "Dogma," <u>S.M.</u>, 2, pp. 102-7.

70 This is due to the linguistic conditioning inherent
in all magisterial statements which are therefore subject
to rules of language, i.e. if the secular field of discourse
is changed, the original statements are liable to be mis-
understood. The teaching authority always expresses the
creed in formulae based on theological language subject to
particular cultural and historical factors in human thought.
Therefore Rahner asserts: "The factor of linguistic con-
ditioning present in the expression of the Church's doctrine
and now able consciously to be reflected upon makes it clear
that it is both possible and justified for there to be a
pluralism among the theologies, and for these to exhibit
great differences in their formulations from the formula-
tions of the Church's official teaching." "Pluralism in
Theology," <u>T.I.</u>, XI, p. 17.

71 <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 17f.

72 <u>Foundations</u>, pp. 383-84.

73 "Pluralism in Theology," <u>T.I.</u>, XI, p. 22. Else-
where Rahner makes a similar statement: ". . . the concept
of <u>paradosis</u>, of <u>traditio</u> or handing-down--from a biblical
point of view--has its ultimate and deepest meaning and
reality not so much in the handing down and transmission of
<u>propositions</u> but in that <u>paradosis</u>, handing-over or trans-
mission in which the Son of God become man, the divine
Logos in the flesh, always hands himself over and delivers
himself up anew in the celebration of the sacred mysteries,
the Lord's Supper of the Church, in the Eucharist . . . ."
"Scripture and Tradition," <u>T.I.</u>, VI, p. 100. This same
concern is expressed by the Protestant New Testament scholar,
Peter Stuhlmacher: "The principle of inspiration points up
in hermeneutical fashion that the scriptures as witness to
the revelation possesses an independent power and efficacy
which cannot be overtaken or levelled by the most intense
pursuit of a systematic exegesis, that scripture cannot be
understood in isolation from the referent and experience of
the church and a lived faith, and that theological interpre-
tation can be carried on only within the horizon of a con-
cept of truth which allows the historical contact or
encounter of immanence with transcendence." <u>Historical
Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture:
Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent</u>, trans. R.A. Harrisville
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 60.

74 In his address to New Testament exegetes in
"Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology," Rahner admonishes,
"You must be critical--inexorably critical. You must not
'arrange' dishonest reconciliations between the results of
your researches and the Church's teaching." <u>T.I.</u>, V, p. 71.

75   It is perhaps true that I have interpreted Rahner's
ecclesiology from a more "Protestant" perspective than is
warranted by Rahner's own approach.   Although my own concern
in this thesis is to present the convergence between tradi-
tional, biblical, and contemporary theology which Rahner's
theology suggests, my own difficulties with Rahner's theology
on certain points should not be left unstated, particularly
with regards to ecclesiology.   There are indications in
Rahner's writings that he has not consistently pursued the
implications of his (transcendental) anthropological
approach, especially as regards traditional authoritarian
claims of the Roman Catholic church.   Although he vigorously
opposes the idea of extrinsic authoritarianism (be it of
scripture or the church), Rahner tends at times to preserve
and uphold it, particularly in some of its institutional
forms.   Two such cases which non-Catholics must find
especially objectionable are Rahner's defense of the Roman
Catholic church as the one true church of Jesus Christ
(Foundations, pp. 346f.) and his defense of the infallible
authority of the pope and the magisterium (Foundations, pp.
378f.).   The question to be asked of Rahner is, given the
legitimate and essential diversity both of human experience
and of interpretations of the Christ event, why can there
not also be a legitimate pluralism of confessional expres-
sions and commitments?   Surely no one institution--even less
one authoritative body or office within it--may pridefully
boast of possessing the revelation of God.   Why can the
church not be seen in broader, more authentically universal
terms, particularly if we are now in the global and
pluralistic "second epoch" of dogmatic development?   Does
the Catholic hierarchy itself perceive the new epoch and
is it facing and addressing that challenge (cf. ch. V
below)?   It would appear that Rahner at times abandons his
anti-authoritarian anthropological foundations precisely
at those points where they are most critically required
in his ecclesially-centered theology, namely where the
church hierarchy demands conformity to its authoritative
proclamations.

76   Stuhlmacher asserts: "If, according to Paul and
the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit is active as the power
of faith and a true understanding of Jesus, and if without
him there can be neither faith nor an understanding of
Jesus as Revealer and Reconciler (1 Cor. 12:3; Gal. 3:2;
Jn. 14:24-25; 16:12-13), then for hermeneutics this means
that the biblical texts can be fully interpreted only from
a dialogical situation defined by the venture of Christian
existence as it is lived in the church." Op. cit., p. 89.

77   "The Historicity of Theology," T.I., IX, p. 71.

CHAPTER FOUR

1   Foundations, p. 177; "Two Basic Types of Christology," T.I., VIII, ch. 15.

2   "Jesus Christ," S.M., 3, p. 198.

3   "Current Problems in Christology," T.I., I, p. 150.

4   Foundations, pp. 212f.; "On the Theology of the Incarnation," T.I., IV, ch. 4.

5   "The most urgent task of a contemporary Christology is to formulate the Church's dogma--'God became man and that God-made-man is the individual Jesus Christ'--in such a way that the true meaning of these statements can be understood, and all trace of a mythology impossible to accept nowadays is excluded." "Jesus Christ," S.M., 3, p. 196.

6   "Current Problems," p. 154.

7   Cf. Anne Carr, The Theological Method of Karl Rahner (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 167f.

8   "Current Problems," p. 154; cf. above, ch. III.

9   A notable exception is the article, "Theos in the New Testament," T.I., I, ch. 4.

10   Cf. above, ch. III.

11   "The Position of Christology in the Church Between Exegesis and Dogmatics," T.I., XI, p. 194.

12   Cf. above, ch. III.

13   Foundations, pp. 203f.; "'I Believe in Jesus Christ': Interpreting an Article of Faith," T.I., IX, ch. 10.

14   Foundations, pp. 204-5. GT, p. 204.

15 Cf. above, ch. III.   The ecclesial nature of Christianity is powerfully argued by Rahner in Foundations, pp. 342f.   "We cannot exclude communal and social intercommunication from man's essence even when he is considered as the religious subject of a relationship to God. If basically God is not a particular reality alongside all other possibilities, but rather is the origin and the absolute goal of the single and total person, then the whole person including his social and interpersonal dimension is related to this God. By the very nature of man

and by the very nature of God, and by the very nature of the relationship between man and God . . . the social dimension cannot be excluded from the essence of religion . . . . Otherwise religion would become merely a private affair of man and would cease to be religion." (p. 343).

16. "Christology Today?" T.I., XVII, ch. 4. Rahner argues that Chalcedonian Christology is of perduring significance not only because it has been acknowledged as binding in the Christian Church for over fifteen hundred years, but that its central affirmations retain an authority and truth for contemporary Christianity as well, insofar as they compell us to take Jesus absolutely seriously "as the unsurpassable and irreversible Word of salvation to ourselves--as the Word of God per se." (P. 27).

17. And, of course, this restatement of classical formulations involves one in the dynamic self-transcendence of the formulas into the mystery to which they refer, so that the restatement is actually a participatory appropriation of the truth of the formula within and in terms of one's historically-given situation. This process of the Aufhebung of Christological formulas is described in "Current Problems," pp. 149f. But this is not only an Aufhebung of Christian tradition but also of the divinely created and foreordained historical conditions in which these formulae are reinterpreted, and this is clearly stated in "Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding of Himself and of His World," T.I., XI, pp. 215f. It is obvious that Rahner envisions the mutual illumination of Christian tradition and the contemporary situation within the self-transcendent faith relationship of a person to Jesus Christ, and it is this, not an antiquarian historical interest in biblical literature or the history of dogma nor the deliberate attempt to be "modern," which animates Rahner's theology.

18. Cf. above, ch. 2.

19. See Foundations, pp. 294f.; S.M., 3, pp. 194f.; "The Quest for Approaches Leading to an Understanding of the Mystery of the God-Man Jesus," T.I., XIII, ch. 13; "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation," T.I., XVI, pp. 220f.

20. Cf. "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbor and the Love of God," T.I., VI, ch. 16.

21. Cf. Karl Rahner, On the Theology of Death, tr. C.H. Henkey (Montreal: Palm Pub., 1961), ch. III.

22. S.M., 3, p. 195; cf. Foundations, p. 298.

23. A. Grillmeier defines Monophysitism as "the doctrine that there is only "one nature" (φύσις, ὑπόστασις) in Christ, as developed in discussion of the relationship between Godhead and humanity in Christ . . . . Monophysitism . . . emphasizes . . . the oneness of Christ, to the detriment of the differences." "Monophysitism," S.M., 4, pp. 107-8.

24. See Foundations, pp. 178.; S.M., 3, pp. 203f.; "Christology Within an Evolutionary View of the World," T.I., V, ch. 8; "Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding," T.I., XI, ch. 9.

25. "Christology Within an Evolutionary View," p. 160.

26. Foundations, p. 223.

27. "Current Problems," p. 162. This is stated also in the Foundations from an existential point of view; "Not until one experiences himself as a free subject responsible before God and accepts this responsibility does he understand what autonomy is, and understand that it does not decrease, but increases in the same proportion as dependence upon God." (P. 79).

28. On this understanding of God's creative causality cf. above ch.1, pp. 22f., and ch. 2, pp. 38f.

29. God's immanence is therefore not understood statically as the conservation of the abiding ontological structures of the universe, but as the dynamic divine ground of evolution which grounds the underivably new, the "more" in the historical process of becoming, which therefore provides an important corrective to humanistic (and ultimately mythological in an anthropological sense) evolutionary theory. Cf. "Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding" : "But on any showing the immanence of God in the world must be conceived of as of so radical a kind that the process of self-transcendence inherent in being in process of becoming genuinely is and remains an active process of self-transcendence. At the same time, however, the transcendence of God must be maintained, and that too not merely by reason of God's sovereign independence of the world, but in order to ensure that what emerges from this process of becoming is that which is genuinely new. And this too must be maintained in such a way that that which comes to be is genuinely new and not merely an explication of that which has been present all along. Thus we can see that the state of becoming genuinely inherent in the world of itself postulates the fact that God is simultaneously immanent and transcendent in it in a single act." (P. 224)

30. " . . . God has not merely "uttered" man as the open question which we are in respect of him, but . . . he has uttered this question in such a way as to provide it with the possibility and potential of accepting itself as such unconditionally and totally--thereby accepting God himself." " 'I Believe in Jesus Christ', " p. 167. Jesus Christ is the ultimate achievement of this acceptance.

31. "Christology Within an Evolutionary View," p. 172.

32. " . . . a transcendental Christology need not proceed as if it had formed the Christian notion of the God-man independently of the historical experience of this God-man in the concrete figure of Jesus. The transcendental deduction of an "idea" is always subsequent reflection on a concrete experience. It is a reflection which notes explicitly the "necessary" in the factual. It is therefore justifiable and necessary, since it alone explicitly displays the essence of the concrete experience in its necessary essence, not just its factuality." "Transcendental Theology," S.M., 6, p. 289. "Nor is a transcendental Christology of this kind, within an evolutionary and dy= namic conception of the world in general, invalidated by the consideration that de facto such a transcendental christology is only developed a posteriori and after the experience of the God-man has already been achieved. . . . In a transcendental christology of this kind . . . the Christ-event is not something which is enacted upon a sort of cosmic stage which is static and unaffected by what is taking place in him, but rather constitutes the point to which the becoming of the world in its history is from the outset striving to attain." "Christology Within the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding." p. 227. Cf. also Rahner's defense of transcendental christology in Foundations, pp. 206f.

33. Foundations, p. 196.

34. "On the Theology of the Incarnation," T.I., IV, ch. 4; "Incarnation," S.M., 3, pp. 110-118; Foundations, pp. 212f.

35. "Theology of the Incarnation," p. 110.

36. Ibid., p. 113. cf. Foundations, pp. 220f.

37. Ibid., pp. 114-5; Foundations, p. 221.

38. "Thoughts on the Theology of Christmas," T.I., III, p. 32: "When God lets himself go outside of himself; then there appears man--who for this very reason is pure openness for God--out of the very fringe of nothingness

. . . . When God expresses himself out of himself into the emptiness of the non-divine, when he engages in 'theology' outside of himself, then 'what comes out' is nothing else but anthropology engaged in by him in the Incarnation understood as his own self-expression; and for this theology, anthropology is not a pre-established vocabulary but one which springs from it. However true it is that this happens only by the fact that God creates this grammar of his self-expression out of nothing, this grammar--since it itself springs from this theology as such--can really also express God and not merely something else."

39. "Theology of the Incarnation," p. 117.

40. Cf. Foundations, pp. 224f.

41. "The Theology of Symbol," T.I., IX, p. 224.

42. Ibid., p. 234.

43. Ibid., p. 236. As Rahner says, the mystery of the Trinity, i.e. the idea of plurality in a being without detriment to its unity and perfection, is the ontological background of the theology of symbol. Ibid., p. 235.

44. On the unity of the immanent and economic Trinity cf. The Trinity, p. 21f. Rahner asserts that this view of Christ who as the Incarnate Logos is the real symbol of the God, is basically an exegesis of John 14:9: "He that sees me, sees the Father." "Theology of the Symbol," p. 237. We might add here that just as the Logos is the real symbol of the Father, so too the humanity of Jesus is the real symbol of the Logos as the medium of the Logos' self-expression. This results a radical and infinite extension of all (symbolic, created) reality insofar as "in Christ this reality no longer refers to God merely as its cause: it points to God as to him to whom this reality belongs as his substantial determination or as his own proper environment." Ibid., p. 239.
Here, I confess, I cannot follow Robert Doud's criticism of Rahner's christology of Realsymbol when he asserts: "Rahner fails to develop the side of christology in which the human subject is a Realsymbol, so constituted independently of his relation with the Logos . . . . For this reason, Rahner's christology of Realsymbol fails to convey his larger christological intention of asserting the full humanity of Jesus. Rahner's onesidedness in his christological application of Realsymbol causes him to jeopardize the humanity of Christ and to relapse into Monophysitism." "Rahner's Christology: A Whiteheadian Critique," The Journal of Religion, 57, 2 (April 1977), p. 148. Doud's call for a recognition of two Realsymbols in Christ, one human

and one Logos (and arguing that Rahner overlooks the former, focusing exclusively on the latter--p. 149) appears to miss the very point which Rahner is concerned to make, namely the radical realsymbolic _unity_ of God and man in Jesus Christ as the perfection of the God-creature (as realsymbolic) relationship. Donald Gelpi here advances a more accurate and profound understanding of Rahner's thought, which he represents as follows: ". . . the very human nature of Christ reveals the Word to us; for the Word reveals himself to mankind not only by what he says but also and especially by what he is. The human nature of Christ is, then, a real-symbolic expression of the Word himself. As the Father posits the Son within the Trinity as the eternal expression of himself, in an analogous fashion the Son posits within himself his human nature as the real-symbolic temporal expression of his own inner reality. The human nature of Christ is, then, the real-symbolic expression of the divine Word in time: it is a reality posited _by_ the Word, _within_ the Word, yet _distinct_ _from_ the Word, and thus as an expression of the inner reality of the Word." _Life and Light: A Guide to the_ _Theology of Karl Rahner_ (N.Y.: Sheed and Ward, 1966), p. 12. It is this unconfused and inseparable realsymbolic unity of Logos and humanity which grounds the eternal signif- icance of Jesus' humanity for our relationship to God. cf. "The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Jesus for our Relationship with God," _T.I._, III, ch. 3; "One Mediator and Many Mediations," _T.I._, IX, ch. 11; "The Body in the Order of Salvation," _T.I._, XVII, ch. 7.

The same failure to understand Rahner's theology of symbol by attempting a separation between Logos and humanity of Christ (cf. Doud above) is evident in Seely Beggiani's argument for a "Logocentric theology" in which he argues that "the divine Logos is to the human nature of Christ as the divine Logos is to each individual human," (pp. 374-5), i.e. it is the divine Logos and not the human nature of Christ which mediates salvation (God's ultimate self-comm- umication) to humanity. "A Case for Logocentric Theology," _Theological Studies_, 32 (1971), 371-406. Beggiani argues that Christ functions as a model of God-manhood for others and differs only by degree in union with the Logos. What would seem clear in Rahner's theology of symbol is that if one differs in degree (i.e. perfect union versus imperfect union) then, according to the analogy of proportionality which underlies a theology of symbol, this difference is of essential importance. If Christ's uniqueness lies in the fact that he is the only one to actualize and fulfill the human _potentia oboedientialis_ for the hypostatic union so that he is therefore one with the Logos (p. 402), then surely to say that Christian anthropology and soteriology should focus on the Logos and not Christ (p. 405-6) is to

miss Rahner's essential point regarding real symbol.

        As John F. Haught points out in a rejoinder to
Beggiani's interpretation and revision of Rahner's thought,
the real issue with which Rahner's theology of the symbol
is concerned is that of mediation, the unity of the symbol
and that which is symbolized, and it is this which Beggiani
fails to understand (pp. 122f.), "What is Logocentric
Theology?" Theological Studies, 33 (1972), 120-32.
As Rahner asserts in "The Theology of the Symbol":
". . . the true and proper symbol, being an intrinsic
moment of the thing itself has a function of mediation
which is not at all opposed in reality to the immediacy of
what is meant by it, but as a mediation to immediacy . . ."
(p. 244). Because a being both expresses and possesses
itself via symbolic mediation, it can only become immediate
(both to us and to itself) through its (symbolic) mediation
which in an analogical manner it is.

        Another perspicacious observation made by Haught is
that Rahner's starting point of God's relation to the world
is much broader a focus that a narrow doctrinal concern for
the hypostatic union. The central issue for Rahner is not
so much Christ's "difference" from us in some individualis-
tically conceived (moral or ontological) attribute or per-
fection, but rather in his universal historical significance
(pp. 126f.). The Logos is not attached to human individuals
but to human history, as Rahner points out: "The Logos
assumed a human history. But this is part of an entire
history of the world and of humanity before and after it,
and, what is more, the fullness of that history and its end.
But if we take at all seriously the unity of this history
as centered upon Christ, it follows that Christ has always
been involved in the whole of history as its prospective
entelechy," "Current Problems," p. 167. It is not indi-
viduals but creation and human history which is oriented to
the hypostatic union as its unsurpassable eschatological
fulfilment in a cosmic evolutionary context. It is this
fundamental relation between creation and Incarnation
which Rahner seeks to express in his evolutionary paradigm
and his theology of the symbol, so that although the Incar-
nate Logos is a unique historical event, it has, at the same
time, universal implications because it expresses and
therefore mediates the absolute self-communication of God
to the world as its salvific goal. As Rahner puts it:
"How . . . can the uniqueness of Christ's mediatorship
be credibly proclaimed, unless one understands this
uniqueness as that which gives the interdependence-in-
salvation of all men its eschatological guarantee, its vic-
tory, its historical form and manifestation? . . . It is
undoubtedly clear that all 'mediation' is a mediation to
the end of immediacy, and not a 'medial' something which is

inserted between and thus keeps separate the objects of mediation." "One Mediator," p. 183.

45. "Reality and its appearance in the flesh are forever one in Christianity, inconfused and inseparable. The reality of the divine self-communication creates for itself its immediacy by constituting itself present in the symbol, which does not divide as it mediates but unites immediately, because the true symbol is united with the thing symbolized, since the latter constitutes the former as its own self realization." "Theology of the Symbol," p. 252.

46. Foundations, p. 290. What is being expressed here (as in the quotation in note 35) is the doctrine of the "ontological difference" between being and its real-symbolic self-expression. This analogical tension must be affirmed in the doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum. For Rahner's analysis of the distinction between Jesus and God in the N.T., cf. "Theos in the New Testament," pp. 135f.

47. "Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," T.I., V, pp. 200f. For further discussion of this topic in which Rahner develops an ontology-consciousness Christology see also "Current Problems," pp. 168f.

48. "Current Problems," p. 183.

49. "Christology Within an Evolutionary View," p. 183.

50. "Man as a whole, and in the spiritual development of humanity as such, is always too he who asks questions at a metaphysical and transcendental level. He is always he who cannot have any eschatological hope as a man of this earth unless he affirms that a continuity exists through all the discontinuity between the history of the natural order and the history of the human spirit. Jesus constitutes the eschatological response of God primarily not in words but in the deliverance of concrete reality. And precisely if this is true, then this response of God is ipso facto an event of this material world, albeit one which brings about eschatological transformations in it." "Human Aspects of the Birth of Christ," T.I., XIII, p. 220.

51. Foundations, p. 201; cf. "Christology Within an Evolutionary View, p. 181.

52. "The closeness of God's kingdom, which did not always exist but does "now" and in a new presence as the victorious situation of man's salvation, a situation of radical conversion or metanoia, is for the pre-resurrection

Jesus already inseparably connected with his person . . . .
the pre-resurrection Jesus thought that this new closeness
of the kingdom came to be <u>in and through</u> the totality of
what he said and what he did." <u>Foundations</u>, pp. 251-52.
"Jesus experienced a relationship to God which he exper-
ienced as new and unique in comparison with other men,
but which he nevertheless considered to be exemplary for
other men in their relationship to God." <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 254.

53. Rahner discusses the meaning of Jesus' death and
resurrection in the following works: <u>Foundations</u> p. 228-
285; <u>A New Christology</u>, pp. 10f.; <u>On the Theology of
Death</u>, "The Resurrection of the Body," <u>T.I.</u>, II, ch. 6;
"The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Jesus," <u>T.I.</u>,
III, ch. 3; "Dogmatic Questions on Easter," <u>T.I.</u>, IV, ch. 5;
"One Mediator and the Many Mediations," <u>T.I.</u>, IX, ch. 11;
"The Position of Christology in the Church," <u>T.I.</u>, XI,
ch. 8, pp. 206f.; "The One Christ and the Universality of
Salvation," <u>T.I.</u>, XVI, ch. 13; "On the Spirituality of
the Easter Faith," <u>T.I.</u>, XVII, ch. 2; "Jesus' Resurrection,"
<u>T.I.</u>, XVII, ch. 3; "The Body in the Order of Salvation,"
<u>T.I.</u>, XVII, ch. 7. That this theme is of crucial importance
in Rahner's Christology is evident from the space he
devotes to its discussion.

54. "If it is not idealized ideologically, the real
"cause" of a person is the thing which is actualized and
realized in the concrete existence of the person. Hence
it is the validity of the person himself in its abiding
validity." <u>Foundations</u>, p. 267.

55. <u>On the Theology of Death</u>, p. 67.

56. Rahner argues that Eastern soteriology has trad-
itionally exhibited a stronger emphasis on Easter, on Jesus'
resurrection, than the West, which has tended to focus
primarily on the legal and moral causality of the cross
and viewed the resurrection more in terms of Jesus' per-
sonal destiny. "Dogmatic Questions on Easter," p. 126.

57. Cf. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 122f.; <u>On the Theology of Death</u>, pp.
68f.; "Theological Considerations Concerning the Moment
of Death," <u>T.I.</u>, XI, ch. 14.

58. <u>On the Theology of Death</u>, p. 71.

59. "Death ends time by being its consummate validity
and therefore eternity. Hence what follows "after" death
(and resurrection as essential element of <u>this</u> death) is
precisely the definitive thing which took place in death.
And vice versa: what now takes place is definitive and
hence what is truly and eternally real and effective. The
life of the exalted Lord is not the personal recompence

for something which he did in his earthly life and which merely has "consequences" which now persist in themselves after their cause is past. It is the very reality of the soteriological significance of his temporal life, accepted by God, set free to work, and actually effective." "Dogmatic Questions," p. 131. Cf. "On the Spirituality of the Easter Faith," p. 13: ". . . when we turn to the exalted Lord in faith, in hope and in love, we find none other than the crucified Jesus, in whose death his whole earthly life is of course integrated . . . . [Jesus'] life in eternity is the ultimate form of his history . . . . But for that reason this earthly life of Jesus is not after all simply part and gone: it is; it is completed and eternally valid; it has itself been accepted by God and acknowledged as real; from the human subjectivity of Jesus, it has been gathered out of the mere flux of earthly time into the now of eternity, and taken into irrevocable possession."

60. "Jesus, the Man, not merely was at one time of decisive importance for our salvation, i.e. for the real finding of the absolute God, by his historical and now past acts of the Cross, etc., but--as the one who became man and has remained a creature--he is now and for all eternity the permanent openness of our finite being to the living God of infinite, eternal life; he is, therefore, even in his humanity the created reality for us which stands in the act of our religion in such a way that, without this act towards his humanity and through it (implicitly and explicitly), the basic religious act towards God could never reach its goal." "The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Jesus," p. 44

61. " . . . the Father's Word made flesh is the Mediator of God's self-communication (which is also always a forgiving communication) in so far as he is the exchaton of the history of this self-communication. History hangs upon its own future and is mediated by it, i.e. it is as it happens throughout its whole course, and it takes place in reference to its fulness and its victorious end. Consequently it is in this sense that the Word made flesh is the Mediator of God's self-communication and, within this, of the ultimate, radical depth of human intercommunication as well." "One Mediator," p. 179.

62. Foundations, p. 284. Cf. "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation," pp. 207f.

63. Here Rahner would appear to be at one with E. Schillebeeckx, who points out that the New Testament authors adopted interpretative images from their culture and experience (such as satisfaction, bloody sacrifice, atonement, defeat of evil heavenly forces) to express the salvific significance of Jesus' death, images which have lost

their interpretative power in our day and culture: "The question is whether in our modern culture, which shrinks from sacral slaughter, this datum (the salvific death of Jesus) has to be called a bloody sacrifice . . . . In the course of the post-biblical history of theology, more theories of redemption will indeed arise than those already offered by the New Testament, and these often, rightly, take up specific details of culturally determined sensibilities and contemporary expectations of salvation. However, one cannot compel a Christian who believes in the soteriological value of the life and death of Jesus, and his life with God and among us, simply to believe in all these interpretative elements; indeed for many people they can even endanger belief in the saving worth of the life and death of Jesus." Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord, p. 633. Rahner, then, is attempting to articulate Jesus' soteriological significance via interpretative elements which are more accessible to the contemporary person's experience and world-view.

64. "Christology Within an Evolutionary View," pp. 184f.

65. Ibid., p. 186.

66. Ibid., p. 187.

67. Jesus the Christ, tr. V. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 9.

68. Cf. Gerald McCool's representation of Tübingen theology in Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 263f. McCool points out that this theological approach is thoroughly historical, and that the intelligibility of this historical thought cannot be "mastered" through its explication in a metaphysical system. Rather, the intelligibility of historical thought must reveal itself through its historical expressions so that speculative theology is immersed in history itself.

69. Kasper, p. 50.

70. Ibid. This same concern for the lack of intersubjectivity in Rahner's thought is expressed from a philosophical standpoint by various other critics. Eberhard Simons introduces the I-thou language of philosophical personalism to resolve this problem in Rahner's transcendental thought, emphasizing the category of personales Miteinandersein over Beisichsein as the proper understanding of Daseins. Philosophie der Offenbarung: in Auseinandersetzung mit "Hörer des Wortes" von Karl Rahner (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1966). Robert Doud argues that the process philosophy of A.N. Whitehead provides a perspective

which better integrates <u>Mitsein</u> and <u>Beisichsein</u> in the attempt to articulate an adequate contemporary Christology. <u>Art. cit.</u>, pp. 144-55. And Robert Masson propounds a similar criticism when he calls for the adoption of a more historical, less transcendental Heideggerian conception of "be-ing" (pp. 275f.). This conception would show, in contradistinction to Rahner, that "for the human person, this fundamental fact of existence is not self-presence (subjectivity) but interpresonal be-ing which at its very roots is as much constituted by "communion" as self-presence" (p. 286). "Beyond Nygren and Rahner: An Alternative to Tracy," <u>The Heythrop Journal</u>, XXI, 3 (July, 1980), pp. 260-87. In contrast to these scholars, who themselves attempt to solve the problem of intersubjectivity by incorporating metaphysical insights from other philosophies(ers), Kasper opposes the metaphysical approach to the historical Jesus in general, arguing that the latter is unique and underivable and can only be meaningfully understood in his concrete historical setting.

71   Kasper, pp. 51-52.

72   Kasper states his criticism as follows: "We can observe and demonstrate only a few steps in evolution; we can never see the evolutionary processes as a whole. The individual stages are always in some way tentative, trivial and even futile. There is no such thing as one ascending evolutionary process. There are signs and pointers to meaning <u>in</u> the world; but there are no signs of a meaning <u>of</u> the world: of an alliinclusive context of meaning with its ultimate crown in Jesus Christ. The signs of meaning and fulfilment are opposed by signs of meaninglessness, non-fulfilment, futility, and an inexplicable creaturely suffering. Are we justified in describing these merely as by-products and waste-products of development? We cannot conceive a meaning of reality but we have reason to <u>hope for</u> such a thing. We can go further and say: Jesus Christ can only fulfil all reality if he also accepts the ultimately depressing--the agonal--aspects of reality. That means, if he is not merely to be set in a pure history of ascent, passing as it were over the dead bodies of time on its way up. The compelling and convincing aspect of Jesus Christ is that in him both the greatness and the inadequacy of mankind are accepted, and accepted infinitely. In <u>that</u> sense, Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of history." P. 58.

73   <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 245.

74   <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 247.

75. Kasper asserts that a distinction must be made between the Logos-Christology of the fourth Gospel, which is not yet concerned with the ontological problem of two natures in a single subject,and Chalcedonian Logos-Christology which discusses Jesus' soteriological meaning in a historical ontic categories which resulted in speculation on abstract concepts of human and divine nature rather than the events of personal and relational salvation history. (Pp. 233f.) Rahner is guilty, in Kasper's opinion, of this same kind of abstraction, ignoring the historical fact that "Jesus' human consciousness is turned not directly to the Logos, but to the Father." (P. 245).

76. Ibid., pp. 249f.

77. A New Christology, Part II: "New Testament Approaches to a Transcendental Christology."

78. Offenbarung und Transzendenzerfahrung: Kritische Thesen zu einer künftigen dialogischen Theologie (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1969).

79. Thüsing states, in agreement with Kasper, that the "connection between transcendental Christology and evolution is one of the most problematic of all forms of transcendental thinking . . . . Is it not possible that a one-sided evolutionary Christology might make it difficult to integrate the message of the cross?" (Pp. 68-69).

80. "Rahner appears to see this descendere and ascendere primarily and one-sidedly, in relationship to the New Testament, from the vantage point of Christ. In other words, it is for him predominantly Christocentric or transcendentally anthropocentric. Descendere and ascendere are not seen in such a consistently theocentric light as they should be if Jesus were a real man, even when he had been raised from the dead, in other words, if the theocentric implication of the transcendental approach-- openness to God--were taken really seriously. The Christological theocentricity of New Testament in the descending line is . . . primarily not ontic, but dynamic." Ibid., p. 74.

81. Ibid., pp. 203f. "The real difference between transcendental christological thinking and New Testament Christological thinking is that the aspect of dialogue that is implied in the transcendental approach is made explicit and thematic in the New Testament approach." P. 207.

82. Gerken, pp. 17f.

83   This would also appear to be one of the major
problems which Eugene Borowitz has with Rahner's Christology.
Contemporary Christologies: A Jewish Response (New York:
Paulist Press, 1980). Borowitz opposes Rahner's ontological
consciousness Christology because it substitutes "existential-
ist, anthropological" categories for the words and acts of
the historical Jesus, weakening Rahner's claim that Jesus is
the perfection of human possibilities: ". . . the Jewish
judgement of his complete fulfillment of the human potential
will be directed more to how he lived and died rather than
to a second-level interpretation of the will behind the
events, though these are closely intertwined" (p. 79).
Borowitz argues that there is an apparent contradiction in
Rahner's theology insofar as on the one hand he disparages
the idea of an unmediated presence of God and demands the
concrete "possession" of God in history (cf. "Current Pro-
blems," p. 187) which in Borowitz' eyes is tantamount to an
approbation of idolatry, a blasphemous immanence (pp. 76f.).
On the other hand, "when it comes to Jesus as the perfect
person, Rahner is content to discuss this in . . . his
abstract fulfillment of various human capacities" (p. 79)
which are unrelated to Jesus' life, a life which, as finite
and limited, is hardly the perfection of the whole of our
human potentialities.

Here we find ourselves back at that perennial stumbling
block, viz. the relation between transcendence and immanence,
universal and particular, which lies at the heart of Rahner's
(and perhaps all) theology. The only way to respond to Boro-
witz' criticism is to appeal to Rahner's theology of the sym-
bol and his views of the spirit-body relation (cf. above, note
44). Rahner nowhere collapses the analogical distinction
between symbol (Jesus Christ) and the symbolized (God), that
is, he does not confuse the mediated presence of God in his-
tory with God, and yet this mediation is precisely that of
the immediacy of God's self-communication. This does not
require therefore that Christ somehow literally perfect every
possible human relationship. Rather, he in his person pro-
claims and makes possible the perfection of all human
relationships because God's universal salvific grace and
love becomes part of our single intersubjective historical
reality through his death and resurrection. Christ's
uniqueness and perfection is precisely his universal signifi-
cance by virtue of God's presence within him according to
the perfection of the basic God-creature relationship.

84   Foundations, pp. 229f.; "Current Problems," pp. 185f.;
"Remarks on the Importance of the History of Jesus for Catho-
lic Dogmatics," T.I., XIII, ch. 14. Here the criticism of
Gerken that Rahner focuses too much on the transcendental
supernatural existential rather than on the historical Christ
and one's personal faith encounter with him is somewhat unfair
(op. cit., pp. 26f.). Unfortunately Gerken fails to realize
(or acknowledge) that Rahner presupposes such a personal rela-

tion to Christ which is historically mediated; indeed Rahner
seeks to elucidate the meaning and ultimate significance of
that experience.

85. "The Position of Christology in the Church," p.194.

86. "Transcendental Theology," S.M., 6, p.288. The
quotation continues: "Reflection on the transcendental
orientation of man is not rendered impossible by the histori-
cal and unpredictable character of the saving events, their
a posteriori nature, the fact that they are freely ordained
by God. For what was first and most strictly ordained by God
is the permanent supernatural existential of grace, the pro-
ferred self-communication of God, and hence a "transcendental"
condition of man. And this free grace, as a transcendental
determination of man, has its own proper history in what we
call history of salvation and revelation, which cannot be and
be grasped as such without this a priori possibility in man
which is called grace, or the grace of faith." Of course,
Kasper too is constantly engaging in such transcendental re-
flection on historical events in his Christology and this is
nowhere more evident than in his discussion of the basis of
belief in Jesus' resurrection as an experirence of faith in
the disciples encounter with the risen Lord, a "believing
seeing" based on a transcendental faith orientation, not the
pure objectivity of the event. Kasper, pp. 124-140.

87. Therefore, states Rahner, a "theological anthro-
pology does not just add something new . . . to the state-
ments of the secular anthropologies," since God is not a
parallel reality alongside others in the world, but rather
is the transcendental ground and telos (or entelechy)
of the world. "The Theological Dimension of the Question
About Man," T.I., XVII, p. 57. Given Rahner's understand-
ing of the God-world relationship, therefore, it is obvious
"that a revelatory self-manifestation of God in the
ultimate resort cannot be thought of only as a particular
event in space and time, within the world and its history."
(Ibid., p. 58). "For Christian anthropology, man is essen-
tially the historical being for whom divine revelation and
salvation are encountered through his specific history. At
the same time he is the being who is always already en-
dowed by what we call the Holy Spirit of grace with the
saving reality of God himself, as offer made to his liberty,
which can be realized in all history. . . . The dialectical
relationship in which the statements stand always points be-
yond these statements themselves into the mystery of God,
which cannot be reduced to a system; and without this self-
transcendence the statements would neither be true nor
theological." (Ibid., pp. 63-4). I must confess my own
bafflement regarding the charge that Rahner's thought is
not theocentric and dialectical. Indeed it is the most
profound articulation of the divine-human relationship that
I know.

88. "We are convinced . . . that the historical content of our message is simply this; that in Jesus we have the firm historical and revealed assurance that this inner endowment with the Spirit conferred on man's existence is and remains, finally and victoriously, the innermost entelechy or determining principle of mankind's history." Ibid., p. 68.

89. James D.G. Dunn asserts that the unifying element in early Christianity was the perceived continuity between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ, "the conviction that in Jesus we still have a paradigm for man's relation to God and man's relation to man, that in Jesus' life, death and life out of death we see the clearest and fullest embodiment of divine grace, of creative wisdom and power, that ever achieved historical actuality . . . . " Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: an Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 376. As Martin Hengel points out, the historical basis for this Christological development was twofold: " . . . first, Jesus' claim to messianic authority, in which he announced the imminence of the rule of God, i.e. the saving love of the Father, to the lost, and secondly the disciples' certainty that God had raised his crucified Messiah Jesus." The Son of God, p. 90; cf. Rahner's identical assertion, above, note 53.

90. E. Lohse, " υἱός ," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, VIII, p. 361.

91. 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7 and 89:26f. It should be pointed out that there was a conscious demythologization present in Israel's appropriation of kingship-ideology in the Ancient Near East. In contrast to, for example, the Egyptian view where the king (Horus) was viewed as the divine offspring of the father-god Osiris in the context of eternal myth-ritual cycle, the Israelite king was viewed as the chosen (annointed) one of God, filled with the spirit of God and adopted by God for a special responsibility, namely to lead the people, to administer justice, and to superintend the cultus. In the Israelite cultus the king was not mythically or cultically identified with the god in a fertility ritual but was rather recognized as a primus inter pares who represented the people in the confirmation of the covenant, giving thanks for Israel's election by Yahweh and pledging obedience. Cf. Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948); Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh, tr. G.W. Anderson (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1954), esp. ch. III; The Psalms in Israel's Worship, tr. D.R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), vol. I.

92. Exodus 4: 22f.; Hosea 11:1; Isaiah 1:2; 30:1;

63:16. Morna Hooker states: "The image of sonship . . .
is used for describing the relationship between God and
his chosen people; it symbolizes the ideas of election
and obedience. It is not really a title; rather it de-
scribes a role." A Preface to Paul (N.Y.: Oxford University
Press, 1980), p. 58.

93. We here adopt Oscar Cullmann's methodological
caveat against the strictly comparative approach of the
Religionsgeschichtliche Schule: " . . . as scholars we simply
cannot neglect to take Jesus' own self-consciousness into
consideration. For one must reckon a priori with the pos-
sibility--even the probability--first, that in his teaching
and life Jesus accomplished something new from which the
first Christians had to proceed in their attempt to explain
his person and work; second, that their experience of
Christ exhibited special features not present in
every obvious analogy to related religious forms." The
Christology of the New Testament, tr. S. Guthrie and C. Hall
(London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 5.

94. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Test-
ament, vol. I, tr. K. Grobel (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1951), pp. 42f. "Jesus' call to decision implies
a Christology " (p. 43). Cf. Rahner, "The Position of
Christology in the Church," pp. 201f.; Foundations, pp.
249f.

95. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, "How Much Did Jesus Know?--
A Survey of the Biblical Evidence," Catholic Biblical
Quarterly, 29 (1967), pp. 37f.; Anton Vögtle, "Exegetische
Erwägungen über das Wissen und Selbstbewusstsein Jesu,"
Gott in Welt: Festgabe für Karl Rahner, ed. J. Metz
(Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1964), vol. I, pp. 608f.

96. Rahner, Foundations, p. 254.

97. The decisive text would appear to be Matthew
11:27 (cf. Luke 10:22), which, if "son" is there inter-
preted as titular [cf. F. Hahn, The Titles of Jesus in
Christology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), pp. 307f.]
is ascribed to the early church rather than Jesus. How-
ever, I am more convinced by Joachim Jeremias' interpreta-
tion that the passage in terms of language, style, and
structure must be ascribed to a Jewish setting and that the
absolute "son" is not to be understood as a title but as
"an oriental paraphrasis for a mutual relationship: only
father and son really know each other;" and that therefore
the saying can be authentically ascribed to Jesus himself.
New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus, tr.
J. Bowden (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 58.

98   _The Central Message of the New Testament_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 27.   Cf. Mark 14:36.

99   Cf. Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; 1 Thess. 1:10.

100   ". . . in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 3:3); ". . . born of woman, born under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

101 Cf. Morna Hooker, _A Preface to Paul_, pp. 60f.; James D.G. Dunn, _Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation_ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1980), pp. 38f. Hooker sums up Paul's use of "Son of God": "He uses the term in passages where he speaks about God's saving act in Christ, and I suggest that he uses it in order to underline the fact that God's purpose of salvation is brought about through one who (being Son) acts in accordance with and in obedience to that purpose; what happens in Christ, therefore, is the activity of God himself." Pp. 62-3.

102   Cf. Dunn, _Christology in the Making_, pp. 46f.; Kasper, _Jesus the Christ_, pp. 164f.

103   This God-creature relationship so perfectly exemplified by Christ is described by Donald M. Baillie as "the paradox of grace" (1 Cor. 15:10): "Never is human action more truly and fully personal, never does the agent feel more perfectly free, than in those moments of which he can say as a Christian that whatever good was in them was not his but God's." _God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 114.   Christ is God Incarnate by virtue of his completely open humanity for God: "He did not set up at all as a man confronting God, but along with sinners--who do _not_ take this attitude--He threw Himself solely on God's grace.   The God-Man is the only man who claims nothing for Himself, but all for God." _Ibid._, p. 127.

104   _Foundations_, p. 303 (GT, p. 294).

105   My reflections here are heavily reliant upon Dunn, _Christology in the Making_, pp. 98-128.

106   Cf. Rom. 1:18-25; 3:23; 5:12-19; 8:19-22.

107   Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24 = image; Rom. 5:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 2:12 = glory.

108   Cf. Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Phil. 3:21; 2 Thess. 2:14.

109 cf. Rom. 5:12f.; 1Cor. 15: 21f.; Phil. 2:6f.

110 Phil. 2:6f. Dunn asserts: "He (Christ) becomes one with man in his falling shortness in order that through death and resurrection he might lift man to God's glory. He becomes one with man in his sinfulness in order that by the power of his life-giving Spirit he might remould man in God's righteousness. He becomes what Adam fell to by his disobedience in order that Adam might become what Christ was exalted to by his obedience." Christology in the Making, p. 113.

111. I am here arguing against Dunn's thesis that the Adam passages shifted from being interpreted as a Christ-ology of death and resurrection to a Christology of incarnation because of the influence of the history of religious school which proposed that a Gnostic redeemer myth provided the background to these texts. Christology in the Making, p. 128. Surely incarnational Christology can be viewed in other than purely ontic and mythical categories, and has the potential capacity to integrate an eschatological orientation and a proper understanding of Christ's death and resurrection.

112 This point is made by Larry Hurtado who argues that the Phil. 2: 5-11 passage, (in contrast to Käsemann's view that it makes no reference to the personality or actions of the earthly Jesus but describes a cosmic drama of salvation based on the Gnostic Urmensch-Saviour myth), bespeaks an ethical pattern to which Christians are called to be conformed. "Jesus as Lordly Example in Phil. 2:5-11," a so far unpublished essay (to be published in the Festschrift for F.W. Beare, ed. by J.C. Hurd and G.P. Richardson, forthcoming in 1982). "Here (Phil. 2:5-11) Jesus is certainly presented as the triumphant Lord who now bears cosmic authority, and whose humiliation and obedience was both unique in kind and soteriological in effect. But here also, Jesus' own action in 2:6-8 is described in language . . . that attributes to Jesus' action the character the readers were to exemplify in their own lives." Ibid., p. 18. This precludes a sharp discontinuity between the earthly Jesus and the risen Lord, and enables us to perceive the incarnational possibilities of the eschatologically-oriented Adam Christology. As Rahner states: "A piece of this world, real to the core, but occupied by the pure and sovereign power of the dispassionate freedom of Christ, is surrendered, in the total self-mastery which can be achieved by fallen man only in the act of death, to the disposition of God, in complete obedience and love. This is Easter, and the redemption of the world." "Dogmatic Questions on Easter," p. 128. This is also Adam Christology.

113. "Dogmatic Questions on Easter," p. 129.

114. Cf. Matt. 11:27-30; Jn. 1:1-18; 1Cor. 8:5-6; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-3.

115. Hengel, The Son of God, p. 69.

116. Cf. Job 28; Prov. 8: 22-31; Sir. 24; Bar. 3:9-4:4; Wisd. 6:12-11:1.

117. Dunn, Christology in the Making, p. 176.

118. Cf. Hengel, p. 72. Dunn asserts, "the thought is primarily of Christ as the eschatological embodiment of the wisdom of God, as the one through whom the creator God in all his fullness had revealed himself most clearly and definitively for man's salvation and creation's renewal", (p. 211).

119. Dunn claims that the three phrases: Spirit, Wisdom, the Word, "are simply variant ways of speaking of the creative, revelatory or redemptive act of God," i.e. they are "simply alternative ways of speaking about the effective power of God in his active relationship with his world and its inhabitants." (p. 219). Cf. Psa. 33:6; 147:18; Prov. 3: 19 where all these are used to describe Yahweh's creative power.

120. Commenting on the biblical understanding of pre-existence Hengel says: "As in the case of the relationship between a personified hypostasis and purely metaphorical language, the transition here from mere 'ideal' pre-existence (that is, to some extent only in the thought of God) to 'real' pre-existence is fluid." (p. 69). It is quite likely that this distinction would not even have been considered by the biblical writers and their immediate audience.

121. I disagree with Dunn (cf. pp. 239f.) in his argument that in the Logos Christology of John we have a deliberate transition from impersonal personification (emphasis on the will and pre-determined plan of God coming to actualization in Christ,) and only the former is pre-existent) to an actual pre-existent person (where the pre-existent Logos is seen as a person, i.e. Christ). Here Dunn appears to have succumbed to the false literalism he otherwise eschews. Why reify the metaphor or image at this point? Why must a separation of person and function occur in the Johannine Logos Christology when it is avoided elsewhere? It is here that Rahner's theology of the symbol and his ontological consciousness Christology provides a helpful corrective, for it provides the basis for a unity of function and person, soteriology and ontology which can

consistently elucidate theological (in this case Christ-
ological) images, no matter how ontic they appear, in a
non-mythological way.

122. One of the clearest Wisdom Christology state-
ments made by Rahner reads as follows: "The Incarnation of
the Logos (however much we must insist on the fact that is
is itself an historical, unique Event in an essentially
historical world) appears as the <u>ontologically</u> (not merely
'morally', an afterthought) unambiguous goal of the move-
ment of creation as a whole, in relation to which everything
prior is merely a preparation of the scene. It appears
as orientated from the very first to this point in which
God achieves once and for all both the greatest proximity
to and distance from what is other than he (while at the
same time giving it being); in that one day he objectifies
himself in an image of himself as radically as possible,
and is himself thereby precisely given with the utmost
truth; in that he himself makes most radically his own what
he has created, no longer the mere anhistorical founder of
an alien history but someone whose very own history is in
question. Here we must remember that the world is some-
thing in which everything is related to everything else,
and that consequently anyone who makes some portion of it
into his own history, takes for himself the world as a
whole for his personal environment. Consequently it is not
pure fantasy (though the attempt must be made with caution)
to conceive of the 'evolution' of the world <u>towards Christ</u>,
and to show how there is a gradual ascent which reaches a
peak in him." "Current Problems," p. 165. Indeed the
hermeneutical circle of creation and Christology informs
the whole of Rahner's concept of revelation.

123. cf. "Christology Today?," pp. 34f.; "Two Basic
Types of Christology," pp. 219f.; "Remarks on the Impor-
tance of the History of Jesus," <u>T.I.</u>, XIII, pp. 209f.

CHAPTER FIVE

1 The Crucified God, trans. R.A. Wilson and J. Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1974).

2 Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach, trans. J. Drury (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1978). Cf. "The Following of Jesus and Faith in Christ," The Myth/Truth of God Incarnate: The Tenth National Conference of Trinity Institute, ed. D.R. McDonald (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow Co., Inc., 1979), pp. 105-22.

3 Cf. "The Following of Jesus," pp. 106-107.

4 Christology at the Crossroads, pp. xv f.

5 "The Following of Jesus," p. 107.

6 Christology at the Crossroads, p. 36.

7 Sobrino distinguishes between the objective and subjective aspects of a starting point, and it is with the former that he is concerned here, i.e. "that aspect of the total and totalizing reality of Christ that will better enable us to find access to the total Christ" (ibid., p. 351). In terms of the subjective starting point, he would appear to be in agreement with Rahner (cf. above, ch. V note 13) when he asserts: "The subjective starting point of Christology is faith as a lived experience" (ibid.). Cf. Kasper's Christological starting point: ". . . the phenomenology of faith in Christ; faith as it is actually believed, lived, proclaimed and practised in the Christian churches" (op. cit., p. 18).

8 "Basically we are not going to study just another datum connected with the historical Jesus. Instead we are going to try to recover his totality in history in theological terms. We are going to try to recapture the history of Jesus in terms of that which is most profoundly his: his faith." Ibid., p. 85.

9 Ibid., p. 87.

10 Ibid., p. 207.

11 Sobrino calls this the "concretization of theodicy." Ibid., pp. 223f.

12 Ibid., p. 225.

13 Ibid., p. 226.

14 Ibid., p. 227.

15 Ibid., p. 236.

16 Cf. Ibid., ch. 9.

17 Ibid., p. 255.

18 For Sobrino's hypothetical reconstruction of the chronological historical process of theological reflection in which the New Testament writers arrived at their Christo-logical affirmations, cf. ibid., ch. 8.

19 Sobrino has this to say about the doxological state-ments of Christian dogma, which reflects a Rahnerian insight: "To reach the point of making a doxological statement, the one making it must experience a rupture, must take a leap; and this leap from a historical statement to doxological statement about God must take the form of an act of self-surrender. In every doxological statement we find the surrender of the finite "I" of the human person. We can no longer verify or maintain control over the content of our affirmation about God; we sacrifice our ego and allow ourselves to be controlled by the mystery of God." Ibid., p. 324.

20 Ibid., p. 340.

21 Sobrino concisely enumerates three essential com-ponents of the historical process of Jesus: 1) Jesus' abso-lute reference point is the kingdom of God--he sought to make it real in history through judgement on that which prevented it and by standing in solidarity with the oppressed; 2) Jesus' preference for and solidarity with the poor and oppressed who were the privileged recipients of his mission; and 3) Jesus' subjective faith relationship to the Father was shaped by his historical praxis toward the kingdom of God, and this inner and outer dialectic can-not be separated. "The Following of Jesus," pp. 115f.

22 Cf. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Critical Social Theory and Christology: Toward an Understanding of Atonement and Redemption as Emancipatory Solidarity," The Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, vol. 30 (1975), pp. 63-110.

23 Rahner has written an article by this name, "Church and World," S.M., 1, pp. 346-57.

24 Foundations, p. 344.

25 For a sketch of the major stages of development in Rahner's ecclesiology (up to 1976), cf. Leo J. O'Donovan,

ed., "A Changing Ecclesiology in a Changing Church: A Symposium on Development in the Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner," Theological Studies, 38 (1977), pp. 736-62.

26 "Karl Rahner--An Interview," America (Oct. 31, 1970), p. 356.

27 Ibid. Rahner goes on to say, "we have come to see much more clearly than before that a more radical spirituality today brings with it a more radical responsibility for the world, and vice-versa, that a more radical responsibility for the world must be accompanied by a more radical spirituality." Ibid., p. 357.

28 Ibid., p. 357.

29 Cf. Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1978).

30 Rahner, The Church and the Sacraments (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1963); "The Word and the Eucharist," T.I., IV, 10; "The Future of the Church and the Church of the Future," T.I., XX, 8; Foundations, pp. 411f.

31 "The New Image of the Church," T.I., X, 1, p. 14.

32 Hence the theology of the symbol applies to the church in a manner analogous to the "real-symbolic" unity of God and man in Jesus Christ (cf. above, ch. IV note 44). Rahner asserts: "Therefore fundamental sacrament means for us the one abiding symbolic presence, similar in structure to the Incarnation, of the eschatological redemptive grace of Christ; a presence in which sign and what is signified are united inseparably but without confusion, the grace of God in the "flesh" of an historical and tangible ecclesiastical embodiment . . . ." The Church and the Sacraments, p. 23.

33 Our representation of Rahner's eschatology is drawn primarily from the following sources: Foundations, ch. IX; "The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Assertions," T.I., IV, 13; "The Church and the Parousia of Christ," T.I., VI, 19; "Theological Problems Entailed in the Idea of the 'New Earth'," T.I., X, 14; "Immanent and Transcendent Consummation of the World," T.I., X, 15; "The Question of the Future," T.I., XII, 10.

34 Metz asserts: ". . . God revealed himself to Moses more as the power of the future than as being dwelling beyond all history and experience. God is not "above us" but "before us"." Theology of the World, trans. W. Glen-Doepel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), p. 88. This radical futurity of history precludes, in Metz's view, an

ontology of history or a metaphysics of being insofar as
the future cannot be grasped within the framework of what
exists, i.e. nature. Ibid., pp. 98-100. Cf. Pannenberg's
definition of God as the "power of the future" and his
development of eschatological theology in Theology and the
Kingdom of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969).
Cf. also Moltmann's discussion of "the future as the mode of
God's being" in "Theology as Eschatology," The Future of
Hope: Theology as Eschatology (New York: Herder and Herder,
1970), pp. 1-50 (esp. pp. 9f.).

35 Foundations, pp. 431-32. Rahner's view would appear
to agree on this point with Langdon Gilkey's criticisms of
eschatological theologies, which Gilkey calls a "temporal
version of a radical neo-orthodoxy." Gilkey asserts:
"Theological language has meaning--even if its reference
be to the future--only in relation to dimensions of present
experience." The problem of the meaning of history is not
resolved by moving God into the future, but "only by re-
thinking ontologically the way the God of the present acts
in relation to human freedom and to the possibilities of the
future, i.e., by an explicitly ontological doctrine of the
self-limitation in every present of the divine power in
relation to the freedom of the creature." Reaping the
Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History (New York:
Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 234-35.

36 "The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Assertions,"
T.I., IV, p. 326; cf. Foundations, pp. 444f.

37 Ibid., p. 333. "Eschatology is the view of the
future which man needs for the spiritual dimension of his
freedom and his faith. It derives from the situation in the
history of salvation brought about by the event of Christ,
which is the aetiological source of knowledge. It looks
forward to the definitive fulfilment of an existence already
in an eschatological situation." Ibid., p. 334.

38 Eschatology is therefore not something which is
added on to the world or leaves the world behind, but
rather presupposes that "precisely this 'world in its
worldliness,' which as such retains all its secularity,
nevertheless, still in itself and as such, at basis exhi-
bits a secret Christianity. The task of completing the
creation and the fulfilling of it appear as an intrinsic
element in the one total redemptive and divinising will of
God for a world in which his self-bestowal is achieved,
and this task and the fulfilling of it derive from this
totality their ultimate meaning and a concrete form. In
virtue of this, task and fulfilment alike, precisely in
the specific worldliness, are oriented towards their con-
summation." "The Theological Problems Entailed in the
Idea of the 'New Earth'," T.I., X, p. 271.

39 Cf. "The Man of Today and Religion," _T.I._, VI, 1; "Christianity and the 'New Man'," _T.I._, V, 7; "The Experiment with Man," _T.I._, IX, 13; "The Problem of Genetic Manipulation," _T.I._, IX, 14.

40 "The Experiment with Man," _T.I._, IX, pp. 208f.

41 "So long as mankind exists with its vocation to salvation, history (including the history of man taking himself in his own hands) remains a one-way street. Man's self-manipulation must not be thought of according to the model of a limited laboratory experiment where, for the most part, isolated processes can be performed and reversed at will." _Ibid._, p. 219.

42 Anyone who criticizes Rahner for propounding an exclusively individualistic as opposed to a social theology simply has not read him carefully. Not only does he repeatedly affirm that contemporary man "is the man of a history unified the world over, the man of a global space for life and hence the man of a world in which everyone is dependent upon absolutely everyone else. . . . The 'field' which determines the fate of the individual today is, not merely physically but also historically, the whole earth." "Christianity and the 'New Man'," _T.I._, V, p. 136. Rahner also asserts: "The theologian is aware that, since the necessary setting for the individual's salvation is the church as the unity of mankind and its history, _theology must always be 'political' theology_. He is aware that he may only look at the salvation of an individual as one which is not achieved fully except within the absolute future of the whole of mankind, as the ultimate result of the love of all the others in the absoluteness of God." "Christian Humanism," _T.I._, IX, 12, p. 189. "God's promise of himself to man is addressed not only to each individual in the freedom of his own unique personhood. From its very origins this promise is at the same time aimed at mankind as a unity, a unity which is always historically and socially constituted. . . . As the subject to whom God's grace-bestowed will to save is addressed, the individual is always aimed at as the member of a community of mankind, and always and necessarily this also has a social manifestation. . . . As a reality which is constantly also achieving visible form at the social level, it is quite impossible for salvation not to be concerned with the social realities within which it has to be realized and made manifest in history." "The Function of the Church as A Critic of Society," _T.I._, XII, p. 238.

43 Cf. "The Theology of Power," _T.I._, IV, 17.

44 This dynamic historical relationship between freedom and manipulation is described by Rahner in _Meditations_

on Freedon and the Spirit (New York: Seabury Press, 1978).
This theology of history is similar to Langdon Gilkey's
much more sonorous articulation of the ontological relations
of destiny, freedom, fate and power. Cf. Reaping the
Whirlwind.

45 Cf. "The Theology of Power," T.I., IV, pp. 402-409.
Rahner's description of the use of power and its inherent
limitations, as well as the eschatological ideal that it be
redemptively absorbed by love, is similar to the Christian
realism of Reinhold Niebuhr. Indeed Rahner uses the term
"Christian realism" in a very Niebuhrian-sounding passage:
". . . Christian realism soberly recognizes the existence
of power and therefore of conflict as one side of human
living. . . . It is . . . against any ideological or any
practical monopolization of this power, but at the same time
it also recognizes that it is inevitable that there shall
be something in the nature of conflict. . . . Nevertheless
the Christian has the most solemn duty and task, . . . of
restraining this inevitable conflict, of inculcating humani-
ty. . . . Precisely the struggle against these forms of war,
forms which are still less than human, must be conducted
precisely in the light of the anti-ideological realism of
the Christian with its capacity for sober criticism."
"The Peace of God and the Peace of the World," T.I., X,
19, pp. 380-82.

46 Rahner delineates three reasons why the future
remains open: 1) The achievement of a planned future pro-
ceeds from prior conditions in the world whose full signifi-
cance cannot be perceived, i.e. comprehensive knowledge
(omniscience) is impossible. 2) Related to this is the fact
that the innumerable possibilities open to man's creative
freedom to shape the future cannot be measured in advance--
the intricate specificity of future development is
unknowable. 3) Human freedom, the phenomenon of genuine
personal historicity, precludes any comprehensive rational
projection for the future. "The Question of the Future,"
T.I., XII, 10, pp. 190-98. Consequently Christians are
guardians of the docta ignorantia futuri, the provision-
ality of the future.

47 Cf. "Ideology and Christianity," T.I., VI, 4;
"Marxist Utopia and the Christian Future of Man," T.I.,
VI, 5; "Christianity and the 'New Man'," T.I., V, 7.

48 "The Church's Responsibility for the Freedom of the
Individual," T.I., XX, 4, p. 55. Thus, "The Church's gos-
pel of Christian realism is and remains the primary ser-
vice that Christianity performs for the freedom of the
individual and society." Ibid., p. 56.

49 "Practical Theology within the Totality of Theological Disciplines," <u>T.I.</u>, IX, 6, p. 102.

50 "The Church and the Parousia of Christ," <u>T.I.</u>, VI, 19, p. 297. "Therefore the Church . . . is living always on the proclamation of her own provisional status and of her historically advancing elimination in the coming kingdom of God towards which she is expectantly travelling as a pilgrim. . . . The essential nature of the Church consists in her pilgrimmage towards the promised future." <u>Ibid.</u>, p.298.

51 Cf. "The Function of the Church as a Critic of Society," <u>T.I.</u>, XII, 13.

52 Cf. "Theological Reflections on the Problem of Secularization," <u>T.I.</u>, X, 17; "Church and World," <u>S.M.</u>, 1, pp. 349-50.

53 <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 330f.

54 Cf. "The Church's Commission to Bring Salvation and the Humanization of the World," <u>T.I.</u>, XIV, 18, pp. 310f.; "Church and World," <u>S.M.</u>, 1, pp. 351f.

55 Cf. <u>Ibid.</u>; "Unity of the Church--Unity of Mankind," <u>T.I.</u>, XX, 12; "The Inexhaustible Transcendence of God and our Concern for the Future," <u>T.I.</u>, XX, 13; "Love of Neighbor and the Love of God," <u>T.I.</u>, VI, 16.

56 "On the Theology of Revolution," <u>T.I.</u>, XIV, p. 317. Cf. <u>Meditations on Freedom and the Spirit</u>, pp. 46f.

57 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 318.

58 Cf. Gustavo Gutierrez's call for a "permanent cultural revolution," <u>A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation</u>, trans. C. Inda & J. Eagleson (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 32.

59 Rahner asserts that revolution, when institutionalized, becomes evolution which is the general (and favored) process of social change, although the borders between evolution and revolution are fluid. Cf. "The Function of the Church," <u>T.I.</u>, XII, pp. 246f.; "On the Theology of Revolution," <u>T.I.</u>, XIV, pp. 320f.; <u>Meditations on Freedom and the Spirit</u>, pp. 52f.

60 "On the Theology of Revolution," <u>T.I.</u>, XIV, p. 327. "The Church can and must bring home to modern man . . . his responsibility for the world, the ultimate depths of this responsibility, with its implications of eternal salvation or perdition for man. . . . The Church can repeatedly stir up groups from among the Christians

belonging to her and organize them in the service of this humanization of the world. . . . In her official life the Church can even go on to give help to secular institutions . . . when the immediate goals of these are unequivocally designed to serve the dignity and freedom of man. . . . The Church as an official Church, however, is not the immediate or proper subject for realizing in the concrete the humanization of the world. She must be ready to declare that she is not qualified in this respect, yet at the same time she must live by and represent respect for the freedom and dignity of man in an exemplary manner in her own life in ways that are appropriate to our times." "The Church's Commission," T.I., XIV, pp. 311-12.

61 The following section on the new self-understanding of the church is drawn primarily from: Concern for the Church, T.I., XX; "Perspectives for the Future of the Church," T.I., XII, 11; "Ecumenical Theology in the Future," T.I., XIV, 15; "Transformation in the Church and Secular Society," T.I., XVII, 14; "Third Church?" T.I., XVII, 17; The Shape of the Church to Come, trans. E. Quinn (New York: Seabury Press, 1972).

62 "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," T.I., XX, 9, p. 125. ". . . the Church must be sustained . . . by a readiness to believe freely on the part of its members at the base, on the part of the basic communities; the latter will not be content simply to be cared for by an institutional Church, but will themselves on their own responsibility take an active part in forming the Church. . . . At the same time, not a few things which are taken for granted in our own country as distinct from many other Churches in other countries will not continue to be so regarded, but will either disappear or demand for their maintainance a new and resolute socio-political commitment and also readiness for sacrifice. . . ." "The Future of the Church," T.I., XX, p. 110. Cf. The Shape of the Church to Come, pp. 23-24.

63 "If the Church is indeed the sacrament of salvation for a world where in fact most people are saved without the Church's institutionalized means . . . then to gain new churchgoing Christians means not so much saving those who would otherwise be lost, but acquiring witnesses as signs making clear for all the grace of God effective throughout the world." The Shape of the Church to Come, pp. 61-62. Such a missionary church would therefore be "a declericalized, serving, caring Church, preaching morality without moralizing, being open to secular society, boldly giving concrete directives for public life without always declaring these to be permanently valid dogma or part of the unchanging content of natural law, socially critical without seeking to dictate to secular society or

restrict its autonomy." "Structural Change," T.I., XX, p. 126. In Part Two of The Shape of the Church to Come, each of these characteristics is treated in detail under separate chapter headings (chs. 3-7), with an additional characteristic (ch. 8), namely a genuine living spirituality in which the mysterious presence of God is acknowledged in unconditional surrender and hope, leading to ultimate freedom and redemptive responsibility. "The spirituality of the future will be a spirituality of the Sermon on the Mount and of the evangelical counsels, continually involved in renewing its protest against the idols of wealth, pleasure and power. The spirituality of the future will be a spirituality of hope, awaiting an absolute future, enabling man to be grimly realistic and continually to break down the illusion that he could himself, by his own power and shrewdness, produce in this world . . . the eternal kingdom of truth and freedom. The spirituality will always preserve the memory of the past history of piety . . . ." "The Spirituality of the Church of the Future," T.I., XX, 11, pp. 145-46.

64 The Shape of the Church to Come, pp. 109f.

65 Ibid., pp. 120f.

66 On Rahner's concept of ecumenicity, cf. "Ecumenical Theology in the Future," T.I., XIV, 15; "Third Church?" T.I., XVII, 17; The Shape of the Church to Come, pp. 102f.

67 "Third Church?" T.I., XVII, p. 223.

68 "Perspectives for the Future of the Church," T.I., XII, 11, p. 214.

69 "Transformations in the Church and Secular Society," T.I., XVII, 17; "The Church's Responsibility for the Freedom of the Individual," T.I., XX, 4, pp. 56f.

70 "The Church's Responsibility," T.I., XX, P. 63.

71 Rahner asserts: "To win one new man of tomorrow for the faith is more important for the Church than to keep in the faith two men of yesterday. . . . we can have the courage in priciple--without directly intending it--to be ready to lose that person who would no longer belong to the Church tomorrow: for tomorrow anyway his mentality and social situation will no longer sustain his traditionally constituted faith." The Shape of the Church to Come, pp. 50-51.

72 "The other person, who is loved, is the sacrament in which we receive God. But this also means essentially that Christian hope is brought to its own nature and its

own fullness by an <u>intramundane</u> hope." "Theological Justification of the Church's Development Work," <u>T.I.</u>, XX, 5. p. 71. Cf. note 52 above.

73 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 70.

74 Cf. <u>The Shape of the Church to Come</u>, pp. 123-32.

75 Cf. "Theological Justification," <u>T.I.</u>, XX, pp. 71f.

76 "Faith resides in the speculative intellect as evidenced by its object. But since this object, which is the First Truth, is the end of all our desires and actions . . . it follows that faith worketh by charity just as <u>the</u> <u>speculative intellect becomes practical by extension</u> (<u>De</u> <u>Anima</u> iii. 10)." <u>S.T.</u>, II-II, 4, 2.

77 ". . . it is by human virtue that human acts are rendered good; hence any habit that is always the principle of a good act, may be called a human virtue. Such habit is living faith." <u>S.T.</u>, II-II, 4, 5.

78 "Since, however, human knowledge begins with the outside of things as it were, it is evident that the stronger the light of the understanding, the further can it penetrate into the heart of things." <u>S.T.</u>, II-II, 8, 1.

79 The charity by which we love God and our neighbor is a participation of divine charity (<u>S.T.</u>, II-II, 23, 2) so that St. Thomas affirms the unity of love of God and love of neighbor: "Now the aspect under which our neighbor is to be loved, is God, since what we ought to love in our neighbor is that he may be in God. Hence it is clear that it is specifically the same act whereby we love God, and whereby we love our neighbor. Consequently the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor." <u>S.T.</u>, II-II, 25, 1.

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