

*Review*

# A Theologian of Ultimate Concern: Paul Tillich

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## Abstract

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The purpose of this paper is to examine Paul Tillich's theology in order to gain an insight into his ideas concerning the role of religion, theology, philosophy and culture in the contemporary world, and demonstrate how these four disciplines affect human existence. The paper examined robust existing research findings relevant to the theology of Paul Tillich, in the process of conceptualizing the influence of his theology on contemporary human existence. The article updates Paul Tillich's theology to the findings herein. Moreover, the paper adopted analytical methods to analyze Paul Tillich's theology of Ultimate concern. The results indicated that Tillich comprehends religion as the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern which contain the answers to the questions of the meaning of life. Besides, the outcomes showed that religion is dialectically and intimately related to theology, culture and philosophy. Furthermore, the paper stipulated that religion encompasses other disciplines of religions which include and not limited to Christianity, Islam, Judaism, African, Comparative, Oriental and Contemporary. Consequently, all these religions contain a theology and a philosophy which unites or separates them. Likewise, the paper demonstrated that theology and religion are perceived as two complementary human activities which are done by man, who is religious and who develops a theology and a philosophy relevant to his or her religion and applicable to his or her ways of existence. This paper established that every religion in this biosphere communicates to the world through the lenses of philosophy and theology. Subsequently, these outcomes will be useful as a resource and reference material in the teaching of Universities both at graduate, post graduate and undergraduate levels especially in courses such as; New Testament in the modern scholarships, contemporary theologians, contemporary theology and contemporary religious thought. Moreover, the findings will also be useful in the field of research.

**Keywords:** Ultimate concern, Being, Theology, Philosophy, Religion, Method of correlation, Humanism, Mediation, Dualism and Supernaturalism, Theonomy, Heteronomy and Autonomy

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine the contemporary theological problems in the New Testament modern scholarships that contemporary theologians have been encountering and the desired solutions to the existential condition of humanity. This paper analyzed Paul Tillich's contemporary theology of the twentieth century by analytical methods, and how these theology interacts with man's modern-day situation. The researcher deliberately chose to write this article because Paul Tillich is one of the most prominent protestant theologians who form part of the contents

taught to University students both at undergraduate and graduate curriculum in the courses entitled 'Contemporary Religious Thought, and 'New Testament in Modern scholarships respectively. In this very reason the paper sought to provide a scholarly paper on Paul Tillich's theology of the New Testament, which shall be used as reference material for my post graduate and undergraduate students, fellow researchers and other readers. In his contemporary Theology, Tillich presents a theology of correlation revealed in contemporary culture. The problem that guided this paper is that culture exists in the

contemporary human situation over time, as opposed to the eternal theological message which does not change with time, and which is supposed to be received and be understood by the temporal situational recipients. The problem posed is on how can the people who are living in the present-day situation /culture relate to the eternal message? In the event, this paper exposed that Tillich formulated the theology of correlation in order to supply answers to the human situation, out of which questions arise. Tillich articulated a systematic theology which provide symbols in Christian theology as avenues to providing answers to the existential situation of humanity. Theology therefore, should be understood as a tool used to understand the philosophical problems of man in the modern situation. It is therefore the prerogative of this paper to study the personality of Paul Tillich as part of the introduction to this paper.

Paul Tillich was born on 1886 and died in 1965 Chadwick, (2011). He stands out as one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century and a leading promoter of existential interpretation of the Christian theology. He was a Germany- American existentialist philosopher and one of the most influential New Testament theologians of the 20th century. He invented a theology of correlation in which he developed ways of relating theology to all human knowledge and experiences. His major works were influenced by his crisis of protest against the Hitler regime in Germany that consequently forced him to immigrate to the US where he developed his approach of correlating the questions of human existence. His works include but, not limited to, Systematic Theology (1951), the shaking of the foundations (1948), the dynamics of faith (1957), the eternal Now (1963), Biblical religion and the search of the Ultimate concern (1955). He is the author of; 'socialist decision' a book which the Nazi government burned in 1933 with the dire consequence of imprisonment. He also authored 'the Courage to be' (1952), 'Dynamics of Faith' (1957), in which works he presented the theology of culture. In the area of theology, Tillich authored a three volume work on systematic theology (1951, 1957,1963), in which he established his 'method of correlation' which is a methodology to discovering the cyphers of Christian revelation as responses to the problematic nature of human existence elevated by metaphysical investigation (Ibid). His father was a conservative Lutheran pastor of the evangelical state church of Prussia's older Province. At the age of 17 His mother died of cancer in 1903 (Ibid). He attended the University of Berlin in 1904, University of Tübingen in 1905, University of Halle-Wittenberg in 1905- 1907. He received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Breslau in 1911 and in 1912, he earned his Licentiate of theology Degree from Halle-Wittenberg. In the year 1912, he was ordained as the Lutheran minister to the Brandenburg Province. In 1914, he was appointed as the chaplain of the imperial Germany army during the World War I. In 1924-25, a

professor of systematic Theology at the university of Marburg, a professor of Theology at the Dresden University of Technology, and in 1929-1933, a professor of Theology at the University of Frankfurt.

### **Tillich's Contributions to New Testament Theology**

The paper examines Tillich's theology which impact modern scholarships in the theology of the Christian Church in four main scopes, which includes, but, not limited to: apologetic theology where Tillich identifies theology as an avenue of providing responses to queries questioned by theology itself. He understands Christianity as defending man's state of affairs in the modern-day biosphere, whereby he creates salient methodologies of correlating Christianity to profane and materialistic culture. Next, Tillich describes religion in terms of the ultimate concern, in which theology as one of the main constituents of religion turns out to be an 'ultimate concern, and consequently, only God remains immune from criticism. The third, is the sphere of Arbitration theology, which intercedes amongst theology and religion, religion and culture and Lutheranism and Socialism. Last, but not least is the fourth scope of the concept of being. In his systematic theology, Tillich (1951), opines that the core of philosophy is the ontological structure and the underlining ontological questions are rationally prior to every other, and that they must start with being and they will not go beyond it. Furthermore, Tillich (Ibid) contends that the study of ontology and it's questions is possible because of the presence of less universal concepts of particular dominions called principles of being, categories of being and ultimate concepts. All these contributions of Tillich's theology are examined and synthesized in context below.

### **Tillich's Contributions to contemporary Theology**

In this paper, I have deliberately analyzed Tillich (1959) as a contemporary theologian of both culture and ultimate faith by the use of analytical method of inquiry. In his experiences of the 1<sup>st</sup> world war he was rightly convinced that the ravages of these war had resulted to rampant death on a wide scale and that these horrors of war were as a result of the philosophies of capitalism with all its ideology of the bourgeois and liberalism. In one of his works, Tillich (1948), rejected capitalism and liberalism because these philosophies had ignored the role of the divine as the unconditioned to all reality in society. He was exceedingly moved to consider that western philosophy had totally gone wrong and had created a gap between the traditional religion and Cultural Revolution in central and Eastern Europe, and so he resorted to religious socialism as a means to contain the repulsions of capitalism and liberalism philosophies (Ibid). In his

religious socialism, Tillich pointed out that Christian love should be embodied through; destroying the basis of economic misery: bringing to a halt avenues to economic egoism: extinguishing the origins of war through social movements and that church representative and leadership must participate in social movements (Tillich, 1952).

Tillich also postulated that the central theme for understanding the theology of culture encompasses; heteronomy, autonomy, theonomy and the mutual understanding of Christianity and socialism. Heteronomy is a philosophy which refers to actions that are influenced by forces outside the individuals, in more meaningful sense heteronomy is a condition of being ruled, governed and being under the influence of another as for example a military occupation. Autonomy is a condition of being independence in one's own thoughts and actions, for example a young university student from a strict household who is now living on his or her own in the university life is experiencing autonomy. Theonomy is a philosophy in which society is governed by divine law and so it subscribe to a hypothetical Christian government which subscribe to the divine law. Tillich rejected both concepts of escapism of religion and the technology of liberalism which, according to him, he concluded that they were unaware of the history of the time.

The problem noted here and which disturbed Tillich's mind is the complacent church in Germany that did not care of the situation of adherents during the Nazi holocaust in Germany. This is the situation that characterizes religion in every dispensation. A clear example that I need not pause to mention here is the historic Post election violence in Kenya in 2007 and early 2008, in which case also the Church in Kenya remained virtually complacent amidst the huge massacres of the people, of which some were burned alive inside the famous '*Kiambaa*' Church, situated at *Eldoret* in Kenya (KNCHR, 2008). Another example justifying the complacency of the church in Kenya is the trajectory politics of Kenya since 1963 to the present. In the early 1960s Kenya witnessed political assassinations under the reign of *Mzee Jomo Kenyatta* (Kwanja:213-216). This followed rampant ethnic classes of 1978-2002 under the late *Toraitichi Daniel Arap Moi*, and the ethnic political violence of 2007-2017 under the leadership of Uhuru Kenyatta. These political assassinations and ethnic violence were occasioned by rampant poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, ethnic exclusion and manipulated elections (Ibid, 2008)

The existential philosophical questions that demand theological answers include, but not limited to: where were the church leaders when some people were burned inside this church? Where were the large ordinary religious members during the awful burning of people inside the church? Where did religion apparently go during this awful moment? Did religion fail to prevent this Kenyan catastrophe of consuming people by furnace of

fire inside the church? The Theology of Paul Tillich informs that true religion and true church ought to be courageous enough and speak out the evils committed in society. If people were burned inside the *Kiambaa* church (Human Rights Watch (2008), if the Christians of the same church participated in burning their fellows Christian members and those who sought for refugee in that church, and if Christians have been participating in the ethnic cleansing and historical political violence, then can we say that the Christian religion failed to observe the moral law (Exodus 20:1-20) which forbid them not to kill?

Another second world example I correlate here with Tillich's Contemporary Theology is the outbreak of the 2020 Covid 19 Pandemic (corona virus) in the world. Religion ought to deliver relevant containment messages to this corona virus infection by providing reliable and acceptable containing measures in order to safe people from mass death rather than subjecting adherents to this disease. Faith Based organizations should respond to this situation by, in the first case suspending commercializing religion in terms of offerings, planting the seed slogans and holding large congregation meetings, and instead device methods of doing religion with minimal Covid 19 contagious mechanisms such as the use of electronic and technological media platforms. By the use of live streaming sessions of not more than hundred people will to a large extent save lives and reduce suffering and the spread of this disease. In instances where it is a must that people have to congregate, they should do so by applying physical social distancing, sanitizing hands regularly by using relevant detergents, and wearing face masks. Furthermore, in an attempt for religion to be relevant to the Covid 19 situation in the world, it should provide charitable services such as donating medical equipment to particular vulnerable groups in the society, and ensure that health facilities provided to society, schools, homes and hospitals adhere to Covid 19 regulations. Doctrinal practices in all religions such as the haji pilgrimages for the Muslims and the Ester passion festivals for the Christians which attract large crowds without observing containment measures ought to be suspended apparently for the period in which this diseases shall be active and until such time that it shall have been minimized in societies. I concur with Tillich's argument that theology ought to provide answers to philosophical questions in society by giving and disseminating effective messages anchored in their health authorities. Also contemporary theologians should take the lead in providing safe alternatives to their esteemed religious rituals and regular worship services.

### **Tillich's theological influence on Germany politics**

Tillich (1969), related religion to politics, art, philosophy, psychology and sociology. As chaplain of the Germany

army during the Nazi regime, he experienced people's sufferings and tragedies as well as the wounded and the dying, a situation which perceived Christianity as having failed to answer the existential human questions of tragedy and suffering (Tillich 1958). Tillich assessed the horrors of the first World War which resulted in the loss of life, destruction of property and the refugee question, in which activities led him to focus more on the containment measures embedded in his method of correlation in order to contextualize Christianity and to avert the impending ravages of the second world in Germany (people.bu.edu/~wwildman/tillich/resources/popculture\_politics01\_dalton.htm). As a consequent reaction of the aftermath of the 1<sup>st</sup> world war, Tillich condemned the actions of Germany during the period, while at the same time promoting the Germany culture. Furthermore, in his engagement with Germany politics, Tillich attacked the Germany government because it ushered in a situation of impunity and fascism thread during the Second World War. In 1941, Tillich, along with his fellow theologians Reinhold Niebuhr formed the democratic council for Germany which was a refugee organization to promote democracy in German: equality and social salvation, clear the Germany people of Nazi influence, create political unity during post war period, fight against nuclear weapons and their use and create a free Germany (file:///C:/Users/USER/AppData/Local/Temp/3764-Article%20Text-7601-1-10-20150825.pdf).

He publicly criticized President John F. Fredrick on the use of nuclear weapons by the time. Tillich's commitment with the politics in Germany started at the time when he presented powerful public lectures and speeches all over Germany while he was a lecturer of Theology at Frankfurt University. As a result of his engagement he came into direct conflict with the Nazi government, and subsequently Adolf Hitler who became the Germany Chancellor in 1933 dismissed him from University assignment at the Frankfurt University, Germany (Tillich, 1952). Coincidentally when Reinhold Niebuhr paid a courtesy call to Germany in 1933, and upon being fascinated by his writings, he enlisted Tillich to take up his new University teaching career as a professor of Religion at the New York City's Theological Seminary from 1933 to 1955 (Ibid). The problem noted here is, 'on how far the Christian religion and theologians ought to contextualize their message to mediate hostile political situations at hand, without distorting the intended message to the audience such that it can effectively solve the problems of global politics, problems of genocide, political violence, political marginalization and political impunities'.

### **Tillich's Systematic theology, Existential theology/philosophy and individualism**

In this caption I shall endeavour to illustrate the extent to

which Paul Tillich's ideas contributed to both systematic and existential theologies as a contemporary New Testament scholar. To begin with I shall show the relationship between philosophy and theology, then expound on Tillich's existential philosophy in the light of the dialectical theology in the New Testament.

Existential theology is a 20<sup>th</sup> century theological academic discipline. St Augustine (2013) concurs with Kierkegaard's theology (1962:20-24) that the only hope for fallen mankind is to recognize one's fall from essence to existence and to seek personal, existential salvation through Jesus Christ. (Kierkegaard, 1996:506) rightly observes that the main unresolved issue bestowed to contemporary theology by the immense influence of existentialism is the problem of an adequate doctrine of God in a fully existential theology. On one hand existence denotes to the things that have collapsed their essence, and so have slanted from their true being such as man as a finite being who once was perfect but later became fallen and inherited the sinful nature, while on the other hand essence is what an object essentially is, can be and should be. Essence then is a territory that cannot be besmirched by the human mind and this is manifested in regeneration, justification and sanctification. For instance the Bible does not shy away from showing the existential weakness of fallen humanity from Genesis chapter three, and the book of Romans chapters one to three verse twenty. The same chapter three in Romans as from verse twenty one to the end of the book of Roman categorically reiterates on the question of the essence of the human race and here I quote; "But now the righteousness of God without the law is revealed, being manifested and being witnessed by law and the prophets so that now man may not perish. The believer in Christ is now by grace shrouded under a blessed righteousness that the law from Mount Sinai can find neither fault nor dominion therein".

Steward (1952), concurs with Tillich by expounding that man's existential nature is his situation as enslaved in this contemporary temporal world because of his misuse of the freedom of choice. This is similar to Tillich's view where he asserts that man can retain his essence by choosing the right actions and values, and this qualifies man to move from the situation of existence to essence. In this view, (Allan and rockery, 1991:59) contends that existential philosophy impacted the New Testament to the extent that an understanding and interpretation of the New Testament is derived from the interpreter's existential awareness, in which case the interpreter becomes the source of meaning, and that, meaning shifts from the author to the reader. In addition existentialism influenced Rudolf *Bultman* as argued by *Hege* (2017). Existentialism therefore draws a conclusion that since the New Testament was written by writers who were under the influence of faith, then a faith response from its readers is the desired result. *Hasel* (1978:82-100), argues that since the New Testament is couched in

the language of myth, it has to be by faith demythologized and reconstructed existentially to establish its hermeneutical interpretation. It therefore follows that, on one hand Philosophy is a discipline which formulates questions of challenges inferred in human existence, while on the other hand theology investigates in the quest of finding solutions and supplying answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions raised by philosophy in human existence. This is an area which is of interest to shed light on by my own experience as a lecturer of Religion.

The relationship between theology and philosophy is not understood to the extent of downplaying one for the other. However, in this study I have through careful investigation endeavoured to explore that the two complements each other in an hypothetical consonance in that theology generates questions of human existence, while theology provides a dictionary of answers to those varied questions which would have remained a generic problem. In other version I am saying that the two spheres of philosophy and theology forms a vicious circle which motivates humanity to a situation where queries and responses are not disconnected. Existential theology is an acknowledgement that actual faith and divine implication cannot be originated in structured religions, rituals or texts Kierkegaard (1959). Existentialism stipulates that observing religious rules is not an indicator of real faith. Existential theology requires that faith be individual. Existentialism is all about an adherent being religious without God; being your own conqueror devoid of all the endorsements, and authorizations of religion or culture. These views have been expounded by Kierkegaard, 1813-1855, Heidegger (1962, 1995), Nietzsche (1966, 2000); Paul Tillich, 1886-1965; Berth (1886-1968), (Hasel, 1978:91-92,222); and Parrella, (2009). Other modern existentialists include but not limited to; Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, and Reinhold Niebuhr. For Paul Tillich, theology is required to serve the needs of the Christian church, which involves both speaking the truth as contained in the bible and providing contextual interpretation for each generation. The contextual interpretation would be attainable by establishing a close correlation with philosophy through the organization of subject matter and the lens of theology.

Kierkegaard (1962), and Martin Luther before him championed for a dominant Christian church to reform, repent and reconstruct a theology of praxis in conformity with the Christian teachings. During Kierkegaard's time, the Lutheran church had taken the same route of the Catholic, from which it had separated. Lutheran Church was established as the state church in Denmark and, the nation considered itself as God given duty to defend the church besides promoting her welfare by instituting compulsory religious training in all schools, and to safeguard the clergy by assuring them a respectable economic level, and by giving them the status of civil servants (Tillich, 1948). Thus, it was against this system

of security and state control that Kierkegaard rebelled. The security of a Christian church meant to him the betrayal of every tenet of Christ's teaching, and in extension a system that led to martyrdom of the early church. Therefore, for Kierkegaard, restoring Christianity to its origins was paramount, thus a return to the best practices of the early church/ faith, when faith was a personal, immediate, and personate experiences as opposed to an overly structured and overly intellectual pursuit of the proper procedures and the proper believe with regard to some obscure point of theology (Kierkegaard 1996). Religious existentialists are fundamentalists seeking to return to the earliest practices of faith. Like Kierkegaard, they reject the original Christian existentialists, they reject the notion that faith and reason can be reconciled.

Tillich (1951) opines that since God of the Christian church is an active being, His definition demands that we include His works and his relationship with them. Thus theology seek to comprehend God's creation, above all mankind, his situation, and God's redeeming efforts in relative to humanity. In this sense consequently, the term Theology implies:

- i. A curriculum of the doctrines of the Christian faith, grounded principally on the holy writs, positioned in the phenomenology of culture in over-all, expressed in a modern-day figure of speech, and interrelated to problems of life.
- ii. A Theology that narrates to the questions of general culture, science, cosmology.
- iii. A practical theology in the technical sense that is; how to preach, how to counsel, how to evangelize and to contextual theology.

### **Tillich's Theology of Freedom of choice**

Tillich (1939) pronounces that freedom is the essential nature of man, and that man make choices against his essential nature as a result of the existential nature of the doctrine of man. Commenting on Tillich's perceptions on the theology of freedom of choice Jacobs (1965), on one hand Points out four indicators that prevents the freedom of choice, which include and not limited to; religious conservatism, authoritarianism, religious intolerance and religious transcendentalism. Conservatism characteristic that negatively affects a free religious society are the conditional elements, the unapproachable nature of the unconditional, the minimum indication of the ultimate and the predisposition of confusing the holy with the bearers, leaders and clergy. Religious authoritarianism prevents adherents from criticizing the religious traditions, and these type of leaders influence the development of dictatorship type of leadership. On the other hand religious freedom presents four major features that are responsible for the creation free of society. The first of these is the institution of religious environment of

conditionality which leads to ultimate concerns, and the concrete ones which ushers in traditions, symbols and doctrines in religions (Grigg, 1985). The second indicator of free society is getting rid of religious authoritarianism in order to allow criticism and not to suppress them. This 2<sup>nd</sup> indicator leads to the creation of a third indicator of eliminating religious intolerance, thereby ushering in the concept of religious tolerant in societies as a consequent result, and as the prophets of old were tolerant to the persecutions of the time. The fourth aspect in creating a religious free society is made possible by developing mechanisms of eliminating religious transcendentalism in which both the vertical and the horizontal relationship of the society members are observed against a situation where people are made to concentrate only on the vertical development at the expense of the horizontal and interpersonal relationships (Gream, 1984). These four indicators of the creation of a free society will be accomplished through religious education where students are introduced to the study of religious symbols, religious cultures and religious doctrines.

It therefore follows that in human existence, freedom and destiny is the ultimate fulfilment and turning point. Freedom is experienced in the form of discussion, decision making and taking responsibility. Negotiation leads to an act of considering intentions. An individual evaluating is constantly directly above the motives that are evaluated. Destiny is the foundation of freedom and freedom participating in destiny. Destiny is 'myself' formed by nature, history and myself, the self, the self being bodily structures, psychic strivings, moral and spiritual characters, communal revelations, past experiences and total impact of the environment and therefore all decisions issue from a self which has been formed by nature and history.

In my engagement with this philosophy of existentialism, which subscribe to the freedom of choice, I found solace in the existential freedom of choice expounded by Augustine's (2010) conservative Christianity, where he discourses that the choice made by Adam in the garden of Eden caused the one act of the original sin which affected the whole creation by a negative choice made by one man. I also concur with William (2007) by asserting that the Jesus of the Christian religion came and provided freedom from the burden of humanity's inherited nature which was occasioned by Adam's choice of sin. Moreover, Ted (2019) postulates that God's grace liberated the self from the self in order for the self to love another self as itself.

### **The Theology of absolute Faith**

Tillich's faith subscribe to the theology that concerns the society ultimately, which is the unconditional concern manifested in material, mental and spiritual spheres (Tillich, 1957:121-131). Tillich trusts on the faith of

enculturation which is attained through the method of correlation. This theology of correlation creates a reciprocal relationship between culture and faith. Kelley (1982), in his work entitled the theology of Paul Tillich, affirms faith as the ultimate concern in the sense that whatsoever is perceived as ultimately important becomes the object of one's faith. This ultimate concern calls for the allegiance emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and mentally. Tillich's faith is not exclusive characteristics of the theistic faiths, but both the theistic theory and to those whose ultimate concern is seen in their nation, power and success. Absolute faith can transcend the theistic idea of God, and has three elements. The first element is the experience of the power of being which is present even in the face of the most radical manifestation of none being. The second element in absolute faith is the dependence of the experience of non-being on the experience of being and the dependence of the experience of meaninglessness on the experience of meaning. Even in the state of despair one has enough being to make despair possible. There is a third element in absolute faith, the acceptance of being accepted.

### **Theology: Method of correlation**

Hammond (1964). Contends that a theology of correlation seek to unearth contemporary efforts in an attempt to relate Christian doctrine to non-theological estimates of the human condition through the lens of existentialism examined above. Tillich incorporates the principle of theological dialogues and correlates them with contemporary culture through his 'method of correlation', which is in itself a methodology that draw parallelism from Christian exposition with the issues raised by existential, psychosomatic and metaphysical investigation. Tillich pronounces that theology and philosophy are interdependence, a position contended by Kerl Berth (1968), and as seen by Harrison (1986), who examined the correlation of both Barth and Tillich, especially where Barth articulates that a philosophical theology is impossible. In his introduction to Systematic theology, Tillich (1951) opines that: the discipline of philosophy conveys the questions inferred in human existence, and theology provides the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence, thus according to Tillich, theology becomes one of the sciences. This is a sphere which pulls man to a point where questions and answers are not separated. The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence. These answers are contained in the revelatory events on which Christianity is based and are taken by systematic theology from the source.

In his method of correlation, Tillich, (1935) rejects the three correlational methods of supranaturalism, humanism and dualism. In the first incidence, supranatu-

ralism philosophy which Tillich rejects clarifies the discontinuity between God and man, and earth and heaven. It also perceives the Christian message as the sum of the revealed truths which are injected into history without preparation, and that man must therefore become something else than human in order to receive divinity as expounded by Tertullian, Kierkegaard and Berth. As elaborate by *Dourly (1997)* Tillich rejects this supernaturalistic separation of the human and the divine. Secondly, Tillich rejects the philosophy of dualism in his method of correlation. Tillich's concept of dualism is that of a supernatural theology and a natural theology, supernatural structure as comprising the whole reality. According to Tillich, (Ibid) dualism relates these different fields through complementary methodologies. Consequently, Tillich rejects the method of dualism because of its artificiality. He sees a self-contradiction in the existence of God theology because he does not believe that Gods exists. He rejects a natural revelation, though he accepts that there is a revelation through nature. Thirdly, in his method of correlation, Tillich (1939), rejects the philosophy of humanism, in which the message of God is revolved through man's natural thought. The philosophy of humanism supplies answers to the questions of human existence. Humanism postulates that there is only one dimension in life which is the horizontal dimension without the vertical relations. Also humanism denies absolute norms and that there is no God who speak beyond man's existence. Therefore Tillich rejected liberal theology as heresy.

In my careful analysis of Tillich's theology of correlation, I raise my voice here by two major examples which I drew from Kenya. First, theology of correlation ought to provide relevant answers to major contemporary issues affecting major six institutions of society referred as of: economics, politics, religion, family education, recreation and sociology. In economics, theology ought to authenticate the ethics of integrity concerning all members of the society especially the observance of the moral law of the Decalogue recorded in Exodus (20:18-20). Integrity is the art of being truthfulness, honesty, accuracy and exhibiting strong ethical principles recorded in the Kenyan constitution (2010) chapters three and six which stipulates on bill of rights, and leadership and integrity issues respectfully. Theology here ought to propel an honest, transparency and accountable society members who include and not limited to politicians, cabinet ministers, principle secretaries, members of parliament, County governors, senators, religious leaders, business community, parastatal chiefs and all members of the community engaged in all sectors and institutions of the economy. Secondly this theology of correlation ought to mitigate the endemic human problems of hunger, diseases poverty, impunity and marginalization by the use of modern technology in agriculture, construction of modern hospitals and industrial development.

## The theology of Culture

The theology of culture is a branch of theology that studies culture and cultural phenomenon. It lies close to philosophy of culture, but has focus more on existentialism and spiritualism. Paul Tillich is considered as the first theologian who wrote about the theology of culture (Tillich 1959). In his book (Tillich, 1959), he posts that what is of essence is often communicated in analogy, metaphor, symbol and myth. He further contends that both religious symbols and signs poses a hidden meaning in which symbols represent a reality in their inner layer as opposed to signs (Tillich, 1957b). He also reveals that a theology of culture invokes the dynamics of making a distinction between the sacred and the secular. In the contemporary world the theology of culture deals with cultural differences between religions and thus share more on the theology of religions. (Adams, 1970), while commenting on the relationship between culture, science and theology contends that theology should be in dialogue with science, culture and religion, which is in agreement with the views of Tillich (1966). This was a radical statement following World War I, when religion largely denied the validity of culture, and when culture in turn denied the validity of religion. (Tillich) 1961), asserted that culture and religion are within each other, though a line should be drawn between the sacred and the secular. His aim was to find a common ground because there is a danger when religion endorses any culture. His existential concept of religion eliminated the gap between sacred and the secular. He was deeply concerned with the religious meaning of culture. He called religion 'the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern. To him, culture was the form of religion, which era by era registers intimate drive of the soul as art. And in these arguments, Tillich solved the question of the protestant theologians and the liberal's 19<sup>th</sup> theologian's failure to explain the relationship of Christian faith to culture, science and social values.

In my view, to a large extent I concur with Tillich in particular, where he states that culture and religion complement each other. My first point is that, I consider religion and culture as having a symbiosis relationship, in the sense that religion and culture are inseparable and that religious rituals seek to unite the believers in a specific religion in one hand, while on other hand religious rituals separates non-believers in a society. Here I mean that religion enters into a society, mingles with it and directs it towards achieving the desired goods. Secondly, religion is both an essential aspect of culture and a culture in itself. Again in this point I mean to say that religion and culture shapes one another because both religious and cultural beliefs molds an individual's sociological and psychological perspectives. Thirdly, an individual's religion is directly associated with his or her cultural beliefs and backgrounds. Fourthly, religion has been engaging the society through social welfare, social

development activities such as schools, hospitals, infrastructure, raising economies of scale, formulating the natural law which is a controlling agent in communities, restructuring politics and controlling family values. Fifth, Christian religion originated from the culture of the Hebrews. On this point I mean to say that Christ, the founder of the Christian church, inaugurated the church through the culture of the Jews and therefore to me, this Christianity has to be contextualized and incarnated through the culture of communities if it has to be understood, accepted and become an influence in societies. The problem I noted here is that the Christian religion that was propagated by the missionaries from the west in the 15<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was quite different from the religion that was established by Jesus Christ of Nazareth because the Christ Christianity was contextual and was wrapped in the culture of the recipient community, whereas the missionaries who brought Christianity to African presented an ethnocentric gospel which was to a large extent rebelled by the African culture.

### The Question of Being

The study of being is one of the components of metaphysics which is the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things, and it include abstract concepts such as being, reality, logic, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics identity, time and space. Metaphysics can also be defined as the study of things that do not change or the first cause of things (natural theology) or after the physical one. The title metaphysics was initially meant to warn student of Aristotle's philosophy that they should attempt metaphysics only after they had mastered the physical ones-14 books of Aristotle's physics as titled by editor Andronicus of Rhodes- which expounded on nature or the natural world, about change for change is the defining feature of the natural world. Therefore the subject matter of metaphysics is being/ the first causes of things/ that which does not change. Ontology is the study of what there is. It is the study of the general features or properties of what there is (being). King (1955), while examining Tillich's 'being' holds that God is the only metaphysical reality, and that the core of philosophy is the study of ontology, which is prior to every other, and so many classical problems of philosophy rotates around ontology. Tillich (1955) pointed out that God is being – itself in the sense that God is the power of being in everything and above everything. For the true meaning 'being itself', is the 'God above God' and 'the ground of being'. The question whether or not there is a god or the problem of the existence of the universal are problems of ontology. Arguments for and against the existence of god all clusters around the theme of ontology.

King (1955: <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/chapter-iii-co>), in his analysis of the concept

of ontology as expounded by Tillich, posts that Tillich offers another meaning of being as the 'man, self-world correlations'. He further contends that the core of Tillich's philosophy of the ontological question exhibits the concept of the self –world relationship, where man experiences himself as having a world to which he belongs. And this means that 'being' ought to encounter the world. This self-world relationships incorporates equally the surroundings in which man subsists and the general rules and concepts which man upholds and give hermeneutical interpretation. Man transcends the environment by developing it to be a better place for him to live. The ego-self in man always make him aware of the world around him and as well as himself.

Tillich (1955) further expounds that there are four categories of being and these are time, space, causality and substance. Time is the essential category of a being because it ties positive and a negative philosophical elements together. On one hand negative philosophers who emphasize the negative element of time point to the moment of time from past that is no more towards a future that is not yet, through a present which is the moving boundary line between past and future. On the other hand the positive philosophers point to the creative character of the temporal process to its directness and irreversibility, to the new produced within it. Neither of these two views are satisfactory because time cannot be illusory, but, if the present is actual, then the past and the future can be interconnected. Space means the present and physical location, causality means power from which things proceed while substance denotes to self-identity.

Tillich (1951) further presented a picture of being in the sense of its ontological elements which institutes the rudimentary edifice of a being. These elements becomes meaningful only in relation to their opposites such as; individual and universality, dynamic and form, and freedom and destiny. In the realm of individuality versus participation, Tillich contends that individuality is a value of the whole thing that subsists and that to be self is an indicator of individuality. Persons attain the attribute of personhood by participating in society by mind and reality. In the realm of dynamism and form Tillich (Ibid) explains that being something (dynamics) means possessing form and that whoever loses his form, loses his being. Dynamism philosophy is against the philosophy of static. For instance the biblical human nature is static because the nature of sin is irreversible, while the biblical gospel is dynamic because in it is vested the cosmic power to reverse the static nature of sin (Romans 5: 12).

Steward (1952) , on his examination of Tillich's being opine that structure of being which is found in man enable him to transcend and encounter the world around him, manipulate it subjectively and objectively. On one handman subjectively belongs to the world in the sense that he is separate from everything as to be able to look at it and act upon it, while on the other hand he belongs to the world objectively by being an intimate part



of the developments therein. Perhaps this was the dream of the liberal philosophy which presented a theology of crisis by influencing the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> world wars, thus Tillich and the Neo-orthodox theologians rejected it and advocated for a theology of faith.

### **Tillich' theology on Ultimate concern**

In his works on the ultimate concern of Paul Tillich, (Vater 2013), concurs that theology communicates of the objects that are of ultimate concern to mankind. Paul Tillich (1965) elaborates that the essence of religious attitude as 'ultimate concern is experienced as numinous or holy, distinct from all profane and ordinary realities. It is also experienced as overwhelming reality and valuable, so really, that in comparison, all other things appear empty and worthless, as such it demands total surrender and promises total fulfilment, and this call for a form of religious commitment in the form of worship, praise, love, gratitude, supplication, singing, confessions and, petitions'. For Tillich (1958:250-261), being religious is to be unconditionally concerned, whether in secular or sacred. The present-day norm is the "New Being in Jesus as the 'Christ' that becomes our 'Ultimate Concern (Ibid). An arguably central component of Tillich's (1961: 2-11) concept of faith is his notion that faith is "ecstatic". 'Ecstasy' means 'standing outside of oneself' - without ceasing to be oneself - with all the elements which are united in the personal center. It should also be noted that Tillich does not exclude atheists in his exposition of faith. Everyone has an ultimate concern, and this concern can be an act of faith, "even if the act of faith includes the denial of God.

### **Tillich on life and spirit**

According to Tillich, (1963), religious experience is used as a medium of spiritual knowledge with the recognizance of the divine conciseness which differentiates God's knowledge from other kinds of human knowledge. Tillich, (1951), analyzed the concept of the Spirit into sophisticated academic theology and philosophy, whereby, the Divine Spirit becomes the symbol that gives meaning to the revelatory experiences of God present. Tillich's theology further explains that the Spirit is the constitutive element of understanding God and the human person that completes the Trinitarian structure of his system (Ibid). Tillich's idea of the Holy Spirit is its correlative relationship to life, its place the trinity, its relationship to ecclesiology, culture and religion (Ibid). To him the divine spirit became the Spirit of Jesus Christ, constituting in him the Christ and the power of the New being in Him effective. *Berdyev*, (1962: 278-230), Concurr with Tillich on the question of the concept of the Spirit by invoking the place of ecstasy,

vision and prophecy in man's endeavor to understand reality. Furthermore, *Berdyev* (Ibid) asserts that the creative ecstasy and inspiration were a pledge of the living reality of God and man, and that the Spirit is the divine element in man.

Keith (2018) discourses that Paul Tillich is an exceptional modern theologian in dealing with the concept of life and spirit as the potential to engage with other disciplines such as theology, biology, chemistry, cosmology and social sciences. In his ontological understanding of life as a spirit which is so crucial in the ecological consideration, is so complex that enables powerful and critical inter-religious dialogue in environmental ethics. Otto (1923) agrees with Tillich by pointing out that the Holy Spirit is the reality of God being present to our spirit, the one who makes the New Being of the Christ alive in life and history.

### **Tillich on the Question of the theological Christology**

Tillich (1954), handled the problematic question of history of Christology in order to eliminate the historical uncertainty of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The question of the relation of history to faith and of the effect of the historicism on the Christian faith was a substance of enduring concern to Paul Tillich (Ibid). His position regarding this matter is that faith guarantees the historical basis for Christianity, a position he established from the 'you are the Christ the son of the living God' pronouncement of Simon Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus as recorded in the book of Mathew 16:16, and as commented by (Lockyer, 1972). The apostle Peter had recognized a radical truth about the Jesus of Nazareth which influenced Paul Tillich in his Christological arguments, although Tillich's argument were leaning towards Arianism and adoptions philosophies. Tillich's ideas in part are similar to Berth's acceptance of the biblical picture of Jesus of faith as the epistemological foundation (Weber, 1964). Then what is the relationship between Tillich's and Barth's Christological ideas?

To Berth (1933- (1918), faith is the response of mankind to God's faithfulness, it is also the faith of a human community which is of paramount and therefore to him a faith without human community is not faith. For instance a monastic life does not meet the prerequisite of a Christian faith because humanity means fellowship. It is worthwhile to note that Berth defines faith as a human act, which has to be done by the individual, but which cannot be done naturally, and so to him faith is a human work which makes man to respond towards gods work in Jesus Christ. To Berth therefore, the son who is the object of faith makes a man free to believe in Him, and the faith in Him becomes the act of a right freedom (*Troeltsch*, (1977: 179-210). Historical study cannot be used to prove the truth of the Christian faith, because

historians often times speak of probabilities but not absolute proof in matters of faith and this informed Earnest Troeltsch's (1977) shift from the theology of mediation to the problem for historical research into the writing of the New Testament, Schweitzer's quest for historical Jesus. Tillich's (1961) ideas concur with Bultman's (1961) dialectical theology and his synoptic tradition insights into the New Testament. Furthermore, Tillich's position finds solace in his teacher-Martin Kahler (1896), who attempted to solve the problem of how to be sure of the truth of Christian message by paralleling the Jesus of history with the Christ of faith. Tillich endeavored the question on how to interpret the Christian doctrine if the non-existence of Jesus as an historical person were to become a probability.

Tillich claimed that Christian belief was founded on the Biblical picture of Jesus and not on the historical Jesus. This radical position made him known in German as a radical theologian, while in America he was perceived as a proponent to Karl Berth's (1956) theology. He argued that due to limitation and unreliability of sources to the search of the historical Jesus, and in the quest of making Christ of faith independent of the uncertainties of the historical research, the historical Jesus cannot be found and therefore the Christ of faith stands the test of time because faith warrants what historical research cannot and at the same time faith gives certainty of its own foundation which is immune to critical investigation unaffected by historical research. He further maintains that the birth of the Christian religion does not coincide with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, but, rather when he was pronounced as the Christ by his disciples. To Tillich the Christian faith is founded upon the 'you are the Christ' by his disciple, and that without this realization there would never have been the demonstration of the new Being in the personal life designated to by the name Jesus. The facticity of the Jesus of Nazareth is guaranteed by faith in Christ that 'you are the Christ', which effects the transformation of reality for the community of faith.

## CONCLUSION

This paper concludes by analyzing and synthesizing Tillich's theology into four major spheres. First, is the area of the apologetic theology, where Tillich perceives theology as an apologetic tool to provide answers to the questions asked by philosophical theology. He views Christianity both from the outside as well as from the inside, and defends man's situation in the contemporary world by inventing major ways in which Christianity is related to secular culture. Secondly, Tillich define religion as the ultimate concern, where by to him theology as one of the major components of religion becomes an 'ultimate concern, and therefore, nothing except God is exempt from criticism. Third, is the sphere of Mediation theology,

which mediates between theology and religion, religion and culture and Lutheranism and Socialism. Last, but not least is the fourth sphere of the concept of being.

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