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A LEADER WITH FEW FOLLOWERS: MAURICE CREASEY AND HIS THEOLOGICAL VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF QUAKERISM

JON R. KERSHNER

Those of us who are interested in contemporary Quaker theological expression, and appropriate means for applying theological analysis to the vitality of Quakerism today, are indebted to David Johns for his editorial work on the *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004*.¹ Johns' effort brings to light an able Quaker theological "centrist"² whose writings would otherwise be inaccessible to most scholars, and whose research and influence are under-represented among the Quaker thinkers of the second half of the 20th Century. Johns' collection is a helpful corrective to the tendency of scholars to look to the first two generations of Quaker insight in the 17th Century as the only theological voices with something worthy to say.

Part five of this collection, titled "Quaker Identity," contains four essays written between 1962 and 1977. In these four essays Creasey attempts to name, and correct, what he sees as a theological problem present in Britain Yearly Meeting, and then suggest two avenues that he believed could guide Quakers through their predicament and into a meaningful future, namely, 1) a reinterpretation of the Quaker message; and, 2) ecumenism. While Creasey was chiefly writing these four essays to Britain Yearly Meeting Quakers, there is much in them that applies to Quakers of all stripes today. My review, then, will first discuss Creasey's analysis of the theological problem, followed by his suggested pathways for resolution through reinterpretation of the Quaker message and ecumenism. I will treat these four essays as a whole, a move that seems justified considering Creasey's final essay in this section, "Rethinking Quakerism," is in many ways a re-articulation and development of the other three essays, "'Inward' and 'Outward': A Study in Early Quaker Language," "A Frame of Reference for Friends," and "Prospect for Quakerism."

I. THE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Creasey believed that Britain Yearly Meeting in his day lacked “a widely shared sense of purpose, a common vision of what the Society of Friends exists to be and to do.”³ This organizational and ecclesiological question Creasey elsewhere applied anthropologically: what does it mean to be human?⁴ These two interrelated questions - the corporate one of, what is the Quaker organizing principle? And the anthropological one, what does it mean to be human? - are central to the challenges and opportunities Creasey contends Quakers must address if they are to be relevant.⁵

At the core of these questions of relevancy, Creasey identifies a central Quaker theological problem that must be addressed: “the central, inescapable Quaker theological problem is that of the relation between the general, universal, inward, divine revelatory activity and the particular historic revelatory activity focused in Jesus.”⁶ Creasey notes that in the first two generations of Friends a certain linguistic and conceptual looseness has done much to muddy the waters and is responsible for contemporary misconceptions of the means and content of revelation. In a study of the first generation’s usage of terms like “Inward” and “Outward,” Creasey notes that Fox and others of his generation viewed “Inward” as “obeying the voice of God in the deep inner places of responsible personal existence,” and a “personal response to the acts of God in history as interpreted and transmitted in Scripture.”⁷ For the first generation of Friends, the emphasis on the “inward” appropriation of Truth was to say that the heart of faithfulness must be comprehensive and total and reach into the deepest crevices of the soul if it were to be real.⁸ By contrast, the “outward” was religion kept at arms length; it was to take the message of the Gospel in words, but to know nothing of it in one’s self.⁹

However, Creasey argues that Robert Barclay and William Penn shifted understandings of “inward” and “outward” language in a way that minimized the centrality of the historical revelation of Jesus, affirmed as core Truth by the first generation. Thus, whereas the first generation considered outward/inward language to be the difference between a merely formal, conventional knowledge of the Christian revelation, and that of a transforming acquaintance with that same revelation, in Barclay it came to signify “a contrast between modes of revelation, and even a contrast between two distinct organs whereby these modes of revelation are respectively received.”¹⁰ Creasey notes

that based on this development of a dualism between inward/outward “it is very difficult to accord any fundamental importance to History or to Scripture.”¹¹

In other words, Creasey argues that Barclay and Penn¹² changed the way the first generation used “inward” and “outward” language to the extent that they viewed the historical revelation of Christ as important, but not essential to the faith because the real essence of Truth was an “inward” revelation distinct from historical and physical, “outward” manifestations.¹³

The central theological problem of the relationship between the universal, inward revelatory activity and the particular, historical revelatory activity, though, gets to the core of the questions: “Who are the Quakers, and what are they to do?” And, “what does it mean to be human in a technological age?” By stating the theological problem positively, Creasey identifies the central Quaker affirmation, namely, that “every [person] is enlighten[ed] by the divine light of Christ,” which “holds together the historically particular emphasis upon Christ and the universal concern with every [person]. The tension between the two, and the difficulty of maintaining it”¹⁴ helps explain the events and byways of Quaker history as well as the “wide diversities of understanding and emphasis among us today.”¹⁵

II. REINTERPRETATION OF THE QUAKER MESSAGE

Thus, Creasey is astute to suggest that the central Quaker theological problem concerning the nature of revelation, is also the central affirmation that must be maintained and reinterpreted into a late 20th Century context: Creasey states that to the extent that Quakers have any prospects, it depends on, first, “whether we as Friends can discern the ‘condition’ of the contemporary world.”¹⁶ And second, “whether we can speak relevantly and credibly to it.”¹⁷ And later, he stated that the early Quaker synthesis of the historical revelation of Christ in a transformative inward encounter, reinterpreted into a modern context, had great possibilities for addressing the fundamental ecclesiological and anthropological question of the age.¹⁸ This act of “reinterpretation” was central to Creasey’s analysis of the prospects for Quakerism, and an essential means for addressing the tensions within Quaker understandings of revelation.

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Creasey's emphasis on the task of theological reinterpretation is at once a strong corrective to those who would seek to relive 17th Century Quakerism, while at the same time a refreshing and hopeful assessment of what Quakers can offer modern society. In terms of the corrective, Creasey is clear that modern Quakers cannot relive the fervor of the 1650s, "this way is closed. We cannot do it; we should not even try to do it."¹⁹ 17th Century Friends lived in a different thought-world, they assumed the legitimacy of Christendom, which is no longer a tenable assumption for modern Friends and would only demonstrate irrelevance.²⁰

On the other hand, a rethinking, or "re-minting,"²¹ of the central affirmation - of "every [person] being enlightened by the divine light of Christ"²² - Creasey believed could offer a fresh expression of hope for the world that takes seriously God's grace and human longings for fullness. Thus, Creasey advocates that a rethinking of the central affirmation will understand the "Inner Light," which Creasey notes is an "un-Foxian phrase," not as "a kind of built-in infallibility or self-sufficiency, but it is, as the first Friends said, grace - capacity or potentiality for responding to encounter and disclosure."²³ That is, that the historic revelation of Christ can be known truly and deeply, that it is of "universal significance," that this proclamation is not only of "doctrinal and universal 'extensive' significance... [but] is also to be known in an 'intensive' ...inward and experiential manner by each person."²⁴ Doing this re-minting, Creasey argues, will permit Quakers to again speak to the condition of modern day seekers who "make very little sense of traditional religious concepts and practices, but on the other hand are totally disillusioned by any merely materialistic, positivistic concept of Man as the only thing there is... We cannot speak to them unless we can get away from the traditional language, but we shall have nothing to say to them, unless we know what that traditional language means."²⁵

III. ECUMENISM

Perhaps Creasey's most distinctive contribution to discussions of Quaker relevance was his conviction that any Quaker address to the problem and prospect of the nature of revelation cannot be done in isolation from the Church as a whole. The kind of rethinking that must be done, he says, must be done ecumenically because it involves "the overarching problem of rethinking the Christian faith and tradition

and experience. If you abstract Quakerism from that, and try to re-think it by itself, I fear that you have nothing worth rethinking.”²⁶ Rather, he believes this rethinking should occur with others who potentially have things of value to say to Quakers and Quakers can say to them.²⁷ Creasey believes the Quaker future is bound up with the “mysterious, perplexing, infuriating and yet altogether to-be-thankful-for reality which we call the Church...”²⁸ As David Johns has argued in an article on Creasey’s ecumenism in the most recent *Quaker Religious Thought*, Creasey’s understanding of the possibilities of ecumenism are intertwined with his ecclesiology, which was open to the other, and held loosely to many accepted Quaker forms and traditions.²⁹ Thus, Johns argues that Creasey de-centers Quakerism in the grand scope of the Church universal, so that his theology of the Quaker position in relation to the Church is not “self-referential.”³⁰ Because Creasey did not think that the Quakerism of the future would be an exact replication of the 1650s, but a rethinking of the central, universal affirmation, he avoids the pitfalls of “restorationist ecclesiologies” that would re-assert early Quaker antagonism to the other churches of their day as a “regulative principle” for Quaker ecclesiology in the present day, which would head off any prospects for ecumenical dialogue at the outset.³¹

However, there is a confusion among Quaker ecclesiologies, Creasey argues, that hinders ecumenical discussion and, along with it, the hopes of addressing the central theological problems confronting Quakers. That is, Quakerism is unable, Creasey maintains, to “understand itself as a permanent part of the denominational pattern, as the nucleus of a purely spiritual and ethical world faith, as the comprehensive and permanent pattern of the true Church, and as a temporary corrective of certain errors and mistaken emphases which have appeared in the Church, but which the Church as a whole is now aware of and well on the way to overcoming.”³² Rather, Creasey’s ecumenism takes seriously the contributions Quakerism can make to the Church, while also holding that a sober self-awareness of some facets of Quaker thought might need to be refined by the critical assessment of others. This, I think, is precisely the type of “rethinking” that Creasey envisioned and on which he hangs Quaker prospects. Johns summarizes Creasey’s ecumenism thus: “Friends may be a contrast community in terms of practice and theological conviction... however, Friends are a contrast community only in an interpretive sense, never in an ontological or an eschatological one.”³³ Creasey, Johns argues,

understood Quakerism to be an important voice in the Church, but not the only voice, and not the goal of the Church.³⁴ In this way, Johns makes explicit the manner in which Creasey's ecumenism provided a pathway for rethinking the Quaker message in a way that would assert its relevance to the fundamental questions of the day.³⁵

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Johns aptly situates the theological insights of a largely marginalized Quaker figure and organizes these insights in a way that brings out Creasey's continuing relevance.³⁶ As a whole, Britain Yearly Meeting - and perhaps much of the Quaker world - has rejected Creasey's critical analysis of Quaker tradition and prospects for the future. Whether a reader agrees with Creasey's analysis or not, the central theological problem of the balance between the inward revelation and the historic revelation remains a pressing issue among Britain Yearly Meeting Quakers, and there is perhaps no finer articulation of that tension than what is found in Creasey's writings.

However, by locating the origination of the theological problem of revelation solely within the purview of Quaker history and expression I wonder if Creasey missed an occasion to examine the benefits and liabilities - if not the inevitability, whether conscious or not - of the type of ecumenical engagement he advocated. That is, Creasey tended to look at Quakers from their early moments on in monolithic terms, as a group that had maintained their theological particularities in a way isolated from the outside world. To be fair, Creasey did challenge Quakers to engage reflectively with the leading theological voices of the day, but not to the extent or depth that might have contextualized ongoing Quaker theological debates in light of pressing cultural forces.³⁷ Such an implicit understanding of the isolated transmission of religious ideas across time must be treated with skepticism.

In a recent study, for example, Timothy Burdick has demonstrated that the broader Fundamentalist-Modernist theological debates in the United States of the early 20th Century were played out in microcosm in the evangelical Oregon Yearly Meeting.³⁸ In this example, the strong lean towards fundamentalism was reflected in the development of Bible schools and a crucicentric theology that often neglected social manifestations of the gospel in a way similar to other fundamentalist denominations.³⁹ Quakers were not immune to the larger cultural and

theological winds of their day, but reflected them in the crafting and development of their ecclesiology.⁴⁰

It is worth examining whether liberal Friends, likewise, accommodated Quaker theological tradition to the larger social and cultural currents that have continuously buffeted Quakerism since its inception. Such an occurrence should be expected in any religious group, and might be just as essential for understanding contemporary religious expressions as are a study of origins. For example, Rufus Jones (1863-1948) embodied the Modernist turn among liberal Friends, which remains impactful. Jones described his favored form of religious expression, mysticism, as “the type of religion which puts the emphasis and immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage.”⁴¹ In Jones’ definition, mysticism is a subjective experience, defined by the human recipient and abstracted from historical particularity. While Jones was not shy to claim that his idealized version of religious experience was also that of the first generation of Quakers,⁴² on closer examination his view appears a near representation of the liberal theological developments prevalent in the late 19th Century. The German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), often called “The Father of Modern Liberal Theology,” also placed the essence of religion in the inward, subjective experience,⁴³ what he described as the realm of “feeling” and “intuition.” In fact Schleiermacher rejected any real sense of revelation - in which God becomes known “as He is in and for Himself” - as an appropriate foundation for religion because, he thought, such a revelation could not be comprehended.⁴⁴ If Schleiermacher believed revelation was an inadequate basis for religious knowledge, he, like Jones after him, filtered experience of God through human subjectivity:

The whole religious life consists of two elements, that man surrender himself to the Universe and allow himself to be influenced by the side of it that is turned towards him is one part, and that he transplant this contact which is one definite feeling within, and take it up into the inner unity of his life and being, is the other. The religious life is nothing else than the constant renewal of this proceeding.⁴⁵

For Schleiermacher, then, the idea of “God” is not rooted in the transcendent, or the otherness of a revelation that is given, but “is nothing more than the expression of the feeling of absolute dependence.”⁴⁶ Reminiscent of Schleiermacher, Jones reduced

religious experience to “awareness” and emphasized the role of human “consciousness” in revelation.⁴⁷ If Oregon Yearly Meeting adopted the theological fundamentalism of its day, and Jones adopted elements of the liberal theology of his day, it seems consistent to suggest that all along its trajectory Quakers have been both inheritors of a theological tradition rooted in the 17th Century—as Creasey illustrated—as well as of contemporary social and theological climates. Examined from that perspective, the task of rethinking British Quakerism that Creasey laid out in 1977⁴⁸ should include a form of ecumenical theological reflection in an awareness of the influence liberal theology—as articulated by Schleiermacher and his interpreters⁴⁹—has had on Quakerism, as well as an appraisal of the critiques of liberal theology readily at hand.⁵⁰

Creasey demonstrated himself to be an able theologian whose contribution and insight have been unfortunately diminished, but now helpfully resurrected by Johns. These essays are a crucial starting point for renewed, intentional theological engagement in a Quaker way. Johns’ collection is recommended as a model of critical theological inquiry that both takes seriously the theological legacy of one’s tradition and emphasizes the continuing task of re-minting the linguistic and conceptual points of one’s faith for a new age.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Maurice A Creasey, *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004: The Social Thought of a Quaker Thinker*, ed. David L Johns (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011).
- 2 David Johns, “Maurice Creasey at the Center,” ed. David Johns In *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), xvii.
- 3 Creasey believed that any attempt to make structural changes to Yearly Meeting organization would have “little real meaning and value unless it proceeds from a clear and uniting vision of the Society’s vocation. How can we overhaul our ‘machinery’ unless we know what that machinery exists to do?” Maurice A Creasey, “A Frame of Reference for Friends,” in *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004: The Social Thought of a Quaker Thinker*, ed. David L Johns (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 357.
- 4 Maurice A Creasey, “Prospect for Quakerism,” in *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004: The Social Thought of a Quaker Thinker*, ed. David L Johns (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 383–384.
- 5 Maurice A Creasey, “Rethinking Quakerism,” in *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004: The Social Thought of a Quaker Thinker*, ed. David L Johns (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 399.
- 6 Creasey suggests this central theological problem has three dimensions: First, early Quakers placed at the center of their original proclamation a message that modern Friends do not need to weaken or abandon, “namely, that there ^{is} a saving revelation;

there is an approach from the reality to which we give the name God; and that it embraces every human being... That there is such a divine, saving activity seems to me absolutely fundamental to anything that can be called Quakerism now or in the future.” Second, that the historical Jesus Christ is the divine image that grounds revelation. And third, that to be enlightened by the divine light of Christ is a foretaste of what Creasey calls, “our ‘Christ destination.’” That is, “Christ is not simply in the past; Christ is not complete. The *totus christus*, the whole Christ, is yet to come. But it will be the same, not another. He will never be left behind; he will encounter us all at the end.” These three dimensions of the central Quaker theological problem concern the nature of divine revelation, and how revelation becomes effectual. Creasey, “Rethinking Quakerism,” 406-407.

7 Maurice A Creasey, “‘Inward’ and ‘Outward:’ A Study in Early Quaker Language,” in *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004: The Social Thought of a Quaker Thinker*, ed. David L Johns (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 330.

8 *Ibid.*, 330.

9 *Ibid.*, 330-331.

10 *Ibid.*, 337.

11 *Ibid.*, 337.

12 Creasey argues that, like Barclay, William Penn used inward/outward language to create a dualism that downplayed historical revelation. Thus, for Penn, the story of God’s interactions with Israel in the Hebrew scriptures was not that of God drawing near and revealing God’s self in a way that would otherwise have remained hidden, “it is seen, rather, as a somewhat regrettable intrusion of the inferior ‘outward’ mode of revelation, made necessary by the people’s failure to make right use of an already fully available ‘inward’ mode of revelation.” In terms of the historical Christ, Creasey asserts, Penn believed the “Word’s becoming flesh is almost an embarrassment to [Penn] in his apologetic. Thus he admits that Scripture ‘by that common Figure, or way of speaking amongst Men’ often ascribes to the holy humanity of Jesus Christ, as the ‘Thing Containing’ that which, in reality, is to be ascribed to the ‘Thing Contained, which was the Eternal Power, Wisdom, Life etc.’” Creasey, “‘Inward’ and ‘Outward:’ A Study in Early Quaker Language,” 339.

13 Creasey states that:

“it is one thing to draw attention, as early Friends did, to an ‘inward’ and an ‘outward’ way of apprehending a Revelation which had been, as all agreed, given in History. It is quite another thing to distinguish, within the concept of Revelation, two kinds of Revelation, an ‘inward’ kind alleged to be without any essential connection with History, and an ‘outward’ kind, which existence cannot indeed be denied and whose valued cannot be minimized from the standpoint of Christian faith and experience but which can be accorded only an equivocal and almost marginal status in religious thought. And it is still more obviously another thing to postulate a ‘separate and distinct’ organ within man, which yet is no part of man’s essential being, dependent in no way upon the constitution of man’s mind, whereby alone this inward mode or Revelation is to be received.”

Creasey, “‘Inward’ and ‘Outward:’ A Study in Early Quaker Language,” 353.

14 Creasey, “Prospect for Quakerism,” 373.

15 *Ibid.*, 374.

16 *Ibid.*, 376.

17 *Ibid.*

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18 Ibid., 391–392.

19 Creasey, “Rethinking Quakerism,” 398.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 411.

22 Ibid., 394.

23 Ibid., 412.

24 Ibid., 395.

25 Ibid., 412.

26 Ibid., 409.

27 Ibid., 410.

28 Ibid., 414.

29 David L Johns, “Beyond Quaker Self-Referentiality: Maurice Creasey’s Vision of Ecumenism,” *Quaker Religious Thought*, no. 119 (October 2012): 50.

30 Ibid., 52.

31 Ibid.

32 Creasey, “Frame of Reference for Friends,” 370.

33 Johns, “Beyond Quaker Self-Referentiality,” 48.

34 Ibid., 55.

35 That is, in Creasey’s “generous ecumenicity” and the subsequent “dis-locating ecumenicity from an exclusive Quaker self-referentiality,” Quaker prospects to balance rightly the universal, inward revelation and the particular, historical revelation, are helped significantly along by the very fact that it gives meaning and weight to the way Quakers articulate their faith, and perhaps most importantly, how Quakers shape, and are shaped by the grand sweep of salvation-history, which is in some way evident in the Church. Johns, “Beyond Quaker Self-Referentiality,” 46.

36 Indeed, Princeton theologian, Daniel Migliore, cites as the “task of theology” the:

“freedom and responsibility of the Christian community to inquire about its faith in God... [it is] a continuing search for the fullness of the truth of God made known in Jesus Christ. Defining the theological task in this way emphasizes that theology is not mere repetition of traditional doctrines but a persistent search for the truth to which they point and which they only partially and brokenly express.

Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding, An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 1.

37 In his essay, “The Creative Center of Quakerism,” Creasey raises the question:

“Do we, in fact, find that the Biblical, philosophical and theological positions in relation to which the Quakerism of sixty years ago was interpreted are still entirely adequate and satisfying? Have there been no advances in Biblical and theological understand in the so-called “post-liberal” period? Do we feel no need to relate out traditional Quaker thinking to that of such men as Barth and Brunner, Tillich and Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, Buber and de Chardin?”

Maurice A Creasey, “The Creative Center of Quakerism,” in *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912-2004: The Social Thought of a Quaker Thinker*, ed. David L Johns (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 65.

- 38 Timothy Burdick, "Neo-Evangelical Identity within American Religious Society of Friends (Quakers): Oregon Yearly Meeting, 1919 - 1947" (University of Birmingham, UK, Forthcoming).
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London: Macmillan and co., limited, 1909), xv.
- 42 Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1921), 33; Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 494.
- 43 Schleiermacher writes:
- "the common element in all those determinations of self-consciousness which predominantly express a receptivity affected from some outside quarter is the *feeling of Dependence*. On the other hand, the common element in all those determinations which predominantly express spontaneous movement and activity is the *feeling of Freedom*. The former is the case not only because it is by an influence from some other quarter that we have come to such a state, but particularly because we could not so become except by means of an Other. The latter is the case because in these instances an Other is determined by us, and without our spontaneous activity could not be so determined."
- Here, Schleiermacher describes religion as the human reception of an "influence" - the "feeling of Dependence" - and in the "spontaneous activity" of the subject - the "feeling of Freedom" - that is "determined by us." This clearly diminishes any sense of revelation as divine disclosure given in historical particularity.
- Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed by. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1928), 13-14.
- 44 Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 52.
- 45 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 58.
- 46 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 17.
- 47 Compare Jones' emphases of "awareness" and "consciousness" with Schleiermacher's. Both men attributed to the human subject the locus and defining interpretation of revelation and all legitimate forms of religious expression:
- "The feeling of absolute dependence becomes a clear self-consciousness only as this idea comes simultaneously into being. In this sense it can indeed be said that God is given to is in feeling in an original way; and if we speak of an original revelation of God to man or in man, the meaning will always be just this, that, along with the absolute dependence which characterizes not only man but all temporal existence, there is given to man also the immediate self-consciousness of it, which becomes a consciousness of God."
- Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 17-18; Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xv.
- 48 Creasey, "Rethinking Quakerism," 393-416.
- 49 See, for example, Paul Tillich (1886-1965). Tillich, a contemporary of Jones, argued that, "Religion, in the largest and most basic sense of the word, is ultimate concern. And ultimate concern is manifest in all creative function of the human spirit... Ultimate concern is manifest in the realm of knowledge as the passionate longing for ultimate reality." This definition mitigates the importance of the historical Jesus, and subjects to the realm

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of perception and experience epistemological grounds for revelation. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 7-8.

- 50 See especially Karl Barth's (1886-1968) contention that the human person must not set theology in relation to itself, but rather religion rests on the fact that God graciously sets God's self in relation to humanity. Barth is here critiquing Schleiermacher and liberal theology:

“[Christian love] is man's self-giving to God (not for what He can give, nor for the sake of some purpose that can be achieved with His help, but for God Himself), and his self-giving to his fellow (again, not for what he can give, nor for the sake of some purpose, but for the man himself). As this self-giving, the Christian love which is from God is man's response to God's own love. It is in this way that God loves man. He does not seek Himself, let alone anything for Himself, but simply man, man as he is and as such, man himself.. In this self-giving to man He is God in all His freedom and glory. If the love of man, as his response to the fact that God loves him in this way, itself consists in his self-giving, this certainly means that there can be no more self-love, no more desiring and seeking the freedom and glory of the self.”

Likewise, Wolfhart Pannenberg (b. 1928) revitalizes the role of time and history in the human understanding of religion and revelation: “The very essence of God implies time. Only in the future of his Kingdom come will the statement ‘God exists’ prove to be definitively true. But then it will be clear that the statement was always true. In this impending power the coming God was already the future of the remotest past.” Post-liberal, narrative theologians like Stanley Hauerwas (b. 1940) have also challenged enlightenment foundations of modernism, and reasserted the narrative, covenantal history of the Bible as an important way to consider revelation and religion. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics II/1* (Louisville, KY: W/JKP, 1994), 192; Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 45; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1969), 62. See: Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer on Christian Ethics* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).