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A theology rooted in the gospel will also be imbued with the spirit of love. We are obliged always to speak the truth in love. As Thomas Aquinas wisely admonished, 'We must love them both, those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject. For both have labored in the search for truth, and both have helped us in finding it.'[53]

Finally, evangelical theology will be noted for its daring. It will seek to witness to the truth of God with boldness and resolution, undeterred by pressures from the world. Indeed, holy boldness can be said to be the salient mark of great theology. Yet this boldness must be informed by wisdom, love and humility.

Theology at its best will be a venture of daring love born out of fidelity to the Great Commission to share the gospel with all peoples. It will not try to impose its claims or impress the world with its superior wisdom. It will seek only to serve the incarnate Word of God, its Lord and Master, by announcing the coming of his kingdom with its promise of liberation and transformation for the world.

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Revisioning the Theological Task

Stanley J. Grenz

Every Christian is a theologian. Whether consciously or unconsciously, each person of faith embraces a belief system. And each believer, whether deliberately or merely implicitly, reflects on the content of these beliefs and their significance for Christian life. The close connection between being a Christian and theological reflection arises from the New Testament itself. The biblical documents invite the faith community to think through their beliefs in order to understand why these are a part of personal and corporate commitment (e.g., Mt. 22:37; 2 Cor. 10:5; 1 Pet. 3:15). Theology seeks to facilitate this conscious reflection on faith. Therefore, the enterprise is to be neither feared nor despised, but rather welcomed, because of its important function within the life of discipleship.

We have asserted that the ethos of evangelicalism is a shared experience understood in terms of shared categories, a piety cradled in a theology. But what theology can assist us as evangelicals in our attempt to reflect on the faith we share?

Despite the orientation toward spirituality characteristic of the movement as a whole, contemporary evangelical thinkers generally engage in the theological task with eyes

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[53] 53. Cited in *The Catholic Worker* 46, no. 6 (July–Aug. 1980):8.

focused on epistemology or the cognitive dimension of faith, rather than toward our shared piety. Evangelical theology tends to move from the conviction that there is a deposit of cognitive revelation given once and for all in the Bible. In fact, evangelical theologians sometimes locate the genius of the movement in the combination of a material and a formal principle.[1] The material principle or content of evangelicalism encompasses the basic doctrines of the Bible, whereas the formative principle is loyalty to the Bible as the completely true and trustworthy, final and authoritative source of all doctrine. As a result, many evangelicals view the task of theology primarily as systematizing and articulating the body of doctrine they assume to preexist implicitly or explicitly in Scripture.

Klaus Bockmuehl speaks for evangelical theologians in general in declaring that the task of systematic theology 'is to produce a summary of Christian doctrine, an ordered summary or synopsis of the themes of teaching in Holy Scripture. We are to collect the different, dispersed propositions on essential themes or topics of the OT and the NT and put them together in an order that fits the subject-matter in hand'.[2]

Although it rightly seeks to uphold the authority of the Bible, this approach cannot serve as a catalyst for a revisioned evangelical theology. To understand this assertion, we must begin historically. We must first look at the development of theology in general and the modern evangelical propositionalism in particular. Only then can we move on to reformulate the task of an adequate evangelical theology.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGY

The word *theology* does not appear in the biblical documents. Rather, the term originates from ancient Greece. The word is a compilation from two other Greek terms, *theos* (God) and *logos* (word, teaching, study), and therefore etymologically *theology* means 'the teaching concerning, or the study of, God'. The Greeks used the term to refer to the sayings of the philosophers and poets concerning divine matters, generally viewed within the framework of knowledge of humanity and nature.[3]

The Greek theological task was imported into Christian tradition early, perhaps as early as Paul's encounter with the philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:16–31), but at least by the time of the second-century Christian apologists. As late as the early Middle Ages the Greek understanding of the enterprise remained influential among Christian thinkers. They understood *theology* generally as referring to the doctrine of God, which they regarded as one topic within the broader study of dogmatics or sacred doctrine (*sacra doctrina*).[4]

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[1] 1. E.g., the statement produced by the 1989 consultation on Evangelical Affirmations cosponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School as published in *Evangelical Affirmations*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F.H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), pp. 37–38. See also Kenneth S. Kantzer, 'Unity and Diversity in Evangelical Faith', in *The Evangelicals*, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 59, 73.

[2] 2. Klaus Bockmuehl, 'The Task of Systematic Theology', in *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 4.

[3] 3. For this latter point, see Frank Whaling, 'The Development of the Word "Theology" ', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981):292–93.

[4] 4. Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 89.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, *theology* underwent a change in meaning—from the discourse on God to the rational explication of revelation.[5] With the rise of the universities, the enterprise was destined to become an academic as well as an ecclesiastical discipline.[6] And the term came to refer to a single, unified 'science' focusing on knowledge of God and having the primary character of wisdom.[7]

In eighteenth-century Germany the understanding of theology shifted again. Christian thinkers replaced the concept of a unified, practical science with the multiplicity of the theological sciences.[8] Thereby they transformed *theology* into an all-inclusive word referring to the various aspects of the study of the Bible and the church. At the same time, Christians were growing increasingly aware that the world contained a number of separate religious traditions, each with its own understanding of the divine reality. Consequently, the term came to refer to the account of God in the various religions.[9]

Today Christians generally use *theology* in a slightly narrower manner, interchangeable with what earlier thinkers termed *dogmatics*. In North America, however, this word has been replaced by 'systematic theology', or more recently, 'constructive' or 'doctrinal theology'.

Whatever the term used, the theological task encompasses the intellectual reflection on faith. Theology explores a specific religious belief system itself (doctrine). But it also focuses on the nature of believing and the integration of commitment with personal and community life. Christian theology, therefore, seeks to delineate a coherent presentation of the themes of Christian faith, which traditionally include God, human existence and the created universe, the identity of Jesus as the Christ and the salvation he brought, the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's work in the world, the church as the community expression of Christian faith, and the consummation of God's programme for creation.

In the broad sense, then, we may define systematic theology as the intellectual reflection on the act, and the attempt to articulate the content, of Christian faith, including its expression in beliefs, practices and institutions.

The systematic-theological task did not arise in a vacuum. Rather, Christian theology is the product of the presence in the church of three perceived needs—polemics, catechetics and biblical summarization.[10] These factors were already visible in the early centuries of the Christian era, and in some form they continue to command attention in the church today.

The theological task grows out of the need in the church to define the Christian belief system. This intention was prominent in the early Christian centuries, when the church was faced with doctrinal controversies. Theological formulations constituted one significant aspect in the struggle to differentiate orthodoxy from heterodox views (heresy). The polemical factor was again of special importance during the Reformation era. In the face of differences over questions of faith, the various church bodies marked

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[5] 5. Yves M.J. Congar, *A History of Theology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), p. 33. See also G.R. Evans, *The Beginnings of Theology as an Academic Discipline* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

[6] 6. Whaling, 'The Development of the Word "Theology" ', p. 300.

[7] 7. Edward Farley, *Theologia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), pp. 77, 81.

[8] 8. Ibid., pp. 49, 65, 77.

[9] 9. Whaling, 'The Development of the Word "Theology" ', pp. 305–6.

[10] 10. See Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 93–96. Congar cites the church's need to speak to the pagan culture and the individual believer's need to reflect on faith in the pagan context. Congar, *A History of Theology*, pp. 39–40.

out their theological positions in order to define their own particular understanding of Christianity. In the modern era, the context of polemics has shifted, as Christians now sense the need to delineate the nature of their faith in the midst of many competing worldviews and religions.

The Christian theological enterprise is an outworking of the need to offer instruction to the people of God. Teaching the faith is especially important in the case of new converts, who must be instructed in the fundamentals of Christianity in order to become mature believers. To facilitate the task of teaching the many converts coming from pagan backgrounds, second-century Christian leaders developed church catechisms, which were by necessity theological in orientation. Although styles have changed, the church has continued to use theology in the fulfilling of its pedagogical mandate.

Christians have always desired to bring the basic themes and teachings of the Bible into summary form. In fact, this summarizing tendency is found already in the writings of the Bible. In the Old Testament era the Hebrew people summarized the understanding of the divine nature that arose out of their experience of God (e.g., Deut. 6:4–5; 26:5–9). The New Testament likewise contains summary statements concerning topics such as the nature of salvation and the person of Christ (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:3–8; Phil. 2:6–11; 1 Tim. 3:16). Traditionally, systematic theology has sought to bring together in systematic fashion the major biblical themes of God's gracious salvation.

EVANGELICAL PROPOSITIONALISM

As this quick survey suggests, theology as the summarization of biblical doctrine sports an impeccable pedigree within theological history. Yet the specific expression of this task among evangelicals is a relatively recent development. Many evangelical theologians elevate biblical summarization, seeing it as their central, if not sole, task, and coupling the focus on this endeavour with modern concepts of the nature of science.

Conservative theologians, whether Calvinist, dispensational, Wesleyan or Arminian, fall into step with the assumption that theology is 'the science of God' based on the Bible. Just as the natural world is amenable to the scientist's probings, they argue, so also the teaching of Scripture is objectively understandable. Systematic theology organizes the 'facts' of Scripture, just as the natural sciences systematize the facts of nature. Consequently, the correct theology is a crystallization of biblical truth into a set of universally true and applicable propositions.[11]

Because it champions scientific thinking, the empirical approach and common sense, George Marsden classifies evangelical theology as 'early modern'.[12] This characterization is surely correct. The understanding of truth and of the task of the theological discipline that characterizes much of contemporary evangelicalism predates the rise of the mid-twentieth-century coalition, having been mediated to us by the influence of the Princeton theology of the nineteenth century on the fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth. The Princeton theology had itself accepted the legacy of the older Protestant scholasticism, especially in its Reformed variety.

A theologian who is often connected with Reformed scholasticism and who through his link to the Princeton thinkers has exercised great influence on evangelicalism is

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[11] 11. This feature of evangelical theology is noted by David F. Wells, 'An American Evangelical Theology: The Painful Transition from Theoria to Praxis', in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ed. George M. Marsden (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 86.

[12] 12. George M. Marsden, 'Evangelical, History and Modernity', in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, p. 98.

Francis Turretin (1623–87). According to Turretin, the purpose of theology is to teach savingly of God.[13] To this salvific end, however, natural revelation is insufficient. Rather than being the compilation of truth disclosed in creation and discovered by reason, for Turretin theology is primarily the systematization of the teachings of Scripture,[14] and the object of theology is God as he has revealed himself in his Word.[15] Turretin's theology was likewise oriented toward propositional truth. As Richard Muller concludes, the scholasticism of the seventeenth-century Reformed thinker was an outworking of 'the desire to forge a theological orthodoxy, a system of "right-doctrine" '.[16] Turretin's legacy lies in this basic approach to theology with which his later disciples were imbued.

The approach to the task of theology set forth by Turretin was perfected by the nineteenth-century Princeton theologians. These thinkers accepted the responsibility for articulating Calvinist orthodoxy, given their perception that the older theology had been rendered 'so harmless that it was no longer worth believing'.[17]

Although it included a pietistic strand, nineteenth-century Presbyterianism clearly emphasized biblical doctrine and the systematizing approach to the Bible influenced by the scientific paradigm of the day. Hence Charles Hodge could offer this typical comparison between science and theology:

> If natural science be concerned with the facts and laws of nature, theology is concerned with facts and principles of the Bible. If the object of the one be to arrange and systematize the facts of the external world, and to ascertain the laws by which they are determined; the object of the other is to systematize the facts of the Bible, and ascertain the principles or general truths which those facts provide.[18]

In their doctrinal orientation the Princeton theologians were fiercely loyal to the Westminster Confession, which they believed represented the Bible's own system as closely as was humanly possible.

In keeping with the emphasis on biblical doctrine, the Princeton theology elevated the propositional and unchanging nature of truth. In the characterization of Marsden, 'Truth was a stable entity, not historically relative, best expressed in written language that, at least potentially, would convey one message in all times and places'.[19] Hence, rather than anchoring theology in a cultural context, the Princeton thinkers sought to emancipate it from such a context, and thereby to produce a statement of truth that would be timeless and culture-free.[20] It is within this context that we are to understand Hodge's claim that during his tenure at Princeton no new idea had emerged.[21] The Princeton Presbyterians

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[13] 13. Richard A. Muller, 'Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic: Francis Turretin on the Object and Principles of Theology', *Church History*, 55 (June 1986):204.

[14] 14. Franciscus Turrettinus, *Institutio theologiae elencticae* (Geneva, 1677–85; rpt. Edinburgh, 1847), 1. 2. 6–7, as cited by Muller, 'Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic', p. 204.

[15] 15. Turrettinus, *Institutio* 1. 5. 4; cited in Muller, 'Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic', p. 200.

[16] 16. Muller, 'Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic', p. 205.

[17] 17. Wells, 'An American Evangelical Theology', p. 85.

[18] 18. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1952), 1:18.

[19] 19. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 110.

[20] 20. Wells, 'An American Evangelical Theology', p. 85.

[21] 21. Charles Hodge, *Princeton Sermons* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. xv.

were intent on discovering and bequeathing to the church the timeless doctrinal theology found within the Bible.

The heirs of Turretin and the Princeton theologians in the evangelical tradition have generally followed the lead of their mentors in elevating biblical systematization and emphasizing the propositional nature of theological statements. Among the proponents of this biblically focused, evangelical propositionalism none has been more untiring than Carl F.H. Henry, hailed as the most prominent evangelical theologian of the second half of the twentieth century. Even without writing a systematic theology, Henry has left his mark on evangelicalism by providing the theoretical foundations for the propositionalist understanding of the theological enterprise.

One central passion of Henry's life has been the attempt to set forth the foundations for a truly valid theology. Only a return to the basic evangelical perspective can solve the current difficulty in theology, he believes. And in his understanding this basic evangelical perspective asserts that the foundation for theology can be nothing other than the revelation of God as deposited in the Scriptures.[22] Early in his tenure as founding editor of *Christianity Today*, Henry lamented 'the compromise of the authority of the Bible' noticeable in mainstream Protestantism and the 'surrender of scriptural perspectives to modern critical speculations' which have led to 'doubts over historical and propositional revelation, plenary inspiration, and verbal inerrancy'.[23] As a result, Henry devoted himself to the defence of these dimensions of the conservative doctrine of Scripture.

The emphasis on revelation is not uniquely his, of course. But what sets Henry's brand of evangelicalism apart from other twentieth-century articulators is his understanding of the nature of revelation. According to Henry, revelation means that God has both acted in history and spoken to humankind. God's speaking is crucial to God's acting, he argues, for it provides the rationale and meaning of the divine historical acts.[24] Through God's interpretation God's activity gains meaning for us.[25] In keeping with this emphasis, Henry defines revelation as 'that activity of the supernatural God whereby he communicates information essential for man's present and future destiny. In revelation God, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, shares his mind; he communicates not only the truth about himself and his intentions, but also that concerning man's present plight and future prospects'.[26]

For Henry, revelation's spoken nature means that in an important way it is rational and hence propositional. In his magnum opus, the six-volume *God, Revelation and Authority*, he goes to great lengths to develop the thesis that 'God's revelation is rational communication conveyed in intelligible ideas and meaningful words, that is, in conceptual-verbal form'.[27] He agrees with the modern emphasis on the functional, dynamic and teleological dimensions of revelation, but argues that these cannot be separated from the propositional. For him, the reality that God has spoken means that the

[22] 22. For an early statement of this theme, see Carl F.H. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma: An Analysis of the Current Impasse in Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1949), p. 225.

[23] 23. Carl F.H. Henry, *Frontiers in Modern Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), pp. 134–35.

[24] 24. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma*, pp. 95–96.

[25] 25. Ibid., p. 217.

[26] 26. Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976), 3:457.

[27] 27. Ibid., 3:248–487.

intellect plays an integral role in the revelatory process.[28] Revelation, in other words, is objective,[29] conceptual,[30] intelligible and coherent.[31] Therefore Christianity, rather than being an escape from rationality, is oriented toward the intellect.[32]

Lying behind the rational character of the Christian faith Henry finds 'the rational living God'[33] who 'addresses man in his Word'.[34] The Christian revelation, therefore, is 'rationally consistent and compelling', for 'rationality has its very basis in the nature of the Living God'.[35] The concepts of revelation, reason and Scripture coalesce in Henry's basic epistemological axiom:

> Divine revelation is the source of all truth, the truth of Christianity included; reason is the instrument for recognizing it; Scripture is its verifying principle; logical consistency is a negative test for truth and coherence a subordinate test. The task of Christian theology is to exhibit the content of biblical revelation as an orderly whole.[36]

The emphasis on the propositional dimension of revelation so prominent in Henry's thought finds its supplement in his anthropology. In keeping with the rationalist tradition in theology, Henry elevates reason to the status of being the foundational dimension of the human person—a view, he argues, that was universally held prior to the modern era.[37] In fact, he finds in the biblical concept of the image of God the explanation for the phenomenon of divine revelation.[38] Despite the Fall, this divine image (which Henry views as including a certain knowledge of God, rational competence and ethical accountability) was present in some measure in every human being.[39]

Although acknowledging the presence of the divine image in everyone and the doctrinal importance of general revelation,[40] Henry argues that theology can be based only on the self-disclosure of God found in the Bible. In this way, he sets himself apart from evangelical 'evidentialists', those apologists who seek to ground Christian faith on arguments from reason and empirical evidence. Henry follows the 'presuppositionalist'

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[28] 28. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma*, p. 97.

[29] 29. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 4:426.

[30] 30. Ibid., 3:173.

[31] 31. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma*, p. 99.

[32] 32. Carl F.H. Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1946), p. 213.

[33] 33. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:244.

[34] 34. Ibid., 1:199.

[35] 35. Carl F.H. Henry, 'The Fortunes of Theology, Part 3', *Christianity Today* 16 (June 9, 1972):30 [874].

[36] 36. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:215.

[37] 37. Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, p. 247.

[38] 38. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:394.

[39] 39. Ibid., 1:405; 2:136.

[40] 40. Ibid., 2:83–85.

approach,[41] basing all theology solely on the presupposition of the truthfulness of the Bible,[42] which he understands as presenting the truth of God in propositional form.

All evangelicals owe a debt of gratitude to Carl Henry. His erudition as a defender of biblical authority in the modern world is unquestioned. His mammoth *God, Revelation and Authority* has set both a standard and an agenda for younger evangelical theologians. Above all, his restatement of the classical concordance model of theology may be lauded and debated long after his departure from the theological scene.

Despite its uncontestable importance to evangelicalism, the 'concordance' model of systematic theology implicit in Turretin, propounded by Hodge and developed into evangelical propositionalism by thinkers such as Henry has not been without its detractors. In one sense, the entire thrust of modern theology since Schleiermacher has sought to provide a viable alternative to the tradition out of which propositionalism developed—the focus on authoritatively communicated truths— without opting for its Enlightenment alternative, which elevated the quest for truths gained through the speculative reason.[43]

More devastating than the implicit critique levelled by the developing liberal tradition, however, was that of twentieth-century neo-orthodoxy. The repeated outcry of neo-orthodox thinkers has been that revelation does not disclose supernatural knowledge—a body of propositions about God. Rather, in revelation, God himself encounters the human person.[44]

Evangelical theologians have rightly responded to the critique of neo-orthodoxy by refusing to acknowledge the disjunction between propositional and personal revelation.[45] Revelation, they argue, is both. While acknowledging that neo-orthodoxy is correct in asserting that what God primarily does is reveal himself, evangelicals add that God does so at least in part by telling us something about himself. And this *something* takes the form of propositions.

In spite of helpful responses such as these, the challenges posed by non-evangelical critics have led certain evangelical thinkers in recent years to grow uneasy with the older view.

Some voices within the movement have called for only minor refinements. Ronald Nash, for example, advocates a mere cosmetic, terminological change. Noting that the label 'propositional revelation' was probably not coined by evangelicals, he finds no 'sentimental reason' for continuing to use it. 'Instead of an alliterative formula', he writes, 'evangelicals should simply insist that some revelatory acts have a cognitive or informational character, and that this revealed truth is inscripturated in the several different literary forms found in the Bible'.[46]

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[41] 41. For a lengthier discussion of this label and its significance in Henry's thought, see Bob E. Patterson, *Carl F.H. Henry* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), pp. 58–83.

[42] 42. Henry lays down the thesis that the Bible is the sole foundation for theology in *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:181–409.

[43] 43. See, for example, the characterization of John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 12.

[44] 44. Ibid., pp. 27–40.

[45] 45. See, for example, Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), 1:196.

[46] 46. Ronald H. Nash, 'Truth by Any Other Name', *Christianity Today* 22 (October 7, 1977):23.

More germane is the critique articulated by John Jefferson Davis. He reflects the opinion of many when he faults the older evangelical approach for not taking 'adequate account of the social context of the theological task and the historicity of all theological reflection'. Davis claims that this approach 'tends to promote a repetition of traditional formulations of biblical doctrine, rather than appropriate recontextualizations of the doctrines in response to changing cultural and historical conditions'.[47]

In keeping with this concern, an entire cadre of evangelical theologians are now urging each other to contextualize their theology.[48] This is evident, for example, in Millard Erickson's definition of theology as 'that discipline which strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily upon the Scriptures, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in a contemporary idiom, and related to issues of life'.[49] Similarly, Richard J. Gehman advocates a contextualizing theology, which he defines as that dynamic process whereby the people of God living in community and interacting with believers throughout time and space, under the illuminating guidance of the Holy Spirit, proclaim in their own language and thought-forms the Word that God has spoken to them in their context through the study of Scripture.[50]

Other evangelicals, however, have not been satisfied that either contextualization or a mere adjustment in terminology is sufficient. They are convinced that more radical measures are needed if the evangelical theological experiment is to be salvaged. Clark Pinnock, for example, rejects as inflexible and undynamic the 'propositional theology that sees its function as imposing systematic rationality on everything it encounters'.[51] Taking his cue from the contemporary narrative outlook, he chides academic theology for looking for truth in doctrine rather than in the biblical story. Viewing revelation as primarily narrative, Pinnock sees the task of theology as expounding the story and explicating its meanings. Theology, then, is a secondary language whose propositions 'live off the power of the primary story'.[52]

The call to move beyond mere contextualization, as helpful and necessary as this endeavour may be, is surely correct. Despite good intentions, evangelical contextualizers all too easily can remain trapped in a view of propositional revelation that simply equates the divine self-disclosure with the Bible and that propounds an understanding of how the Bible in its canonical form came into existence that is no longer viable. These theologians are likewise at risk of merely continuing the older enterprise of biblical summarization, with only a slight nod to the necessity of rephrasing theological propositions in contemporary language.

Despite his progressive call for contextualization, Erickson occasionally displays this conservative tendency. For example, after bemoaning the neo-orthodox fixation on personal revelation, he gives indication that he himself has not broken out of the fixation on timeless, universal propositions so characteristic of the older propositionalism. He writes, 'If revelation includes propositional truths, then it is of such a nature that it can be

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[47] 47. John Jefferson Davis, *Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 67.

[48] 48. See, for example, ibid., pp. 60–72.

[49] 49. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1:21.

[50] 50. Richard J. Gehman, 'Guidelines in Contextualization', *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 2, no. 1 (1983):27.

[51] 51. Clark H. Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), p. 186.

[52] 52. Ibid., pp. 183–84.

preserved. It can be written down or *inscripturated*'.[53] From this declaration he then moves to delineate the traditional doctrine of inspiration.

The shift to narrative, while not providing the entire answer, does mark a helpful beginning point. We must view theology in terms of its proper context within the narrative of God's action in history. This means that the theological task can be properly pursued only 'from within'—that is, only from the vantage point of the faith community in which the theologian stands.

THEOLOGY, FAITH AND THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Despite its shortcomings, evangelical propositionalism encapsulates a fundamental insight. Our faith is tied to the truth content of a divine revelation that has been objectively disclosed. God has communicated truth —himself—to us.

The difficulty with evangelical propositionalism, therefore, is not its acknowledgment of a cognitive dimension of revelation and consequently of the statements of theology. Indeed, the doctrines explored by the theologian are surely more than 'noninformative and nondiscursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientation', to employ George Lindbeck's description of the 'experiential-expressive' dimension of religion.[54]

Instead, the problem with evangelical propositionalism is its often underdeveloped understanding of how the cognitive dimension functions within the larger whole of revelation. Therefore evangelical theologians tend to misunderstand the social nature of theological discourse. More than its advocates have cared to admit, evangelical theology has been the captive of the orientation to the individual knower that has reigned over the western mindset throughout the modern era. But this orientation is now beginning to lose its grip. Therefore, if our theology is to speak the biblical message in our contemporary situation, we must shed the cloak of modernity and reclaim the more profound community outlook in which the biblical people of God were rooted.

The revisioning of the theological task is dependent on a renewed understanding of the role of the community in the life of faith. Evangelicals are correct in asserting that the revealed truth of God forms the 'basic grammar' that creates Christian identity. Rather than merely being a product of our experience, as certain strands of liberalism have tended to argue, in an important sense the truth of God *creates* our experience.[55] But this identity-creative process is not an individualistic matter occurring in isolation. Instead, it is a development that happens within a community.

Voices within the human sciences, not evangelical theologians, have served as the pioneers in the contemporary attempt to move beyond a focus on the autonomous individual. Thinkers in a wide variety of disciplines have been exploring the thesis that personal identity is formed within social structures. There is an intricate web of traditions and beliefs by which we understand ourselves and shape our lives, they theorize. To the degree that it provides the categories or language in which we frame our questions and answers, we are shaped by this inherited web. The transmitting agency that mediates the

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[53] 53. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1:196.

[54] 54. George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), p. 16.

[55] 55. See, for example, Pinnock's statement on evangelical theological method. Clark H. Pinnock and Delwin Brown, *Theological Crossfire: An Evangelical-Liberal Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), p. 45. This point is delineated in Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 80.

web of belief to us is the social group or community within which the ongoing process of identity formation occurs.[56]

At stake in the new outlook, therefore, is a more profound understanding of epistemology. Recent thinking has helped us see that the process of knowing, and to some extent even the process of experiencing the world, can occur only within a conceptual framework, a framework mediated by the social community in which we participate.

The application of this understanding to the religious dimension of life follows. Foundational to our self-identity, religion claims, is religious experience—an experience of or encounter with the divine. This experience, as well as the conceptual framework that facilitates it, is mediated by the religious community— through its symbols, narratives and sacred documents—in which we participate.

We must be careful, therefore, not to focus our understanding of religious experience only on an individual-centred paradigm of the divine-human encounter. Although coming in the purview of the individual believer, religious experience is also corporate in nature. In fact, there is a sense of primacy in this corporate experience of encounter with the divine reality. In the biblical tradition, the goal of the human-divine encounter is to constitute a community of people in covenant with God. The Christian church declares that we enter that community through a faith response to the proclamation of the salvific action of God in Christ, symbolized by baptism.

The implications for theology of this understanding of the relationship of the community to individual faith formation are immense. In fact, it has launched a revolution in thinking concerning the task of theology. The ideal that predominated during both the medieval and modern eras viewed theology as a systematic investigation of the range of Christian doctrine, coupled with the attempt to demonstrate the truth of the Christian faith for the entire panorama of human knowledge. In the evangelical movement, this ideal took the form of the isolated scholar seeking to systematize the deposit of truth found in the Bible.

Today the older ideal is losing ground to an emphasis on theology as directed toward a 'practical' purpose—that is, as related to the life and practice of the Christian community. Through the recounting of the biblical narrative of God's salvific action in Israel and preeminently in Christ, the Christian community fulfils a mediating function in the lives of its members. The biblical narrative builds the conceptual framework by which the community views itself and its experience of the world. Theology, in turn, functions within the context of the Christian community by reflecting on its conceptual framework and belief structure.

The newer understanding of theology as 'practical' parallels developments in several of the human sciences. For example, it reflects points of contact with Niklas Luhmann's sociology of theology. According to Luhmann, theology is the self-reflection of religion, and as such it is instrumental in the maintenance of the identity of that religion.[57]

Similar to Luhmann, the German theologian Gerhard Sauter, among others, views the primary task of theology as critical reflection on the life and practice of the church, in order to exercise a critiquing and norming function in contemporary church discourse

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[56] 56. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 25–40.

[57] 57. For a sketch and appraisal of Luhmann's position, see Garrett Green, 'The Sociology of Dogmatics: Niklas Luhmann's Challenge to Theology', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (March 1982):19–34.

and life.[58] The same point is made by Ronald Thiemann, who declares that the goal of theology is 'to understand more fully and more critically the Christian faith in order that the community might better exemplify the Christian identity to which it has been called'.[59] So forceful have been recent voices setting forth the fundamentally practical nature of theology that Peter Slater finds a consensus among theologians that their discipline 'serves the faithful, whether as individuals or collectives, and it does so properly when it enables them *to live* more faithfully'.[60]

One implication of the focus on the practical task of theology is the realization that theological discourse is a second-order discipline pursued 'from within'. The enterprise is a critical, reflective activity that presupposes the beliefs and practices of the Christian community. The theologian, consequently, speaks from the perspective of a personal faith commitment and participation in the life of the community.

The newer thinking suggests that our search for a new evangelical paradigm must begin with the community of faith. To understand theology properly, we must view it within the context of the life of the people of God. Theology is indeed the task of the faith community. We need no other rationale to engage in the discipline than our presence and participation in the Christian community. And our endeavours are fundamentally, even if not totally, directed back toward that community.

These considerations suggest that we may view theology as the faith community's reflecting on the faith experience of those who have encountered God through the divine activity in history and therefore now seek to live as the people of God in the contemporary world. Ultimately, then, the propositions of systematic theology find their source and aim in the identity and life of the community it serves. As Theodore Jennings notes, 'Theological reflection is always reflection on behalf of … on behalf of a community, on behalf of a tradition, on behalf of a world'.[61]

THEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

How does the Bible fit into this schema? It goes without saying that the Christian community finds the Bible crucial to its task of being the covenant people and living out its calling. But how are we to understand the relationship between Scripture and theology understood as a practical discipline?

The answer to this query lies in the conjunction between theology and revelation. Theology has always been viewed as in some way closely connected to and dependent on revelation. Evangelical thinkers, following the tradition of Protestant scholasticism from Turretin to Hodge, link revelation with Scripture, and consequently they view theology as the systemization of the propositional truth disclosed in the Bible. Neo-orthodoxy agrees that theology is the reflection on revelation, but differs from evangelicalism in its understanding of where such revelation can be found. Neo-orthodox theologians argue that this revelation lies in God's personal self-disclosure, rather than in the propositional truth gleaned from the Scriptures.

[58] 58. Gerhard Sauter, *Wissenschaftstheoretische Kritik der Theologie* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1973), p. 330.

[59] 59. Ronald F. Thiemann, 'From Twilight to Darkness: Theology and the New Pluralism', *Trinity Seminary Review* 6 (Fall 1984):21.

[60] 60. Peter Slater, 'Theology in the 1990s', *Toronto Journal of Theology* 6 (Fall 1990): 289.

[61] 61. Theodore W. Jennings Jr., *Introduction to Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), p. 179.

Neither the classic evangelical nor the neo-orthodox position has proved ultimately satisfying. Both are hampered by their emphasis on the individual knower. Revelation, in contrast, is an event that has occurred in the community within which the believing individual stands. 'The revelation of God' is the divine act of self-disclosure, which reveals nothing less than the essence of God. This divine self-disclosure, while standing ultimately at the eschaton— at the end of history—is nevertheless a present reality, for it has appeared proleptically in history. On the basis of Karl Barth's identification of the dependent relationship between the inscripturated word and the Word incarnate, we must view the revelation in history in terms of the process of community formation arising out of the paradigmatic events that stand at its genesis.

The Christian community, emerging as it did out of the older Hebrew trajectory of community formation, was and continues to be constituted by the central events of the biblical narrative. In the New Testament, the church preserved the memory of those grand foundational events together with the earliest responses to the revelation of God in Christ, which it understood in the light and context of the Old Testament. Through the interaction of each succeeding generation with the biblical documents, the paradigmatic events and the early confrontation with these events become a continual source of revelation for the ongoing life of the community. Scripture is the foundational record of how the ancient faith community responded in the context of a trajectory of historical situations to the awareness that God has acted to constitute this people as a covenant community. In this way the Bible stands as the informing and forming canon for the community throughout its history.

Theology is related to these paradigmatic events, as well as to their historical and ongoing use in the community of faith. The task of theology is to assist the contemporary believing community to fulfil its responsibility of proclaiming and living out the message that God has appeared in Christ for the sake of the salvation of humankind. Theology assists in this enterprise as it focuses its attention on the community's confession of faith. To this end it raises the central questions concerning faith: What does it mean to be the community of those who confess faith in the God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth? And how are we to verbalize and embody that confession in the contemporary context? The clarification of these queries on behalf of the church is the role of theology.

To this end, theology functions in a manner similar to Lindbeck's characterization of church doctrine. Taking what he terms a 'cultural-linguistic' approach to conceptualizing religion, Lindbeck sees doctrine as providing a 'regulative' function.[62] For the individual believer, the believing community provides a cultural and linguistic framework that shapes life and thought. More than being moulded by the experiences of individuals within it, the communal reality constitutes a central factor in the shaping of the subjectivities and experiences of its members. It provides a constellation of symbols and concepts which its members employ in order to understand their lives and experiences of the world and within which they experience their world.[63] Taking Lindbeck's idea a step further, we conclude that theology systematizes, explores and orders the community symbols and concepts into a unified whole—that is, into a systematic conceptual framework.

Hence, theology is a second-order enterprise, and its propositions are second-order propositions.[64] Theology formulates in culturally conditioned language the confession

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[62] 62. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 18.

[63] 63. See ibid., p. 33.

[64] 64. See ibid., p. 80.

and worldview of the community of faith —of that people who have been constituted by the human response to the story of the salvific act of God in the history of Jesus the Christ.

The assertion that theology speaks a second-order language is not intended to deny the ontological nature of theological declarations. Nevertheless, the ontological claims implicit in theological assertions arise as an outworking of the intent of the theologian to provide a model of reality, rather than to describe reality directly.

THEOLOGY AND TRUTH

The abiding ontological dimension of theological assertions carries with it an important caution. We dare not conclude from the emphasis on the practical nature of theology that the theologian can now retreat from the public discussion of ultimate truth. The focus on the practical nature of theology does not automatically lead to a new subjectivity; it does not aim to replace the subjectivity of the knowing subject with a subjectivity of the isolated believing community. In this context, the philosophical work of Michael Polanyi is illuminating.[65]

Polanyi claims that our location within the social milieu of a particular place and time is not a liability. Rather, it forms the opportunity for pursuing truth, for although our thought emerges from particular circumstances, it is not limited to them. Further, he argues that all thought strives for truth. But because truth cannot be subjective in either an individual or a social sense, this striving for truth carries a 'universal intent'. However, he cautions against confusing this *concern for* universality with any *claim about* universality. For Polanyi truth always transcends our apprehension of it, and this drives us ever onward in the search for truth. For belief involves compelling orientations to which our formulations and propositions give only approximate expression. On this basis, Polanyi argues that all forms of positivism (which focuses on the propositions themselves as expressing final truth) represent a truncated view of belief.

The contemporary situation demands that we as evangelicals not view theology merely as the restatement of a body of propositional truths, important as doctrine is. Rather, theology is a practical discipline oriented primarily toward the believing community. Polanyi's theses suggest that this situation does not necessarily prevent theologians from raising the truth question. On the contrary, our participation in a faith community involves a basic commitment to a specific conceptual framework. Because faith is linked to a conceptual framework, our participation in a community of faith carries a claim to truth, even if that claim be merely implicit. By its very nature, the conceptual framework of a faith community claims to represent in some form the truth about the world and the divine reality its members have come to know and experience.

To the extent that it embodies the conceptual framework of a faith community, therefore, theology necessarily engages in the quest for truth. It enters into conversation with other disciplines of human knowledge with the goal of setting forth a Christian worldview that coheres with what we know about human experience in the world. To this end, theology seeks to understand the human person and the world as existing in relationship to the reality of God, and in so doing to fashion a fuller vision of God and God's purposes in the world.[66]

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[65] 65. For a discussion of this topic, see Colin Grant, 'Dynamic Orthodoxy: A Polanyian Direction for Theology', *Studies in Religion* 17 (Fall 1988):412–15.

[66] 66. Douglas F. Ottiti, 'Christian Theology and Other Disciplines', *Journal of Religion* 64 (April 1984):182.

The practical and veracious dimensions of the theological enterprise, therefore, are not two disjointed, competing tasks. Rather, they form one interconnected whole. Consequently, we need not agree with his emphasis on 'feeling' to applaud Delwin Brown's conclusion concerning the task of theology:

> Religious peoples, Christians and others, inhabit what we might call worlds of felt meaning. That is, our traditions create, sustain, and transform us primarily in the felt dimensions of our personal and corporate lives together—in our worship, in our relationship to our canons, in shared patterns of action, and in our common sensibilities. Theological systems attempt to portray the meaning of these felt worlds in reflective, coherent conceptualities. And in part because each religious world does cohere at a felt level our theological portrayals of them also hang together internally (just as they in turn … must connect up consistently with what we say about the world scientifically, historically, aesthetically, etc.).[67]

Likewise, although James McClendon may be somewhat obscure, he is nevertheless on the right track in defining theology as the 'discovery, understanding, and transformation of the convictions of a convictional community, including the discovery and critical revision of their relation to one another *and to whatever else there is*'.[68]

THE NATURE OF THEOLOGY

With this description of theology's connection to the believing community in view, we are in a position to delineate more clearly and systematically the nature of theology itself. The goal of our discussion demands that we introduce several of the traditional questions concerning how we are to understand theology and that we view theology in terms of certain related concepts.

Central to such an exploration is the question of how we are to understand theology in comparison to faith. Although intimately related, theology and personal faith differ in certain ways. Faith is by nature immediate. Christian faith arises out of the human encounter with the person of God in Christ, mediated by the faith community's testimony to the divine revelation in Jesus. Faith, therefore, is the personal response to the call of God—and this response involves our presence in a believing community.

The response of faith is all-encompassing, extending to all aspects of a person's being. It includes an intellectual aspect, for in faith we accept as true certain assertions concerning reality, and as a result we view the world in a specific way. Faith includes a volitional aspect, for it entails the commitment of ourselves to Another, the God revealed in Jesus Christ, and consequently in a certain sense to the community of the disciples of Jesus.

Theology, in contrast, is the believing community's intellectual reflection on faith. It is the attempt to approach faith as a subject for discussion and reflection in order to illumine and understand it. The focus of the theologians' questions, then, is faith: To what statements do we give assent—that is, what propositions do we accept as reflecting the nature of reality? What is the nature of personal commitment, or what does it mean to commit oneself? To whom are we committing ourselves, or what is the object of our faith? In other words, in so far as theology is reflection on faith, it seeks to isolate the specifically intellectual aspect of faith and then to articulate, clarify and develop this aspect.

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[67] 67. Pinnock and Brown, *Theological Crossfire*, p. 161.

[68] 68. James William McClendon, Ethics, vol. 1 of *Systematic Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), p. 23.

The distinction between faith and theology confirms that theology is a second-order endeavour. It is called forth by faith, as Christians seek to reflect on the reality of faith.

The relation between theology and faith also indicates that theology must not be confused with the intellectual discipline known as religious studies, which entails the study of systems of religious belief. In approaching their subject matter, students of religious studies emphasize, as far as possible, objective observation and detached work. Scholars in religious studies seek to work 'from the outside', apart from personal adherence to the belief system under study. Theology, however, while not totally devoid of detached work and objective observation, consists of reflection on faith within the context of the believing community. Its observations are conducted from within the faith stance and the faith community. Theology expresses the nature and content of faith from a sympathetic, committed viewpoint. Thus, in contrast to students of religious studies, theologians do not seek to free themselves from their own faith commitments and their faith community. Rather, they begin with a sympathetic attitude toward the religious tradition in which they stand.

Faith, then, is the key to the difference between theology and religious studies. Theoretically, anyone could engage in the latter, whereas the theological task is limited to persons of faith. Anyone can study Buddhism or Christianity. But no one can be a Buddhist theologian without being a Buddhist, or claim to be a Christian theologian without participating in the Christian tradition. Christian theology seeks to articulate the specifically Christian understanding of reality, one that views the world through the eyes of faith in the God revealed through Jesus.

While theology pulls into its purview reality as a whole and seeks to describe reality from the viewpoint of faith, no theological system ought to be seen as encompassing reality in its fullness. The reality it studies—God, the human person and the world as a whole—can never be fully grasped by the human intellect. Therefore every theological construct will have limitations. At the same time, the human mind can grasp *something* concerning reality. Theology seeks to facilitate this task by the use of models.

Important to our understanding of the role of models in the theological enterprise is the differentiation between replica and analogue models found in contemporary philosophy of science. Whereas replica models strive to replicate the modelled reality on a smaller, more easily visualized scale, analogue models attempt to simulate the structural relationships of the reality modelled. The model constructed by theology is of the latter type rather than the former.[69] A theological system does not provide a 'scale model' of reality. Its statements are not univocal. Rather, it seeks to invoke an understanding of reality by speaking in an analogous fashion about matters that may be mysterious, even ineffable.

No theological system can claim to be a scale model, an exact verbal reproduction of the nature of God, the human person or the world. Nevertheless, a systematic theology can be helpful, in so far as it is an analogue model designed to assist the human spirit in grasping truth concerning reality. Christian theology is an attempt to speak about the world by focusing on the significance of Jesus of Nazareth for creation and history. It seeks to assist the Christian community in articulating the importance for all human life of Jesus Christ, and the importance of a faith commitment to Jesus as the Christ. To this end it constructs an analogue model of reality viewed from the vantage point of commitment to the God revealed in Jesus.

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[69] 69. For a short discussion of the analogous nature of theology, see Davis, *Foundations of Evangelical Theology*, pp. 48–50.

Our theology, of course, is specifically and unabashedly 'Christian'. Hence our theological model must always remain 'orthodox'. It will seek to encapsulate the vision of a world under God which has always stood at the centre of the faith of the people of God. In this sense, theology may be seen as 'retroduction', the delineation of a conceptual model of reality that is informed by the Scriptures and by the theological heritage of the church.

At the same time, as many evangelical theologians have pointed out in recent years, theology must always be a contextual discipline. Rather than merely amplifying, refining, defending and handing on a timeless, fixed orthodoxy, theologians, speaking from within the community of faith, seek to describe the act of faith, the One toward whom faith is directed and the implications of our faith commitment in, for and to a specific historical and cultural context. For this reason, the categories we employ in our theology are by necessity culturally and historically conditioned, and as theologians each of us is both a 'child of the times' and a communicator to the times.

Because the community of faith is to be a faithful people in history, the people of God experience a creative tension between loyalty to their affirmation of faith and the culture in which they dwell. But because this cultural context changes in differing times and places, the theologian's task of seeking to assist the church in relating the Word of God to the varied, changing flow of human thought and life never comes to an end. Theology is always *in transitu*, and the theologian is a pilgrim thinker working on behalf of a pilgrim people.[70]

As a contextual discipline theology performs the function of an 'inter-mediator'. From their vantage point within the Christian tradition, theologians seek to assist the church in bringing the affirmation of faith, 'Jesus is Lord', into the contemporary context. Theology articulates this affirmation in the thought-forms of the culture of the community it serves and shows its implications, relevance and application to life in that society and that place in history. Although the fundamental Christian faith-commitment to God through Christ is unchanging, the world into which this commitment is to be brought is in flux. The theologian serves the church in each generation and each cultural setting by helping the people of God to articulate their faith and apply it to the world in which they live.

GUIDELINES OF THEOLOGY

This understanding suggests several dangers that confront us as Christian theologians. The first potential pitfall arises from the temptation to substitute personal theologizing for a genuine faith commitment. We can easily replace commitment to the living Christ, for example, with our doctrines concerning Christ. Likewise, we run the risk of placing our confidence in our abilities to develop a theological system, rather than in the God in whose service we stand. A related temptation is to move away from theology into religious studies. As theologians we can become so objective in the discipline that we lose from view our personal faith commitment to the Christ on whom our vocation centres. In this way we are in danger of eventually reducing Christianity to the status of one religion among others.

Second, as Christian theologians we run the risk of confusing one specific model of reality with reality itself, or one theological system with truth itself. Although present among persons of all persuasions, this 'canonization' of a particular theological construct is especially problematic among conservative thinkers, for we have a tendency to elevate

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[70] 70. See, for example, Daniel B. Stevick, *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 69.

a specific theologian of the past or the present to the status of 'doctor of the church'. Because all systems are only models of reality—albeit informed by Scripture and by the mileposts of theological history—we must maintain a stance of openness to other models, being aware of the tentativeness and incompleteness of all such systems. In the final analysis, theology is a human enterprise—helpful for the task of the church, to be sure, but a human construct nevertheless.

Finally, as Christian theologians we are tempted to see our task as ending with the construction of a theological system. In actuality, devising a 'system', however important this may be, is not our ultimate goal. Rather, as theologians we engage in articulating faith, in order that the life of each believer and of the faith community in the world might be served. Our theological reflection ought to make a difference in Christian living. Doctrinal expression is designed to help clarify the ways in which Christian commitment is to be lived. It likewise ought to help motivate all Christians to live in accordance with their commitment.

In short, our theology must overflow into ethics. Whenever theology stops short of this, it has failed to be obedient to its calling.

Michael Goldberg is on the right track when he concludes from his recounting of the story of Augustine, 'Though a propositional theology may have its place, that place is limited by life itself, for as its propositions are abstracted and drawn from life, so too, in the end, they must return to life and have meaning for life in order to be theologically significant'.[71]

In the same way, we need not go all the way with Lindbeck in discounting the ontological intent of theological descriptions to agree with his main point: 'The primary focus is not on God's being in itself, for that is not what the text is about, but on how life is to be lived and reality construed in the light of God's character as an agent as this is depicted in the stories of Israel and of Jesus'.[72]

A revisioned evangelical theology seeks to reflect on the faith commitment of the believing community in order to construct a model of reality. This model in turn aims to foster a truly evangelical spirituality that translates into ethical living in the social-historical context in which we are called to be the people of God.

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Toward Integration in the Theological School Curriculum

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[71] 71. Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 95.

[72] 72. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 121.