AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE AND BASIS OF KARL BARTH'S SOCIALISM

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Using certain insights of F.W. Marquardt's seminal, if controversial thesis, 'Theologie und Sozialismus : Das Bespiel Karl Barth's', as a point of departure, this thesis is an analysis of the nature and theological basis of Karl Barth's socialism. A comprehensive study of Barth's writings is conducted in relation to four areas, in an attempt to derive a more precise understanding of the nature of Barth's socialist commitment, and the manner in which Barth grounds this in his theology. The continuity and changes in both of these areas of Barth's thought are analysed, showing the parallel development of his theology and his socialist commitment. More significantly, the fundamental continuities underlying all these changes are identified, and it is argued that these continuities verify the general thesis that in Barth's theology there is a consistent attempt to ground adequately a socialist praxis that neither secularises the gospel, nor divinises the human struggle for freedom.

There is thus a dialectical relationship between his theology and his socialist praxis, each influences the other, but neither can be reduced to the other. Barth's theology arises in a context of socialist praxis, as a means of grounding and explicating that praxis in a theological base. It is therefore influenced by this socialist praxis, but it can never be reduced to it. It has another source which is God and God's Word, from which it derives its centre and its power, and although God and humans are held together inseparably in the incarnate Word Jesus, they cannot be 'confused' or form a God-human hybrid.

The four areas discussed are as follows. Firstly, there is a brief biographical account of Barth's socialist praxis and

commitment. The concentration on this area of Barth's life is to facilitate the discussion at hand, as it provides the basis for understanding why Barth deemed it necessary to ground his socialist praxis theologically. Because it is shown how important and consistent this praxis was for Barth, it can readily be argued that his theology and his political, socialist, praxis has its grounding in his theology.

The second area involves an analysis of Barth's statements on capitalism, socialism, communism and Marxism. This enables a clearer understanding of the contours of his socialism to be reached, and reveals Barth's basically consistent attitude towards these ideologies and economic systems. This chapter also includes a section on his often misunderstood position 'between East and West' in the Cold War period.

The third discussion revolves around an analysis of how Barth integrated certain Marxian insights and understandings into his theology. The issues discussed include the critique of capitalism, the nature of work, the relationship of theory and praxis, a discussion on revolution, and an analysis of his attitude towards religion and ideology. The basic feature of this analysis is that Barth is clearly seen both debating Marx at these points, and also accepting and integrating certain Marxian insights into his theology within a theologically derived centre.

The fourth and most important area involves a discussion of how Barth's theology can be seen to be, amongst other things, a way to ground a radical socialist commitment that at the same time avoids any religious sanctification of political practice. A structural paradigm basic to all Barth's theology is discovered, a paradigm finally explicated and located in Barth's recovery of Chalcedonian 'two-natures' Christology.

This paradigm is repeated in a series of parallel affirmations that undergird Barth's theology. These are, inter alia, the relationship between God's kingdom and the human struggle for freedom and justice; and the inter-relationship between the gospel and socialist praxis.

The conclusion points to the relevance of the study by locating it within the context of the struggle for a non-racial, democratic and socialist South Africa, and the related theological project.

PREFACE

In recent years the relationship between theology and socialism has once again become a crucial issue on the theological agenda. Both at a practical level, where Christians are engaged in the human struggle for personal, political and economic freedom, and at a theoretical level, where theologians are reflecting upon this liberatory praxis, the issue has become a "theological crux".[1] Much theology since the 1960's, has been developed "in the humus of Marxism".[2]

This thesis must be seen as part of this broader theological project. More specifically it is hoped that it can make a contribution to the struggle for freedom in South Africa, by enabling Christians who are wrestling with the crucial issue of how to relate their faith and political praxis without either losing their Christian identity, divinising their politics, or withdrawing from the struggle, to find a solid theological basis for their actions.

It is argued in the conclusion to this paper that the theology of Karl Barth resolves many of these tensions in a creative and humanising way, a way which enables one to hold together faith and praxis, theology and a socialist commitment, the Kingdom of God and the struggle for the human reign of justice and peace, without either separating them or dissolving the one into the other.

The theological significance of the topic is self-evident. Karl Barth is one of the most seminal theologians since Luther and Calvin. The fact that he was also a socialist, and that he understood his political ethics as being grounded in his dogmatics, makes an investigation of the links between his theological and his socialism imperative. This is the focus of

this study, the theological grounding of his socialist commitment. It is also, however, of necessity, an investigation into the nature of his socialism, tracing both the biographical contours of it and analysing his statements on it.

The sheer breadth and scope of Barth's theology makes this a difficult task. Nowhere does he specifically detail what is attempted here. There is a relative paucity of references to socialism, communism and Marxism in his Church Dogmatics, and it is not possible simply by cross-referencing these to draw the necessary links. In fact, this would be a misunderstanding of Barth's methodology, as he always insisted that all his theology has an implicit or explicit political dimension. It has been necessary, therefore, to attempt to cover as much of the corpus of Barth's writings as is possible, reading it with the express intention of uncovering this implicit political side. Approaching Barth in this fashion, a fashion which he himself legitimised, has opened up new vistas on his theology, and significant insights of his have been recovered. The danger of the exercise, however, is that of reducing his theology to this political dimension. Attempts have therefore been consistently made in this study to prevent this from happening and any points where this is not clear is to be seen in terms of this general qualification.

The question of inclusive language is a difficult one. I have not at any point altered the male language of the quoted texts, as it is understood that the issue of inclusive language was not important at the time most of the writings cited were published. In the body of the thesis however, more inclusive language has been used, such as 'human being' for 'man' (when used generically for the human person), 'Godself' for 'Himself', 'God's' for 'His', and so on.

My special thanks to Prof. Charles Villa-Vicencio, whose critical yet constructive supervision has made this work possible. Glenda Stewart's editorial skills eradicated many of the grammatical and stylistic errors and Heather Jones Petersen provided crucial assistance in the final proof-reading. Needless to say, any errors of substance or style that remain are my own responsibility.

I wish also to acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Human Sciences Research Council. As in the case of the above-mentioned persons, all opinions expressed or conclusions arrived at are those of the author, and are not to be regarded as those of the Council.

Finally, a special word of thanks to Heather, who has given me both the inspiration to attempt this task, and the space to complete it.

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

In 1972, F.W. Marquardt submitted a doctoral thesis on the socialism of Karl Barth[1] that provoked a storm of controversy within theological, and more specifically, within Barthian circles. Not only did Marquardt uncover a vast area of Barth's socialist praxis which previously had been unknown or ignored, but he also advanced the provocative and controversial thesis that Barth's mature theology had its true roots in this socialist activity.

This is not a thesis on Marquardt's interpretation of Karl Barth's theology. The brief analysis of it forms no more than a point of departure from which to engage in Barth's own work, in order to determine both the nature of his socialist praxis and commitment, and the theological basis thereof. A further limitation to this present study needs to be made. The Marquardt thesis, 'Theologie und Sozialismus; Das Bespiel Karl Barths', is a monumental work in its own right, and a careful study of it takes one into numerous areas of Barth's thought that are related to the socialist hypothesis. Given the limited nature of this particular study, attention is paid exclusively to the central focus of Marquardt's thesis,[2] setting aside some of the important but more peripheral concerns.

Methodologically this thesis is developed as follows: a brief discussion of the Marquardt thesis and some of the responses to it, is followed by an analysis of the nature and basis of Barth's socialism, conducted in relation to four narrowing circles. Firstly, there is a brief biographical account of Barth's socialist activities; from his early years as the 'Red pastor of Safenwil,[3] through his membership of the Swiss and German Social Democratic Parties, to his role in the political struggle in Nazi Germany and his position "between East and West"[4] in the Cold War period.[5]

The brief summary of the literature undertaken here is to highlight some of the crucial landmarks in Barth's political praxis, with a view to demonstrating his early socialist commitment. It is shown that he retained this ideological position to the end of his life, although in a modified and somewhat chastened form. It also highlights the links uncovered by Marquardt between crucial political and theological turning points.

Having dealt briefly with this broad circle, the focus is sharpened somewhat by concentrating on a more precise definition of the contours of Barth's socialism. This is done by an analysis of Barth's statements and comments on socialism, Marxism, communism and capitalism. The analysis takes the form of a demonstration of the consistency of Barth's position on these issues, and attempts to clarify the seemingly contradictory and confusing statements he makes at different points.

From this analysis it becomes clear that Barth remained committed to some form of socialism until the end of his life, even though the parameters of this changed somewhat through the decades. It is also shown that he rejected capitalism as fundamentally exploitative, that he rejected Marxism as a world-view while endorsing certain crucial Marxian insights, and that he had a highly critical but open stance towards communism as it had developed in Eastern Europe.

The third circle sharpens the focus once more, as it concentrates on Barth's response to and use of various critical issues and insights raised by Marx. These issues include, inter alia, the critique of capitalism, the nature of work, the relationship between theory and praxis, revolution, and ideology and religion.

It is argued that an analysis of Barth's response to these crucial areas of Marxian theory show both his insight into and his understanding of this theory, as well as his attempt to address himself to these issues. It is suggested that Barth is in continual dialogue with Marx (and Feuerbach) on these issues, even when it is not explicitly acknowledged, and that he has critically integrated many of these insights into his theology.

The fourth and most crucial circle, that which provides the central focus to this study, is an analysis of the theological basis of Barth's socialism. Contrary to a criticism often made of Barth,[6] it will be argued that his socialist praxis is rooted in his theology. It will also be conceded to Marquardt that there is a reciprocal relationship involved in this formulation, viz., that his socialist praxis in turn decisively influenced his theology. Whether 'from above', that is, from the perspective of his theology, or 'from below', from the perspective of his socialist commitments, Barth's theology and his socialism are inextricably linked.

This is demonstrated by a brief analysis of the crucial doctrines of God, creation and Christology. These include important discussions on the relationship between dogmatics and ethics, between nature and grace, and between the place of human culture and natural theology. Attention is also of necessity paid to Barth's analogical methodology as it was this that became the crucial tool for Barth in the shaping of his mature theology and enabled him to make the solid but critical link between his socialist activities and his dogmatic position.

In the conclusion there is a brief discussion of the relevance of Barth's theology, and more particularly of the theological basis of his socialism, to the situation of Christian faith and praxis in South Africa. It is argued that the strength of

Barth's position lies in the manner in which it holds together faith and action, theology and socialism, without either secularising the gospel or divinising the political struggle. In spite of the criticisms which have been levelled against his theological project as a whole, some of which are identified in the conclusion, it still provides a perduring legacy for all who, on the basis of Christian faith, are engaged in a struggle for political and economic liberation.

REFERENCES : CHAPTER 1

1. Later published as F.W. Marquardt 'Theology und Sozialismus: Das Bespiel Karl Barths (Munchen : Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1972).
2. Abstracted in his article 'Sozialismus bei Karl Barth' which first appeared in Junge Kirche 33 in 1972. Four years later it appeared in English under the title "Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth", which is published in Hunsinger, G. (Ed.) 'Karl Barth and Radical Politics'. (Philadelphia : Westminister, 1976). As far as possible references to Marquardt's thesis have been limited to this particular article, and for the sake of convenience to the English translation of it. It has, however, been necessary at times to refer to the larger work by way of clarification. Such references have been kept to an absolute minimum. Furthermore, because of the number of quotations from Barth's 'Church Dogmatics', these will be annotated in the body of the text itself as ('C.D.' 1/1, 1/2. 11/1 etc.) followed by the page number. Again these references are to the English translation of 'Kirchliche Dogmatiek', although at points there is a reference back to the German original for clarification.
3. Barth, K. 'Final Testimonies' (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1977) p.25.
4. in Barth, K. 'Against the Stream' (London : SCM, 1954).
5. A more extensive analysis is found in E. Busch 'Karl Barth: His life from letters and Autobiographical Texts' (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) and the articles by F.W. Marquardt 'Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth', H. Gollwitzer 'The Kingdom of God and Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth' and G. Hunsinger 'Towards a Radical Barth' all found in Hunsinger, G. (Ed.) op cit.
6. Herberg, W. (Ed.) 'Community, State and Church' (New York : Anchor, 1960) p.24 "(Barth) has developed no way of relating the ultimately serious concerns of faith to the

'fundamentally uninteresting' issues of politics".
See also West, C. 'Communism and the Theologians' (London: SCM, 1958) p.244.

CHAPTER 2 : THE MARQUARDT THESIS

Why did Marquardt's thesis come as such a shock to so many convinced Barthians and anti- or post-Barthians alike? Had Barth's theology been consistently misunderstood and misrepresented by his followers? If Marquardt's thesis is valid, then this was certainly the case with some of them.

Even more interesting and more perturbing is the question that H. Gollwitzer poses: "If, as Marquardt and I maintain...a continuity can be shown to extend from Safenwil to the end of Barth's life, then why didn't Barth himself make this so apparent that a controversy about it would be impossible?"[1]

Marquardt's argument, in summarised form, has two parts to it. The first is purely biographical in intention.[2] Here Marquardt, through extensive research into both published and unpublished Barthian material, reveals the full scope and intensity of Barth's socialist praxis and commitment. Although it had been common knowledge that Barth "remained a socialist of sorts throughout his life"[3] it was also maintained that this socialist commitment had become "so revitalised and thrown under the judgement of the divine No!"[4] that it had ceased to be an important factor in Barth's thinking. Rather than his socialism having decisively influenced his theology, as Marquardt was to maintain, it was seemingly clear to all who knew Barth that his theology had radically influenced and diluted his socialist commitment. The revolutionary comrade pastor of Safenwil who wrote the first editions of Romans, became a reformist social democrat, and eventually someone who lost interest in the "fundamentally uninteresting issues of politics".[5]

Against this generally accepted opinion, Marquardt's work reveals two things. Firstly, that the Barth of Safenwil was more active as a socialist than was commonly known, and

secondly, that there was a fundamental continuity between the young Barth and his later commitment and involvements.[6]

The biographical argument is traced more fully in the next chapter. Indeed, this is not the most important of Marquardt's points as Schellong correctly remarks:

> "as a biographical description, the assertion that "Karl Barth was a socialist" even if made more precise - contains too little value as a judgement, for the biographical is not so important and illuminating as Marquardt thinks."[7]

Against Schellong, however, it needs to be stated that the biographical is important as a first step, as it forms the indispensible basis for Marquardt's primary thesis. Without this biographical background, Marquardt's thesis would not only be open to attack on the basis of his assertion of the socialist aetiology of Barth's theology, but would be discounted before he began. If Barth's socialist commitment had not been as extensive as Marquardt maintains, it would be impossible for him to argue, as he does, that this socialist commitment and praxis was a decisive factor in the development and goal and continuity of Barth's theology.

The second and more controversial element of Marquardt's thesis is, bluntly stated, that Barth's theology arose out of this socialist praxis as a means of explicating and grounding it in something less ephemeral and class-conditioned than the models afforded by liberal theology.[8] His theology thus has its 'sitz-im-leben' in his socialist activity, both in its genesis, its later development[9] and its ethical goal.

Marquardt spells out the steps of this process as follows:

1. Karl Barth was a socialist.
2. His theology has its life setting in his socialist activity.

3. He turned to theology in order to seek the organic connection between the Bible and the newspaper, the new world and the collapsing bourgeois order.
4. The substance of his turn to theology was the construction of a concept of "God".[10]

Whilst it is not necessary to repeat all that Marquardt states in validation and qualification on these theses, it is important to look at certain key points that are made.

Firstly, concerning the 'sitz-im-leben'. Barth's own expressed self-understanding was that his theology arose out of his praxis. The well-known and oft-quoted statement about the pastor's "anxiety at preaching" is often held up to be the crucial impetus in the development of Barth's theology.[11] But this preaching, as Marquardt argues, had a broader base in Barth's pastoral activity, which for him included organising trade unions and fighting for worker's rights. It was the practical hermeneutic question that caused this anxiety: "how does one find an organic connection between the Bible and the newspaper, the new world of God's kingdom and the collapsing bourgeois order?"[12] The crisis thus generated by Barth's praxis was not, therefore, purely an existential one, but primarily a theological and practical one, rooted in the crucial issues raised by the conflict between his socialist praxis and the theological models of the time.

H. Hartwell, in a review of E. Thurneysen's "Karl Barth : Theologie und Sozialimus, den Briefen seiner Fruhzeit",[13] states that Thurneysen argues that "Barth's theology had much deeper roots than either the political or social crises surrounding that pastorate or his practical socialist activities, though they hastened its development". It is not Barth's socialist praxis that Thurneysen indicates as the starting point and innermost motivation of his thinking and acting, but the "inward affliction of a pastor tormented by

the conflict between the traditional theology of his time and on the other hand, the grim reality of the world."

Whilst quite obviously there is a need to exercise great caution in questioning the opinion of someone as close to Barth as Thurneysen, the quotation by Hartwell seems to beg an important question: What "firm ground" was Barth seeking when he turned to the Bible? If it was to 'resolve the conflict between traditional theology and the grim reality of the world', surely this 'reality' was something Barth discovered in its grim contours through his socialist praxis. As Barth's letter of 1911 to the Safenwil entrepeneur Hussy reveals,[14] it was his familiarity with Marx's radical criticism of the capitalist order and his pastoral experience of the alienation and exploitation of the proletariat that enabled him so radically to condemn the bourgeois order, and this at a time prior to it having its self-confidence shattered by the First World War. More than anyone else, Thurneysen would know of the young Barth's 'inward affliction', but surely by separating this from his socialist praxis there is a danger of splitting Barth's thinking from his praxis, and locating his affliction in an existential crisis unrelated to objective sociological conditions. Of course Barth experienced a crisis in his preaching, what is argued here is that this 'crisis' had a social as well as an existential basis.

Synthesising to an extent, Marquardt and Thurneysen, we obtain a somewhat more comprehensive picture. Barth's socialist praxis set him in conflict with the liberal theological models of his time which were so linked to the bourgeois order. His preaching, based on these models, became irrelevant to the crucial pastoral issues he was dealing with. To find 'firm ground' he turned to the Bible, in which he discovered "a strange new world".[15] This set up another two tensions, that between the Bible and the traditional theological models, and between the world of the Bible and that of the alienated

social order. Given these tensions internalised in the passionate mind of a gifted and socially-committed thinker, the theological task of reconstruction became an imperative.

On Marquardt's final assertion, that "the substance of Barth's turn to theology was the construction as a concept of 'God'," it is necessary to pause. Before looking at the details of this assertion, it is firstly important to respond again to Thurneysen, who argues that for Barth, God was never a concept, "but the living God of the Bible".[16] Of course this is true, but the criticism arises out of a misunderstanding of Marquardt's use of the term 'concept'. He himself states that it is not to be understood as a "positive technical definition, but as the intellectual ground of open-ended experience, a ground that as such opens up new experience".[17] Barth's quest was, as he later stated following Anselm, 'fides quaerens intellectum',[18] a seeking to understand the nature of the One who had gripped him, the One who confronted him in the Bible, the One revealed in Jesus Christ. As he stated in his lecture on the Bible already cited, "The contents of the Bible are 'God'. But what is the content of these contents? Something 'new' breaks forth! But what is the new?"[19]

The crucial and distinguishing mark of Barth's early theology, was his recovery of the transcendence of God, his description of God as "Wholly Other". In fact, Barth himself in the preface to the second edition of Romans makes the statement:

> "If I have a 'system' it consists in this, that I keep in mind as firmly as possible what Kierkegaard called 'the infinite qualitative difference' of time and eternity, in both its negative and positive significance...God is in heaven and thou art on earth."[20]

What are the roots of this rediscovery of transcendence? G.S. Hendry argues that it is the influence of Kant's transcendental method that is "fundamental and pervasive",

even though concealed in "general and less technical terms" by Barth.[21] Whilst Hendry produces evidence for this, Marquardt introduces a different perspective, by locating the concept of transcendence not in the ontological categories of Kant and Plato, but in the "transcendence of the real revolutionary situation where human beings were oppressed by the class structure of capitalist society".[22]

This rather cryptic statement needs to be somewhat unpacked. God's transcendence, whilst absolutely separated from this present concrete bourgeois order, is not an ontological transcendence beyond and above and totally unrelated to the world, but is an eschatological transcendence, the transcendence of the New Earth, the New Person, the New Age. It is thus a revolutionary transcendence of this current age, a revolution so profound and complete that it relativises and judges all other revolutions. But it is not unrelated to social reality. It is the reverse image of the present social totality, but it is a new reality, a new totality, which has as its content the Kingdom, the new rule of God.

This does two things: it makes an ideological critique of the concept of God irrelevant "because the concept of God here is consciously constructed as the reverse image of society".[23] This overcomes the severe limitation of all idealism, its ideological captivity, to which even Kant's transcendental method, which, in its transcendence, allows God to be mediated only via morality or 'practical reason', is exposed.[24] Secondly it prevents any assimilation of God with society, any accomodation of God with bourgeois sensibility or culture.[25] God is rather the One who is in the process of radically transforming and overthrowing both this society and all societies. He is the "One who makes all things new". "The 'logic of God' overthrows the 'logic of society' - this society as a present reality, not society in general. Even God's logic is a social logic, that of another society, one

not yet attained, even in the Soviet Union."[26] Marquardt in fact, identifies Marx's eleventh thesis against Feuerbach in Barth's description of God as "the fact which not only sheds light on, but materially changes all things"[27] (C.D. 11/1 p.258).

There is no need fundamentally to decide between Hendry and Marquardt. Certainly Barth acknowledged his indebtedness to Kant and Plato in the revision of Romans,[28] and the similarities between Barth and Kant at certain points must be conceded to Hendry.[29] However, given Barth's expressed aim, which was to provide a theological basis for his political and pastoral praxis, and his desire to rescue theology from its ideological captivity whilst retaining its social significance, Marquardt's argument becomes relatively forceful. Certainly in reading the essays 'The Problem of Ethics Today' (1922); 'The Word of God and the Task of the Ministry' (1922) and the famous Tambach lecture 'The Christian's Place in Society' (1919)[30] that marked his break with religious socialism, we are confronted with a person concerned to 'rescue' God and theology from its ideological captivity, both to liberal and religious-socialist culture; to pronounce the most radical No! on all human pretensions and aspirations masquerading as fundamentally important or religious; and yet to preserve the link between God and reality, eschatology and ethics, dogmatics and ministry, between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the World. For the early Barth, this is achieved, as Marquardt points out, by locating God's transcendence in a revolutionary future that God will bring about in the creation of the new person, the new heaven and the new earth.

In evaluating Marquardt, it is clear that he runs the danger of reductionism; of reducing Barth's theology to its political function and of subordinating theology to politics.[31] Hunsinger's comment that Marquardt almost reduces Barth "to a

kind of socialist Ritschl"[32] is telling. His further assessment is both balanced and fair:

> "Marquardt is not wrong to stress that there is a lasting socialist dimension to Barth's thought. He is wrong, rather, in stressing this dimension to the exclusion of all else, and at times subordinating all else to this dimension."[33]

In fairness to Marquardt, this criticism of reductionism must not be overstated. He acknowledges the many intellectual sources of Barth's thinking; Kant, Hegel, Marburg theology. Harnack's historical criticism, the Blumhardt's and Kutter "all belong to his lineage". But he goes on to stress that they provided the "elements", and that it was his "theological existence in Safenwil", existence as socialist praxis, that was its "real origin".[34]

Schellong's assessment of Marquardt focuses in on the crucial point of the "sociological question about context - to which everything today must be exposed - even... the theology of Karl Barth". He argues that it is Marquardt's strength that this question is raised in a way which still takes Barth's "theology seriously as theology", and which therefore is "non-reductionist".[35]

He also points out very helpfully the ambivalence in Barth's self-understanding of the link between his theology and the social context. He shows that even if Barth claims the freedom of theology and the theologian from all 'alien' influences, and at significant points argues for the 'strictly self-contained objectivity of theology', this does not prevent the sociological question from being put to Barth's theology. As Schellong rightly argues: "It must rather be asked whether the sociological way of posing questions can remain ignored as Barth ignored it."[36]

Robin Gill in his book 'Theology and Social Structure'[37] makes the point that there are "correspondences between certain theologies and the societies within which they are developed". This general thesis Barth would have readily accepted. He was clearly aware of the unhappy union between liberal nineteenth-century theology, liberal politics and ethics, and their bourgeois origin and basis. What is not so clear, however, is whether he would acknowledge the same process in his own theology, but with its socialist roots, as Marquardt has argued. Certainly he would admit that as far as theology is a human project it cannot avoid this,[38] just as it cannot avoid using language and concepts derived from philosophy e.g. his use of limit, analogy and acceptance of the 'homoousion'.[39] In so far as it is theology, however, Barth would argue that it is to be formed and shaped and derived from the One Word of God to which it must bear witness. The Word must judge our human words about it, it must shape and form and decisively and critically guide our theological language. Once this decisiveness is acknowledged and maintained, it is certainly possible, indeed a necessity, to acknowledge the social basis and impact of our statements. But this may never be the decisive word. As soon as this occurs, theology has lost its course and its source, and is neither true to its object and subject, nor free from the judgement of ideological suspicion.

Drawing the threads of this argument together, it is apparent that Marquardt's thesis is fundamentally sound, even if overstated at times and even if in contrast to Barth's self-understanding in places. Whether Barth would agree or not, there is a validity, or even more strongly, a necessity, to put the sociological question to all theologies. If this is done in a non-reductionist way where theology is seen to be not merely a reflection of a social base but to have its own identity and centre, then important and illuminating paths are opened up for theological investigation, as is seen in Marquardt's work.

Clearly, Barth's socialist praxis influenced his theology; the question that now needs to be addressed is to analyse the nature and extent of this shaping, in order to lead us to our most important focus, an understanding of the theological basis of his socialism.

REFERENCES : CHAPTER 2

1. In Hunsinger, op cit p.101.
2. 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit pp.39-66, 114-120.
3. Herberg, W. (Ed) 'Community, State and Church (New York : Anchor, 1960) p.22.
4. Ibid p.22.
5. Barth, K. CD iv/1 p.307, also quoted in Herberg op cit p.24.
6. 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.333.
7. Schellong, D. "On Reading Karl Barth from the Left" in Hunsinger, op cit p.150.
8. 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit pp.87-106, 126-159, 200-230.
9. Both Marquardt and Hunsinger have shown convincingly the decisive links between crucial turning points in Barth's theological development and his political and social engagements of the time, whilst avoiding the dangers of reducing these developments to these engagements. In Hunsinger, op cit pp.50-55 and 199-225.
10. Ibid p.47.
11. See Smart, J, (Ed.) 'Revolutionary Theology in the Making' (London : Epworth, 1964) p.13.
12. See Hunsinger, op cit p59; and Barth, K. in Smart, op cit p.45.
13. In the Scottish Journal of Theology vol. 27 1974 p.94f.
14. In Hunsinger, op cit p.40-45.
15. Barth, K. 'The Strange New World within the Bible' (1916) published in Barth, K. 'The Word of God and the Word of Man' (N.Y. : Harper, 1957). See also Marquardt's discussion of this, 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.94f.
16. In Hartwell, SJTh, op cit p.94.
17. In Hunsinger, op cit p.46.
18. See Barth, K. 'Anslem : Fides Quaerens Intellectum' (New York : World Publishing, 1962).

19. Barth, op cit p.46
20. Barth, K. Epistle to the Romans (2nd Edition) (London : SCM, 1933) p.10.
21. Hendry, C.S. 'The Transcendental Method in the Theology of Karl Barth' in Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, 1984.
22. In Hunsinger, op cit p.66.
23. Ibid, p.67.
24. Barth's rejection of idealism is clear and consistent. Crucially for this discussion, it is rejected because of the validity of the critique of it as ideological, which has its roots in Marx and Feuerbach. See CD 1/1 p.110, and especially CD iv/1 p.82, where it is also linked to the discussion of the 'Communicato idiomatum'.
25. CD iv/1 p.110: God's reconciliation "is not the restoration of a parallelism and equipoise in which God and the world, God and man, will now continue to live together happily. This is... the this-worldy, immanentist and middle-class understanding of the being in Jesus Christ given by God to the world".
26. In Hunsinger op cit p.67, also 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.206.
27. In Hunsinger, op cit p.187.
28. Barth, Romans op cit p.4.
29. Hendry identifies the following areas of convergence:
    (a) Barth's interest in the cognitive relations between the phenomenal world and its origin (Ursprung);
    (b) the acceptance of Kant's affirmation of religion as the limit of what is humanly possible, and the possibility of an entirely new order;
    (c) creation as 'saga', the origins of which are seen in Kant;
    (d) epistemology as a 'compound act of awareness and thoughts' (CD 111/2 p.400);
    (e) doctrine of reconciliation as an enactment in time of the primordial act of the being of God.

30. In 'Word of God and Word of Man' op cit.
31. See Husinger op cit p.190.
32. Ibid p.190
33. Ibid p.190.
34. In Hunsinger, op cit p.58. The difference between, for instance, Marquardt and Hunsinger, is primarily one of emphasis and qualification. This probably arises out of the danger inherent in any trail-blazing thesis, the problem of over-statement.
35. In Hunsinger, op cit p.142
36. Ibid p.144. Barth did not completely 'ignore' this. The incarnation of the Word means that it has a 'secular' side, in fact that it is enclosed in this secularity; and in this context the sociological question must be put. See CD 1/1 p.165. See footnote 38.
37. Gill, R. 'Theology and Social Structure' (London: Mowbray, 1977) p.5.
38. Referring to the 'Speech of God as the Mystery of God', Barth writes "in its secularity every aspect can be described sociologically as well". (CD 1/1 p.165)
39. See CD 111/1 p.378 & 379; CD 111/2 pp.113-117; CD 1/1 p.243, 244, 254; CD 1/1 p.438, 439.

CHAPTER 3 : A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

The limitations of this survey have been indicated in the introduction. At the risk of repetition it is again stated that there is an emphasis on Barth's socialist and political praxis that may seem one-sided. This is done consciously in order to highlight this often neglected and sometimes unknown background, thereby making the dialectical links between the development of theology and his socialist praxis more apparent.

3.1 Safenwil

Within three months of Barth's arrival at his first pastorate in the agricultural and industrial village of Safenwil, he began to address the 'Workers Association'. His famous address to socialists of the Aargau in the December of the same year (1911), entitled 'Jesus and the Movement for Social Justice',[1] shows that Barth already clearly understood and endorsed the Marxian Critique of capitalist society. He became involved in various socialist activities. Gollwitzer's comment is a telling one:

> "In Safenwil he established 3 unions, organised strikes, travelled up and down the country as a party speaker, offended the factory owners and well-to-do in his community, urged his presbyters to join the party, formed a 'red' presbytery and was decried as the 'red pastor', and, when called to the theological professorship in Gottingen, took pains that the community he turned over to a pastor as least as 'red' as he."[2]

Whilst Barth's support for the workers struggle in the community and on the factory floor was unequivocal, his support for the political expression of the socialist movement was more critical, and it was this critical freedom which he upheld that made him hesitant to join a political party. In 1913 he was approached to stand as a candidate for the SPD in

the elections for the Great Council, but declined.[3] With the outbreak of the First World War however, the first socialist international was shattered by the rising tide of nationalism. Barth spoke of the "apostasy of the party".[4] But it was in this crisis that he joined the Swiss SPD, a step he took in January 1915.[5] He explained his reasons to Thurneysen as being both theological and political; theological in that this step shows that "faith in the greatest does not exclude but includes within it work and suffering in the realm of the imperfect", and political, in that "the socialists ...will now have a right understanding of my public criticisms of the party."[6] Marquardt is clearly correct in stating "he now wanted to critize the party from within for having lost its radical socialist principles, previously he had advanced this criticism only under religious socialist auspices."[7]

In his political activity and theological writings in Safenwil we see clear links between the social problem with which he was confronted and the development of his theology. In his earlier articles he is obviously at home with the religious socialists, and his oft repeated assertion "A real Christian must be a socialist and a real socialist must be a Christian"[8] epitomises this phase. There is an easy relation between the kingdom of God and the movement for social justice, and the socialist movement and the possibility of revolutionary world transformation in its hands is closely allied or even identified with the revolutionary movement of God : "Jesus Christ <u>is</u> the movement for social justice."[9]

His radical praxis demanded a radical theology, and his period at Safenwil saw his growing disenchantment with the bourgeois liberal theology of his time. Marquardt's argument that Barth's theological break with liberalism had its roots in his socialist praxis makes somewhat more sense of Barth's vehement response to the actions of his professors in endorsing the Kaiser's war policies.[10] It was their nationalistic,

chauvanistic and militaristic social praxis that finally exposed to him the inadequacies of liberal theology, not only an intellectual dissatisfaction with the model, or a 'conversion to Calvin' as has sometimes been maintained, although these too were important. For the socialist Barth, these actions finally exposed the bourgeois, capitalist basis of liberalism, where:

> "The unconditional truths of the gospel are simply suspended for the time being and in the meantime a German war theology is put to work, its Christian trimmings consisting in a lot of talk about sacrifice and the like."[11]

Hunsinger's comment is instructive:

> Barth's political rejection of liberalism not only preceded but facilitated his theological rejection as liberalism. His political break with liberalism had led him to a new sense of God's sovereignty, and his sense of God's sovereignity was at stake in his revulsion at the events of August 1914."[12]

Barth's parallel disillusionment with the praxis of the socialist parties has already been noted, and it was this dual crisis of theology and politics, of church and party and, of course, the tensions he felt between liberal theology and political praxis, in which his new theological programme was forged. The intention of it was four-fold; to secure the freedom of God and theology from liberal bourgeois culture, to secure the socialist praxis of the proletariat from the crisis of the apostasy of the party, to transform the church into God's revolutionary agent, and to come to terms with the living God of the Bible. It was thus a programme of radical theology for radical praxis. Barth himself confirmed this in an interview in 1956: "I decided for theology because I felt a need to find a better basis for my social action."[13]

It was in this context that Barth began to write his

commentary on Romans, which was first published in 1919. The theme of the commentary, and of Barth's whole system in its early stages, is, as we have pointed out, his concept of the transcendence of God, the Krisis of all human reality. Its purpose becomes clear in light of the social context; it was to make it impossible for God to become ideologically bound to these demonic forms of praxis, or function as a means of justifying "the greatest atrocities of life - I think of the capitalist order and of the war".[14] God and theology were to be set free from this captivity, not as a retreat from praxis, but in order to facilitate "the establishment and growth of a new world, the world in which God and his morality reign."[15]

This concept of God implied a different model of revelation of Godself in the Logos. Religion is part of the alienated social totality, its most abstract expression and hence its most ideological. In this judgement Barth accepted and integrated Feuerbach's and Marx's understanding of the genesis and function of religion in alienated society.[16] But after this radical move, he made an even more radical one by exempting God's revelation of Godself in Jesus Christ from this critique. Christian faith is not religion. It is a response to the 'Wholly Other' God who is both the 'krisis' and justification of the world. The locus of revelation is thus eschatology, not religious experience.

The first edition of Romans achieved this radical eschatologizing of revelation. But there was still an inconsistency in his thought, an incomplete break with liberalism, seen in the persistence of the categories of religious socialism. The central point at which this becomes apparent was his view of the Kingdom of God as that which will take place as an organic, yet dialectical process within the world.[17] He had therefore simply transferred the problem of 'relationism' from the individual to the social, from religious experience as the locus of God's revelation, to the

kingdom in history as the locus. Religious socialism therefore failed to take the radical dialectic of human alienation and God's justification seriously enough. God and humans had been conflated within the locus of revolution and the kingdom.[18]

Even the famous lecture at Tambach in 1919[19] in which Barth finally parted with the religious socialists, shows him as still grappling with the problem. The gap between God's kingdom and our movement of protest and revolution is widened, and God's kingdom is given the ontological and ethical priority, but our protest still remains "an integral moment in the Kingdom of God", and the basis of the dialectic is still Hegelian in cast. "The great negative precedes the small one, as it precedes the small positive. The original is the synthesis. It is out of this that both the thesis and antithesis arise."[20]

3.2 From Religious Socialism to Dialectical Theology

Conceptually Barth was aware of this problem almost from the time Romans was published, but the impetus to revise it lay in the political events of 1920. The promise of socialism so apparent in the 1918 Russian revolution and the general strike in Switzerland, which had formed the context of his affirmation of the "revolutionary process of God's kingdom" in his first edition, had rapidly receded, and this tellingly exposed to Barth the dangers of all relationism, even one with a socialist base.[21]

The 1922 commentary therefore radicalised the dialectic in the direction indicated at Tambach, but without any possibility of a direct and reversible relation between God's work and human praxis. God is nowhere present in human experience, meeting only as a tangent to a circle. Human revolution must be negated and relativised by God's revolution, which is its limit, its krisis. Both the reactionary and the revolutionary

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1. In Hunsinger op cit.
2. In Hunsinger op cit p.79.
3. Busch, op cit p.71.
4. Ibid p.82
5. This action was typical of Barth. He often seemed to act 'Against the Stream'!
6. Smart op cit p.28.
7. in Hunsinger op cit p.47.
8. Ibid p.36.
9. Ibid p.19.
10. See Barth's description of this in 'The Humanity of God' (London : Collins, 1961) p.14.
11. Smart op cit p.26.
12. Hunsinger op cit p.202.
13. Ibid p.203.
14. 'The Word of God and the Word of Man' op cit p.18.
15. Ibid p.40.
16. See Chapter 5 below.
17. See Hunsinger 'Towards a radical Barth' op cit pp.208, 209
18. Ibid p.209.
19. In 'Word of God and Word of Man'.
20. Ibid p.299.
21. In Hunsinger op cit p.210.
22. Romans op cit pp.188, 425 and: "Whenever men claim to be able to see the Kingdom of God as a growing organism... what they see is not the Kingdom of God, but the tower of Babel" (p.432)
23. A good description of the biographical contours of the 'Zwischen den Zeiten', is found in Williams, E.C. 'A critical appraisal of the Grenzfall in Karl Barth's ethics'. (unpublished MA thesis, Pretoria, UNISA, 1981).
24. Hunsinger op cit p.213.
25. Barth,K. 'Final Testimonies' (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977) p.25.

are judged by the divine No![22]

This radical dialectic was to dominate his theology between 1921 and 1928, and it was in this period which he described as 'Zwischen den Zeiten',[23] that the clear theological link between socialist praxis and theology in the early Barth became almost obliterated, although, as we have seen from Marquardt, it remained in his doctrine of God. Nevertheless, as Hunsinger points out:

> "partly because of the subtlety of his view of hope and partly because of his heavy stress on God's revolution as the crisis of socialist action, Barth's theology in the second edition of Romans left the impression of advocating political complacency - an impression Barth did not intend, but one from which his theology was never fully to recover."[24]

But is is clear from Barth's writings and reflections of this time that his fundamental affirmation of left-wing politics remained.[25] Many things, however, caused it to lose its earlier passionate cutting-edge. Barth's appointment as Professor at Gottingen in 1921 was especially significant in this process. The heavy academic load he shouldered, for which he felt so ill-equipped, the fact of being in a foreign country, and his isolation from direct socialist praxis in the university milieu, all contributed to this seeming indifference to political and social issues.[26] And yet he remained committed to socialism, as many of his erstwhile supporters were to discover in the coming church struggle! Even his total dedication to and concentration on his academic work he was to interpret consistently as being motivated by political and social factors. He was still seeking a breakthrough to the true and adequate theological grounds for radical social praxis, that would not compromise or ideologically bind the living God, as Gollwitzer remarks in this long but perceptive quotation:

> "With the Safenwil thesis 'Jesus is the movement for social justice'; this breakthrough could not in the long run have been accomplished. It sounded too much like a naive attempt to legitimate one's own decision through a venerable historical example, or even more like an attempt to anchor one's own attitude in something absolute. That, however, would have been the illicit reversal to which every suspicion of ideology is exposed. If there really is an ineluctable momentum leading from the socialism of God's kingdom to action within the socialist movement, if Jesus is in this sense the movement for social justice and the God revealed in him in in this sense socialist, if that remained valid and uncontested despite the now clearly perceived infinite qualitative difference between Creator and creation, between the true socialism of God's kingdom and the always impure socialism of human politics, then simply to assert as much is insufficient. In order to prevent this assertion from all brazen identification it now had to be grounded theologically ....in the concept of God ... (&)[27]in the working out of the Christological basis."

Certain of the theological writings of this period reveal this concern. His essay on Ludwig Feuerbach in 1926 shows that he was continually wrestling with Feuerbach's radical criticism of theology. This concern has two poles. One is to prevent 'theology from becoming anthropology', by making the theological centre what God is <u>in Godself</u> rather than what God is for human beings.[28] The only way to repulse this attack effectively is to be certain that human beings' "relation with God is in every respect, in principle, an irreversible relation."[29] This is the side of the debate which seemingly occupied most of Barth's effort. But it must not and cannot, be divorced from the other Feuerbachian critique of theology that Barth was concerned to deal with, and that was to show that real talk about God only takes place where there is a deep concern with the reality of human being, in talk of God which stands in relation "to the real life of men in their cities and villages, their taverns and their inns".[30] In this

plea for realism, there is a radical critique of idealism in which Barth identifies an affirmation of the true spirit of the Old and New Testaments.

This realism is also linked to socialism. The battle against idealism and theological abstractions is a battle for the emancipation of the workers, and in this Barth concurs. "The Church will be free of Feuerbach's question only when its ethics have been radically separated from both the ancient and modern hypostases. Then the Church will again win belief that its God is no illusion - but never until then."[31] Clearly Barth had not abandoned the question of orthopraxis in his quest for a new orthodoxy!

3.3 The Shift to Analogy 1928-1932

It had become clear to Barth in this period that his dialectical theology had not fully met the force of Feuerbach's arguments on either level. Hunsinger comments that formally, Barth had merely inverted liberal theology by focussing on God at the expense of human being; materially it became impossible for him to affirm the incarnation, and his doctrine of God was too abstract and reliant on philosophical categories of transcendence; and politically the dialectic seemed to result in a secularism like the Lutheran two-kingdom doctrine, where God is no longer the ground and orientation of ethical socialist action.[32]

In his book on Anselm,[33] Barth turned from dialectics to analogy, and it was in the concept and use of analogy rather than dialectics that Barth was finally able to ground his theology and praxis, and simultaneously meet the objections of Feuerbach that had so concerned him. At much the same time, the first salvoes of the church struggle were fired, and these two events on a theoretical and a practical level once more fused into a new basis which inextricably, yet irreversibly

linked God and humans, faith and praxis, church and state, justification and justice, God's kingdom and human struggles for justice and freedom. This relationship was grounded no longer in the transcendent and judging God of dialectical theology, but in Jesus Christ as the incarnate God, in the gracious God who is unequivocally for us, in the servant God who 'goes into the far country on our behalf'[34] and in the 'analogy of faith'.

The full extent of this analogical method and its relationship to the grounding of Barth's political praxis and socialist commitment is discussed in detail in a later chapter,[35] and so will not be elaborated on here. There is rather a concentration on the more biographical elements at this point, recognising once again the clear link between the development of Barth's theology and its social context.

3.4 The Church Struggle 1932 - 1945

As in 1915, Barth's decision to join the German SPD in 1932 came at a time of deep crisis for the party, as they were under increasing pressure from the National Socialists. In 1933 when the SPD recommended to its prominent members that they resign from the party for tactical reasons, Barth, unlike Tillich, refused to do so. For him, the freedom to belong to the SPD "belongs to my existence, and whoever no longer wants me as such cannot have me at all".[36] His actions clearly reveal that his resistance to Hitler's totalitarianism was not simply theological as is often portrayed, it was also profoundly political. Barth himself describes the link between the political and theological at this time as follows:

> "But then came Hitlerism. I plunged into politics again, and there emerged the Barmen declaration."[37]

For the Barth of this period, politics and theology are

inextricably linked: "It was the truth of the sentence that God is One that the third Reich of Adolf Hitler made shipwreck." (CD 11/1 p.444) He realised in retrospect, however, that this link was not made clear enough in the crucial early years of the church struggle. He criticised the confessing church for not understanding that "the first commandment" under National Socialism is not just a 'religious' decision. It is in fact a political decision.[38] For Barth it is "no fortuitous happening"[39] that the Church conflict revealed itself more and more as a political one, this link was there for Barth from the start. This is also seen in his preface to the first volume of Church Dogmatics, written during the church struggle, where Barth writes:

> "I am firmly convinced that we cannot reach the clarifications, especially in the broad field of politics, which are necessary today and to which theology today might have a word to say... without having previously reached those comprehensive clarifications in theology and about theology itself, with which we should be concerned here." (CD1/1 :pxiii)

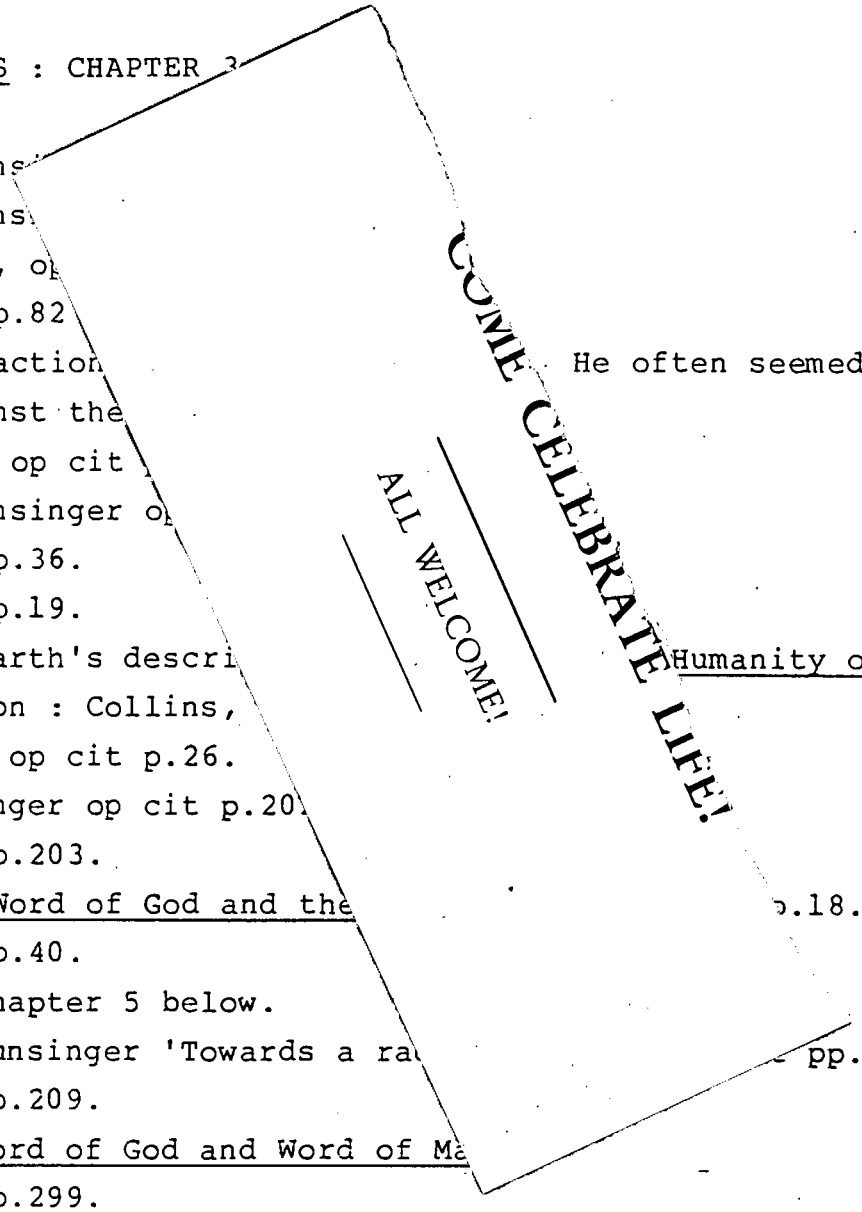
Marquardt's research has also revealed fascinating insights into Barth's political activities from 1935 to the end of the war.[40] Back in Switzerland, after having been expelled from Germany by the National Socialists, Barth not only participated in the church struggle from the outside, but also the political struggle against Nazism. His participation in 1945 on the communist led "Committee for a Free Germany" showed once again where his political commitments lay.

3.5 The Post-War Years

When Barth returned to Basle, he did not become actively involved in socialist politics once more, although as he stated, his "political position was plain enough", as was revealed when, in 1956, in the Hungarian uprising he "became

notorious throughout Switzerland because I would not join in condemning the communists".[41] Not only in Switzerland, but equally in America this action of Barth's led to scathing attacks on both him and his theology. "Why is Barth silent on Hungary!" roared Niebuhr from across the Atlantic.[42]

As Barth's attitude to communism and capitalism and the split between East and West is discussed in the next chapter, it will not be examined further here. What is clear, however, is that Barth's political allegiances in the post-war period were still to the left, and that he remained clearly committed to socialist politics and praxis until the end of his life. What has also become apparent are the clear links that can be drawn between his theological development and the political and social context of his time, and that his theology was decisively influenced by his commitment to socialist praxis, and his wish to ground this in a substantial and solid theological foundation.



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16. See Chapter 5 below.
17. See Hunsinger 'Towards a ra pp.208, 209
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20. Ibid p.299.
21. In Hunsinger op cit p.210.
22. Romans op cit pp.188, 425 and: "Whenever men claim to be able to see the Kingdom of God as a growing organism... what they see is not the Kingdom of God, but the tower of Babel" (p.432)
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6. Smart op cit p.28.
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26. Gollwitzer writes: "The antibourgeois elan of the Safenwil pastor lost its force when, upon entering the academic milieu, the previous praxis could no longer be continued. Our classes hold us all tenaciously fast. The counter-weight of our ideas cannot offset the influence of our social existence on our consciousness" (in Hunsinger op cit p.114).
27. Hunsinger op cit p.87.
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33. Barth, K. 'Anslem : Fides Quarens Intellectum' op cit which Barth later described as his "most satisfactory work" (in 'How I changed my Mind' Edinburgh : St. Andrews Press, 1969, p.134).
34. CD iv/1 p.157.
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CHAPTER 4 : AN ANALYSIS OF BARTH'S WRITINGS ON SOCIALISM, MARXISM, COMMUNISM AND CAPITALISM

In the last few years of his life, when asked the question "Were you a Marxist?", Karl Barth responded emphatically: "No, I never was that, decidedly not. I was never a doctrinaire Socialist."[1] In the first edition of Romans, however, Barth was seen looking forward with hope for the day "when the now-dying ember of Marxist dogma will blaze forth anew as the world truth, when the socialist church will be raised from the dead in a world become socialist."[2]

How are these two statements reconciled? Had Barth himself forgotten how radical he once sounded, or is there perhaps still a basic continuity and coherence between them? These are some of the issues that are addressed in this chapter. By a careful analysis of Barth's writings on the subjects of capitalism, Marxism, socialism and communism, a somewhat changing but fundamentally consistent attitude towards them is identified.

It is argued in this section that:

(1) Barth was consistently critical of, and opposed to, the the capitalist economic order;
(2) Whilst he rejected Marxism as a 'world view' from his earliest years, he accepted and integrated many aspects of the Marxian theoretical analysis into his thinking;
(3) His life-long commitment to socialism was a fundamentally 'practical' one;
(4) He had a profoundly critical but basically open attitude to empirical communism;
(5) His later position 'between East and West' was not a theological abstraction or a weak neutrality, but was grounded in his hope for a truly socialist future, in both East and West.

Each of these arguments is analysed in turn.

4.1 Barth was consistently critical of, and opposed to, the capitalist economic order

In one of Barth's earliest published articles, "Jesus Christ and the Movement for Social Justice" (1911), and more particularly in Barth's open letter responding to the Safenwil industrialist, Hussy, who had vehemently attacked him for it, it is very apparent that the young Barth both understood and endorsed the radical Marxian critique of the capitalist order.

Capitalism, he states "is the system of production which makes the proletariat into a dependant wage earner whose existence is constantly insecure." This comes about because the means of production are the "private property of one of the co-workers, namely, the boss, the factory owner". By this ownership, the profits of the enterprise are also accounted as the "factory owner's private property" and the workers who have contributed their labour to the process are paid merely a pitiful wage. This system is ethically unjust, in that the one "becomes a distinguished person, amasses capital, lives in a beautiful house, and is granted all the pleasures of life, while the other must live from hand to mouth". There is thus a fundamental "class contradiction" which is "the daily crime of capitalism", the basis of which is private ownership of the means of production. This whole system, "especially its underlying principle : private property", argues Barth, "must fall".[4]

In his reply to Hussy, Barth expands on this critique:

"The contemporary economic system is anarchy from above", which because it "stands under the compulsion dictated by competition" leads necessarily "to overproduction and to periodic crises" which have serious consequences for the

working class. The basic injustice in capitalism lies in the concept of 'surplus value', whereby "the net profits which become part of the private wealth of the entrepreneur are by no means equivalent to his contribution to the common production", but are rather extracted from the workers who do not share in the profits but are simply paid a wage for their contribution. "Thus inequality and dependence is precisely the injustice that we don't want,"[5] writes Barth.

It is clear from these two articles that Barth's rejection of capitalism in his early years was a fundamental and structural one, and not merely moral indignation against some of the excesses of early laissez faire capitalism. This is extremely significant as it locates Barth clearly within a 'revolutionary socialist' as opposed to a 'reformist liberal', position. It was simply not enough merely to ameliorate some of the rough edges of capitalism; what was required was the overthrow of its base, the private ownership of the means of production.

When his later writings are analysed, it becomes apparent that this radical and structural critique of capitalism remains with Barth to the end. It is especially his section on 'Work' in CD 111/4 which reveals this continuity, and therefore needs to be analysed more closely.[6]

Firstly, capitalism is rejected because of the competitive nature of work it embodies,

> "work under the sign of competition will always imply as such work in the form of a conflict and will always be an inhuman activity, and therefore an activity which, in spite of every conceivable alleviation or attempt at relief can never stand before the command of God." (p.541)

Secondly, because of the private ownership of the means of

production, "the modern industrial process" in the West rests on "the principle of exploitation of some by others", where the capitalists "earn more than they are entitled to". (542) This is in spite of the power of the organised working-class and the contract between unions and employees which has done much to better the material conditions of the working-class, and to 'balance' the interests of the two classes. Barth's indictment of this 'balanced' feature of the modern industrial state is striking:

> "This is social injustice in a form which is less blatant than simple competition...but which is even more oppressive and provoking in its ostensible show of justice."(542)

Barth then analyses all the arguments usually advanced in favour of capitalism; the fact that:

a) capitalists are benefactors because they give work to others;
b) many capitalists are hard and creative workers themselves;
c) capitalism has provided an incomparable economic and technical stimulus;
d) capitalism has shown great adaptability and flexibility in coping with the crises it has produced. (543)

Again, however, Barth's criticism is radical:

> "of what avail are all these arguments in face of the simple fact that this system does permit in practice and demand in principle that man should make another man and his work a means to his own ends, and therefore a mere instrument, and this is inhuman and therefore constitutes an injustice" (543)

Barth does not leave it at that however. He concedes that "there are and have been many possible counter-movements against the system, even though the system and its injustices

are accepted". There have been and still are "fine possibilities of free reciprocal loyalty between employer and employee"; there has been, even within capitalism, "a genuine concern about the excesses of 'laissez faire capitalism'; and under the "great and radical analysis, questioning and criticism of the system" by Marx, the working class has awoken to its power when "properly organised", both politically and on the shop-floor in the form of trade unions.(543)

But again Barth responds:

> "What we cannot say (in spite of all this! RMP), however, is that this exploitation has been brought to an end, that there are no classes with opposing interests and that there is no more class struggle" (544)

Clearly there is a fundamental continuity in Barth's analysis and critique of capitalism. Because of the basic socialist and Marxian content of the critique, Barth can never fully endorse liberal efforts at reforming the system. His theoretical critique is revolutionary to the end; the system needs to be overthrown, not just to have its excesses curbed. No amount of social tinkering, or compensatory or ameliatory measures can alter its fundamental injustice, against which the command of God is directed.

This is very important for a correct understanding of Barth. The fact that his attitude towards capitalism is the same in both his earlier, "more-radical" stage, and his more pragmatic mature stage, means that Barth remains fundamentally and decisively committed to the "revolutionary" overcoming of the capitalist order. What changes is the basis and locus of this revolution; it shifts from his earlier vision of the revolutionary potential of the international socialist movement in the period prior to 1918, to his hopes for the Christian community and the "great positive possibility" of

love, that becomes "the essentially revolutionary action".[7] Both Gollwitzer and Marquardt[8] analyse this shift from radical secular socialism to radical ecclesiological socialist praxis. With the disappointments of the Bolshevik revolution, and the embourgeoisment of social democracy in the West, Barth, in company with most European Marxists, sought a new locus for revolutionary activity. In this context Barth turned once more to the Church, and poured his energy into the the radicalising of its potential. Why the Church? Because, as Gollwitzer states,

> "In and through her...was and is transmitted, as brokenly and impurely as ever, that Gospel of God's kingdom through which Barth had become a socialist. She stood therefore - despite the reactionary role she had played in society - under the demand of the gospel to be a social-revolutionary force, even if not the, yet in co-operation with other, an agent of revolution."[9]

What also changes is Barth's relativising of the potentials and possibilities of all human revolutions; none is radical enough, and therefore none can be absolutised. This leads him to a more pragmatic acceptance of the possibilities of reform, but without totally negating his fundamental, revolutionary critique.

4.2 Whilst Barth rejected Marxism as a 'world view' from his earliest years, he accepted and integrated many aspects of the Marxian theoretical analysis into his thinking

Barth's use of the perjorative term "doctrinaire socialist" to describe what he means by the term Marxist, is instructive,[10] as it reveals his basic antipathy to the overall theoretical scheme of Marxism. For Barth from his earliest years, Marxism as a 'world-view' was incompatible with Christianity. Marxism is in fact a pseudo-religion, as it cannot dispense with the development of a "basic, declarative ideology and mythology

i.e. some sort of over-world has to be dreamed into it too" which results in "the founding of a new religion" (CD 1/2 p.323).

This rejection of the ideological structure of Marxism is in line with Barth's rejection of all alliances between Christianity and any world-view. But importantly, a rejection of the system does not mean a rejection of its individual components. Concerning all world-views, Barth writes:

> "Faith is radically dialogical to them. In the last respect it has never taken them seriously, even though it has fiercely opposed them or intimately allied itself to them. It accepts no responsibility for their foundation, structure, validity or propogation. It moves within their territory but cannot be detained at their frontiers." (CD III/2 p.9)

It is this 'moving within the territory' that is of concern, as it is here that Barth integrates certain crucial Marxian insights into his thinking. Because of the importance of this topic the next chapter is devoted to it, but certain features can be introduced at this point. The most significant aspect of it is Barth's acceptance of Marx's analysis and critique of the structural injustice of the capitalist order which has already been discussed. On the level of economic and social analysis, Marx's insights remain decisive for Barth, and this has a significant effect on both his ethics and his theology. Without this insight it is doubtful whether Barth could have consistently identified "the command of God" to be against the capitalist order. (CD 111/4 p.541). He was critically aware of attempting to anachronistically find the basis of the critique of the capitalist order in the Bible,[11] although it does of course have continuities in the rejection of private property as sin. No, the basis of Barth's critique of capitalism was his understanding, and acceptance, of the Marxian analysis of it.

Secondly, his analysis of 'work' has a definite Marxian basis as has been already shown, and to which a later section is devoted. His basic acceptance of the Marxian critique of religion and ideology has also been mentioned, and this, together with discussions on revolution and the class-struggle, and the relationship between theory and praxis, form the heart of the next chapter.

4.3 His life-long commitment to Socialism was a fundamentally practical one

In many ways this thesis is the corollary of the previous one, as it spells out in more detail the positive contours of Barth's socialism. In the same interview already cited, Barth states that he had a "limited and for the most part practical interest in socialism".[12]

The qualifier "limited" needs to be set in its correct context. There is absolutely no doubt that this is a correct assessment of Barth's direct interest in socialism. He was never, except perhaps in his earlier years, interested in socialism for socialism's sake, hence his disdain for 'doctrinaire socialism'. As he was not theoretically committed to socialism, and as he saw his fundamental task and calling as a theologian, he was never 'detained at the frontiers' of theoretical disputes and debates within socialism. His socialism was always "exoteric, not esoteric", as he stated in a letter to Tillich of 1933. For him

> "membership in the SPD does not mean for me a confession to the idea and world view of socialism... Membership in the SPD means for me simply a practical political decision. Placed before the various options that confront a person in this regard, I consider it right 'rebus sic stantibus' to espouse the party (1) of the working class, (2) of democracy (3) of antimilitarism, and

> (4) of a conscious, but judicious, affirmation of the German people.'[13]

But this does not gainsay what Marquardt has exposed, that Barth's concern as a theologian was not an abstract one, but was one directly related to praxis, and that this praxis was socialist praxis. As has already been discussed, he understood his pre-occupation with his theological task, especially the writing of the Church Dogmatics, as a practical and political task:

> "we cannot reach the clarifications, especially in the broad field of politics, which are necessary today and to which theology today might have a word to say... without having previously reached those comprehensive clarifications in theology about theology itself, with which we should be concerned here." (CD 1/ pxiii)

Barth's second qualification of his interest in socialism as being 'only a practical one', is thus easy to understand, although, as is clear, it is not limited to the practical but includes certain crucial theoretical insights as well.

Barth's practical engagement in socialist activities has already been traced, as has his progressive disillusionment with the political socialist movements which nevertheless did not prevent him from identifying himself with them at critical times. In analysing his writings on socialism, this practical engagement needs to be kept in mind, or else his basic position can be misunderstood.

Beginning again with his 1911 article, Barth is seen to be making the bold links between socialism and the demands of Jesus. Even then however, he separates out "what socialists do and what socialists want".[14] He was always concerned to penetrate to the "eternal, permanent and general" insights of socialism, and to separate these from both particular actions of socialists he disagreed with, and other obfuscating

elements in socialist dogma. This concern remained to the end, although grounded in a different theological model, as is seen in the last chapter.[15]

His criticisms of socialism thus occur at two levels: at certain actions of socialist parties and individuals, and at certain "anti-Christian" aspects of socialist ideology, such as their thoroughgoing materialism and atheism. And yet against these criticisms must be balanced firstly, his readiness to engage in socialist activity even when strongly critical of his 'comrades', a feature not only of his early life but also of his political decisions of 1932 and his participation in the 'Committee for Free Germany' already discussed, and secondly, his positive assessment and integration of certain crucial theoretical features of socialism.

It is now possible to trace the development and basic coherence in Barth's writings on socialism. In the second edition of Romans, we see a Barth already chastened by the "compromising of those who held the socialist expectation" by the events of World War I. Even here, however, he can state "there is... much in the cause of socialism which evokes Christian approval".[16] Nearly forty years later he writes in a similar vein:

> "it will always be inevitable that there will be impulses in this (socialist RMP) direction whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and heard." (CD iv/2 p.178)

There is clearly here a relativising of Barth's position; from an unequivocal affirmation of socialism in 1911, to his "much that evokes approval" in 1922 to his "certain impulses in this direction" of 1958. What is definitely retained, however, is the link between the demands of the gospel, the command of God, and an open socialist praxis.

As has already been seen, capitalism, even in its most liberal and progressive form, was never acceptable to Barth. But he is never dogmatic about the alternative, as he states in his important essay "The Christian Community and the Civil Community" (1946).[17]

The Church, "in choosing between the various socialist possibilities (social-liberalism? co-operativism? syndicatism? free-trade? moderate or radical Marxism?) will always choose the movement from which it can expect the greatest measure of social justice". (emphasis mine)

and again in CD iv/3:

> "The Christian community both can and should espouse the cause of this or that branch of social progress or even socialism in the form most helpful at a specific time and place and in a specific situation...";

with it's inevitable critical rider:

> "But its decisive word cannot consist in the proclamation of social progress or socialism." (CD iv/3 p.545)

What are the assessments of the various commentators? Clearly, Gollwitzer's comment that "Karl Barth knew what he was saying when he spoke of socialism"[18] is true. Hunsinger's clarification is also helpful:

> "Karl Barth never conceived of socialism as an 'ideology', or a system of ideas. For him, socialism was rather, a series of concrete goals with strong affinities to the Kingdom of God."[19]

What has become clear is that Barth's socialism was never dogmatic or doctrinaire; he could never take the internal arguments and discussions about its nature with the same seriousness as he would the theological task. This did not in any way undermine for Barth its importance, but it preserved

for him the crucial eschatological proviso between the Kingdom of God and empirical socialism, and secured the task of theology as theology, not disguised sociology or political science.[20]

4.4 Barth had a profoundly critical but basically open attitude to empirical Communism

During the post-second World War period, Barth became notorious in the West for his open attitude to empirical communism. His refusal to join in the chorus of condemnation of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Hungary in 1956 provoked the wrath of many of his erstwhile supporters. Niebuhr's scathing attack on him is well known, as are Brunner's many appeals to him for leadership 'at this time'.[21] This, and other actions of Barth's, such as his 'letter to a pastor in the German Democratic Republic'[22] in which he equated the West with the 'flesh-pots of Egypt', not only baffled and hurt those who were looking to him for a decisive word against what they saw as the new totalitarianism, but also led them to make fairly scathing condemnations of his whole theological project.[23] As this position 'between East and West', is discussed in the next section, there is now rather a concentration on a comparison of Barth's early and later perceptions of communism.

"Profoundly critical but basically open." Both poles of this seeming paradox need to be held in tension in this discussion, as they complement and correct each other. Barth was in the middle of writing the first edition of Romans when the 1917 Russian Revolution took place. He initially welcomed it as a sign of the revolutionary activity of God's kingdom in history, but at the same time criticised both certain actions of the Bolsheviks and, more fundamentally, the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which he saw as a new

metaphysics of the State. Describing himself as "more than Leninist", he attacked Lenin from a more radically socialist position, which Marquardt has identified as "anarchist".[24]

The course of the revolution, and the failure of the general strike in Germany and Switzerland in 1918, both radicalised and relativised Barth's position in relation to it. The relativising process so clearly seen in the revision of Romans, is also the most well known. Although Christianity is still closer to the "Russian Man" than his "Western counterpart" (463), this affinity is not guaranteed, or irreversible, "We must never forget the freedom with which Christianity allots its Yes and No". (464) Both the "principle of Legitimation" (of the existing order), and "the principle of Revolution" are to be denied, as the claim of both to objectivity and truth is negated by the truth of God. (478) In fact, the revolutionary is far more overcome of evil than the conservative, because "with his No, he stands so strangely near to God". (480)

Bolshevism is described as one of a series of "negative things" (194) and later as displaying an "essential tyranny" (480). Clearly, Barth's openness was now far more critical, but it still remains an openness, as is often forgotten. It only becomes more clear when we see his rejection of Bolshevism and critique of communism, not as the response of a disillusioned socialist now turned conservative, but as the response of a disillusioned socialist who now radicalised his socialism by locating it within a more solid theological base which preserves the 'critical distance' necessary for a deabsolutised, yet radical praxis.

Barth's mature judgement of communism in CD III/4, is very similar in content to criticisms of Russian communism made by West European Marxists.[25] Barth writes:

> "What we cannot say however, is that this exploitation has been brought to an end, that there are no classes with opposing interests, and that there is therefore no more class struggle. It is doubtful though we must leave this to the verdict of history -whether this is true even of the new and consistently socialist states of Eastern Europe, for although the letter of the Marxist programme means that there can be no more exploiters and exploited, it does not settle the matter that there is no more private ownership or the means of production or free enterprise, or that the direction of the labour process has been transferred to the hands of the State. The injustice of the treatment of one man by another merely as a means to his own ends, as a mere instrument, once rested on a foundation of private capital and still does so in the West. Yet it is by no means impossible, but rather indicated by many features, that this injustice can perpetuate itself in a different form on a different basis, namely on that of a state socialism which is in fact directed by a ruling and benefit-deriving group." (CD III/4, p.544)

4.5 His position between 'East and West'

It is this fundamental but critical openness of Barth's to empirical communism, which has its roots in his basic rejection of capitalism and affirmation of socialism, that enables a correct understanding of his position between 'East and West'. The parameters of this position and the debate it provoked are well documented and well known, and so are not detailed here as such.[26] What is of interest rather, is to discuss the reasons for this position. Were they because Barth's theology was so transcendent that he was not able to make discerning political judgements, as Niebuhr charged;[27] or because his theology and his ethics were so separated that he could only make unsystematic and arbitrary connections between faith and political action; or because, as West charges, "Barth seems, because of the doctrine of all embracing grace, to neglect his responsibility for that difficult empirical analysis of real human relations, most especially in politics"?[28]

As Hunsinger states, if these objections are basically correct, it

> "leaves us with a genuine anomaly : one of the most fundamental Christian thinkers of modern times, with a deep personal interest in politics, proved conceptually incapable of integrating his political decisions with his formal thought... his politics stayed fundamentally cut off from his theology (and) their otherwise capricious relationship can ultimately be explained only on the basis of Barth's personal psychology."

As has been seen in the discussion of Barth thus far, these conclusions are unjustified and verge on the incredible. By and large they expose the background and the real ideological commitments of their writers. Their absolute inability to understand what they see as Barth's "amazing shift of attitude from Nazism to Communism"[29] arise to a large extent out of their failure to perceive Barth's fundamental and consistent commitment to socialism. Even if perverted in practice by Russian communism, in principle it is to be supported over American capitalism, which has not yet begun to face the fundamental social disorder of the time.

His position between East and West is thus not a 'despicable neutralism', a disengagement and 'turning away from political involvement' and an 'indifference to political actualities', as asserted by Herberg.[30] It rather has its very real and substantial roots in Barth's continuing and radicalised socialist vision. Whilst the East has betrayed its revolutionary and humanistic basis, this does not mean that one is thereby forced to endorse Western capitalism. As Barth states:

> "not that I have any inclination towards Eastern Communism...But I do not comprehend how either politics or Christianity requires or even permits such an inclination to lead to the conclusions

which the West had drawn".

In fact, writes Barth:

> "I regard anticommunism as a matter of principle an evil greater than communism".[31]

His comment that "Communism can be warded off only by a better justice on the part of the Western World",[32] cannot mean, given the earlier arguments of the paper, a more liberal capitalist justice, but rather a more radical socialist justice. Communism is to be warded off by socialism, not capitalism. Barth is thus one of many socialists of the time who were, and still are, seeking a third, socialist way 'between East and West'.

REFERENCES : CHAPTER 4

1. 'Final Testimonies' op cit p.39.
2. quoted in Hunsinger op cit p.332.
3. Hunsinger op cit pp.19-45.
4. Ibid p.29.
5. Ibid p.44.
6. See also Chapter 5 below.
7. Barth, K. 'The Epistle to the Romans' (London : Oxford Press, 1933) p.498.
8. In Hunsinger p.82, p.56.
9. In Hunsinger p.82.
10. 'Final Testimonies' op cit p.39.
11. In Hunsinger p.30.
12. 'Final Testimonies' op cit p.39.
13. In Hunsinger op cit p.116.
14. In Hunsinger op cit p.21.
15. See Chapter 6 below.
16. 'Romans' op cit p.463.
17. In Herberg, W.(Ed.) 'Community, State and Church' (NY : Doubleday, 1960) p.173.
18. In Hunsinger op cit p.100.
19. Ibid p.8.
20. It is in this context that we can understand Barth's assessment of politics as 'a game', an assertion he first makes in the second edition of Romans (p.189) and which is repeated in his essay on 'Church and Culture' of 1926 in 'Theology and Church' op cit p.349. P. Lehmann's comment on this is useful "Politics... becomes possible the moment the essentially game-like character of the struggle is exposed to the clear light of day in which it becomes obvious that there can be no talk about objective rightness". ('The Transfiguration of Politics' (NY : Harper and Row. 1975) p.46.
21. 'An Open Letter to Karl Barth' in 'Against the Stream' op cit p.107.

22. Barth, K. in McAfee Brown, R. 'How to Serve God in a Marxist Land' (New York : Association Press, 1959) p.69.
23. cf Herberg p.13; West, C. 'Communism and the Theologians' (London : SCM, 1958) p.244; etc. Tillich, P. 'On the Boundary' (NY : Scribners, 1966, p.67)
24. For this whole process, see Hunsinger pp.56-57 and 'Theologie und Sozialismus' p.126f.
25. See, for instance, Anderson, P. 'In the tracks of Historical Materialism' (London : Verso, 1983) p.68-70. It is also interesting to note at this point a 'radicalising' in an anarchist direction of Barth's conception of socialism when this is compared to his 1911 letter to Hussy already cited, where he endorses the programme of the Swiss Socialist Party which is basically a plan for 'state socialism'. (in Hunsinger op cit p.42).
26. Barth, K. 'Against the Stream' op cit.
27. Niebuhr, R. as quoted in Hunsinger op cit p.182.
28. West, C. op cit p.313.
29. McAfee Brown, R. 'How to Serve God' op cit 36ff.
30. Herberg op cit p.57.
31. Barth, K. 'How I changed my Mind' op cit p.63.
32. Ibid p.57.

CHAPTER 5 : 'BARTH'S RESPONSE TO CERTAIN CRUCIAL ISSUES RAISED BY MARX'

It has been asserted at various points in this paper that Barth integrated many theoretical insights derived from Marxian and other forms of thought into his theology. This assertion now needs to be more closely analysed and more carefully qualified. It is necessary to begin by recognising that Barth, for various reasons, did not generally acknowledge the source of any of his philosophical insights. This is partly because of his oft-stated intention to develop a self-contained theology, derived from its Christological centre, and free of all philosophical supports.[1] But as Hendry has stated in relation to Barth's use of Kantian categories, "philosophical thought structures... were too deeply ingrained to be easily eradicated, and they reappear at several points in the system of Church Dogmatics".[2] Von Balthasar makes a similar comment in respect of the revised Romans where he states: "socialist notions only seem to recede into the background".[3]

This is not, however, to accuse Barth of plagiarism or deception. Rather it is to be seen as consistent with his hermeneutic, where he freely moves between text and newspaper, theology and philosophy, theory and praxis, and integrates all into a Christological centre. It is also consistent with his primary concern not to base his theology on any philosophical system, without at the same time, negating the freedom of theology to use aspects of any system. He writes:

> "The Christian theologian (alas!) with his preaching and scholarship will never visibly walk this earth as an 'Angelic Doctor' free, for example, of all human philosophy"[4]

and again

> "In theology... we must be more far-sighted than

> to attempt a deliberate co-ordination with temporarily predominant philosophical trends in which we may be caught up, or allow them to dictate or correct our conceptions... On the other hand, there is every reason why we should consider and as far as possible learn from (them)". (CD III/3 p.334)

Throughout his theology, Karl Barth demonstrates this freedom in relation to various philosophical systems and thought patterns. It is shown in this dissertation that, although indebted to Marx at certain theoretical levels, he also reveals his independence of him.

In a real sense this section returns to the problem of the aetiology of Barth's thought that was discussed in the second chapter. The findings and the qualifications that were made there thus need to be kept in mind. Certainly there are such strong parallels between Barth and Marx on certain crucial subjects that it would be hard to gainsay the argument that these ideas of Barth's have their origin in Marx's thought, especially given Barth's understanding of Marx and his commitment to socialism. It would be naive to assert that these insights were derived by Barth 'solely from scripture' as has sometimes been maintained.[5] Clearly, as has already been argued, Barth's hermeneutic itself excludes any conception that Barth interpreted scripture in a 'germ free cell'. Barth, at a crucial point in his early analysis of capitalism and socialism asserts:

> "We could certainly search for a long time until we found a similar theory, or anticipations of one, in the gospels. We do not want to search for that at all, the capitalist economic system is a modern phenomenon, as is the socialist counter theory."[6]

This of course does not mean that it is unrelated to his theology, or to the gospel. It is linked in the basic question of <u>private property</u>. But his criticism of capitalism has modern, socialist, contours, and these are integrated into his

theology at many points, especially in his section on 'Work' already discussed. The freedom of the Word and of the theologian as servant of the Word, is to use or not use these concepts in the light of their ability to more clearly reveal the Christ, the Sovereign Lord, and to promote the work of his kingdom, his rule. It is not necessary to digress too much at this point, as this matter is to be taken up more seriously in the next chapter. What is to be argued, however, is that Barth has been both consciously and unconsciously influenced by Marxian insights at certain decisive points in his theology, and that these have been integrated into the body of his work.

5.1 Critique of Capitalism

As this has already been discussed fairly extensively it will only be noted at this point. It remains, however, a crucial and significant argument in this thesis, as it is one of the clearest and least controversial examples of Barth's indebtedness to Marx.

5.2. The relationship of theory and praxis[7]

Marx's theses on Feuerbach are amongst his most well known writings. In these Marx develops in embryonic form a philosophy of praxis which undergirds his whole methodology. In order to highlight the convergences between Barth and Marx at this point, a cursory outline of Marx's theory is important.

This philosophy marks both Marx's final break with idealism and his 'aufhebung' of Feuerbach's materialism. In a brilliant philosophical move, Marx transfers the idealist conception of the active, creative principle into materialism. Reality is thus a process, and social reality is an "interaction of objective and subjective factors of objective circumstances and human activity".[8] Truth, then, is "not a theoretical but a

practical question. Man must prove the truth i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking in practice."[9] The oft-quoted eleventh thesis summed up this process, and set the agenda for the new philosopher:

> "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is, to change it."[10]

Two points are of further importance. Firstly, these theses spell out a profoundly humanistic philosophy. Human being in her concrete essence, not in some abstract humanity, is the beginning and end of this philosophy. But secondly, it is a realistic philosophy, it recognises that each human-being is 'a sum of social relations', and not an isolated individual. There is thus a dialect between subject and object, between the individual and the society, between theory and praxis that cannot, and must not, be separated:

> "Philosophy without practice dissolves very easily into air or smoke or congeals into a dogmatic profession of faith : practice without philosophy turns into myopic, mindless practicism."[11]

Turning to Barth, a basic convergence between he and Marx is uncovered, which must have a basis in, among other things, Barth's theoretical understanding of Marxian thought and his socialist praxis which had validated it. This of course, is not to call Barth a Marxist, it is rather a further example of his use and integration of categories of thought that served theological truth on both a theoretical and practical level. But the convergence is apparent. There are few theologians who have sought to hold together theory and praxis, dogmatics and ethics in such a coherent and consistent manner. The links between politics and the writing of the Church Dogmatics, have already been noted, as has the important way in which ethics is seen as part of dogmatics and dogmatics is as part of ethics.[12] In a quite astounding statement (for a theologian!) Barth says: "Dogmatics itself is ethics; and ethics is also

dogmatics." (CD 1/11 p.793) Clearly, theory and praxis are inseparable, and the dogmatic task is a directly ethical one, and vice versa.

A further feature of Barth's ethics that gives an indication of the clear linking of theory and praxis, is his conception of ethics as a "particular ethics" (CD 11/1 p.546ff). The command of God is "not a reality which is, but a reality which occurs. Not to see it in this way is not to see it all." Ethical theory is "simply the theory of this practice".(548) It is "because this practice occurs, because theological ethics cannot escape noticing this practice, in the contemplation of this practice that theological ethics fashions its concept." (548)

Barth bases this theory-praxis ethics in two areas - firstly in the nature of God, the Word of the Living God which becomes flesh, becomes active.

> "If the eternal being is not implicated in its realisation in actual life, what kind of a being is it?" (CD 1/2 781).

And again;

> "a reality ... which does not affect or claim men or awaken them to responsibility or redeem them i.e.in theoretical reality, cannot possibly be the reality of the Word of God" (CD 1/2 p.793). "The Word of God is itself the act of God" (CD 2/1 p.163).

For Barth then, God is only known in God's act, and that act is the revolutionary transformation of all that is. God, writes Barth, is "the fact which not only illuminates but materially transforms all things and everything in all things" (CD 2/1 p.258). The obvious similarities between this statement and Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach have been perceptively pointed out by Marquardt,[13] and show once more

how Barth integrated basic Marxian thought structures into his theological centre. Even Barth's primary definition of God reveals this fundamental concern, the holding together of God's being and God's action. "God is he who lives and loves in freedom", a definition far removed from the scholastic separation of being and act in God. Interestingly enough, it is again a perceptive insight of Marquardt to trace the aetiology of this primary definition on God to an early description by Barth of truly ethical, socialist, praxis![14]

The second area in which Barth grounds this theory-praxis dialectic is in his anthropology. This dialectict is the heart of the human essence: "Man is existing man. He is not mere thinking man" (CD 1/2 p.742) and

> "Only the doer of the Word is the real hearer, for it is the Word of the Living God addressed to the living man absorbed in the work and action of his life" (742).

For Barth, "theory and practice cannot be separated in the human world" (CD 11/1 p.661).

The co-ordination of these two grounds is discovered in the living acting person Jesus Christ. From this theological centre, human action as a parable of God's action can be effectively secured as liberating praxis. Because what is commanded "is simply the liberation of man" (CD 11/2 p.599) then in turn "man should be free to be for his neighbour what God is for him" (CD11/2 p.621). God's praxis and therefore, God's truth, can only meaningfully be witnessed to by human praxis. "Knowledge of God is in obedience to God" (CD 2/1 p.36).

The question of truth is also one of praxis. If true knowledge is knowledge of God and this knowledge is confirmed in praxis, it is the 'doer' of the truth that knows God, not just the

hearer,

> "the life of the children of God as a creation of the Holy Spirit... (has) to do with a determinateness of human life understood as being and doing" (CD 1/2 p.369).

Turning to Barth's own 'theses on Feuerbach' we have a similar understanding of orthopraxis over orthodoxy. The question of God which Feuerbach and Marx raise, has one of its crucial loci in the question of praxis. Both acknowledge that the 'God' proclaimed by the bourgeois enlightenment could be seen as "a pleasant dream" and "a false pretence intentionally supported for use in stifling the (socialist) struggle for freedom".[15] Barth comments:

> "If only the Church had been compelled before Marx to show in word and action, and had been able to show, that it is just the knowledge of God which automatically and inevitably includes within itself liberation from all hypostases and idols... the Church will be free of Feuerbach's question only when its ethics have been radically separated from both the ancient and modern hypostases. Then the Church will gain win belief that its God is no illusion - but never until then".[16]

Hunsinger has pertinently summed up the relationship of theory and praxis in Barth's thinking, and given it its socialist locus.

> "Karl Barth was a socialist. He took the world as seriously as he took the Bible. His thinking moved from praxis to theory as well as from theory to praxis. The chicken and egg question as to which was first was entirely foreign to his theological procedure... The conceptual priority of theology over praxis goes without saying."[17]

5.3 Revolution

There can be little doubt that the concept of 'Revolution', which is so central to Barth's theology as a description of God's activity, has its roots in his Socialist praxis, and hence in Marxian theory. Revolution, as the overthrow of all existing relations, is first located in a philosophical centre in the writings of Marx. He radicalised and broadened its definition by talking of a total overthrow of all relations, both in theory and in practice. It must also, of necessity, be a permanent revolution, continuously transcending itself until the onset of the classless society in all countries.[18] As it is both a practical and a theoretical revolution, it requires both a revolutionary theory and a revolutionary force. His philosophy is the former, and the proletariat are the latter. They are the only class, argued Marx, who are so alienated by their position in the labour process, that they have the necessary will and motivation to see the revolution to its end. They have nothing to lose in the attainment of the classless society, unlike all other classes, and therefore they are the only true revolutionary force. Because of this, they are the universal class, as their interests coincide with the desired end for all people, the classless society. Hence there must be an unequivocal affirmation of the class struggle and a theoretical and practical identification with the interests of the proletariat.

The early Barth, who participated so actively in the socialist movement, was obviously familiar, and in basic agreement, with this philosophy. Marquardt's research into Barth's yet unpublished material from these early years show him at times "unequivocally affirming the class struggle, the strike and the revolution".[19] This early radicalism was soon relativised, as we have already seen, by the intellectual and theological unease Barth felt identifying God's actions with human actions, an unease finally crystalising into rejection, with

the dual crises of both liberal and socialist praxis precipitated by the war. His disillusionment with the revolution and counter-revolutions, and the real failure of the Russian revolution to fulfil many of the hopes that had been placed in it, helped finally to radicalise Barth's theology and to relativise his 'faith' in revolutionary praxis. The second edition of Romans, whose "content is the censure of the red-brother",[20] proclaims the 'Revolution of God' as the limit and judgement on all human revolutions. In this commentary more than anywhere else in Barth's writings, God's No! on all revolutionary hubris is heard. But this loud No! does not mean a final negation and abandonment of the category of revolution, either in theology or praxis. In fact, in the same commentary, Barth is seen struggling to find a more theologically secure place for revolutionary praxis. Christianity, says Barth, still "displays a certain inclination to side with those who... are ready for revolution."[21] Although the revolutionary Titan is "far more godless, far more dangerous than his reactionary counterpart, because he is so much nearer the truth",[22] this does not exclude revolutionary praxis in toto. Rather it is given a new basis, in the "great positive possibility of love". In love,

> "there is brought to light the revolutionary aspect of all ethical behaviour... because it is veritably concerned with the denial and the breaking up of the existing order. It is love that places the reactionary also finally in the wrong, despite the wrongness of the revolutionary. In as much as we love one another we cannot with to uphold the present order as such, for by love we do the 'new' by which the 'old' is overthrown."[23]

Secondly, God as the revolutionary God, is the only true revolutionary, as it is only God who is able to secure the permanence and radicality of the necessary revolution. Here Barth negates the concept of the proletariat as the revolutionary class, even their No! against the capitalist order is not loud and radical enough. God replaces the

proletariat as the truly revolutionary force in society, and the Church, as summonsed by God and called to proclaim the truly revolutionary message of love is the human counterpart, the material force, of revolution. The link between God's revolutionary activity and that of humans is of course in Jesus Christ and the coming of God's kingdom which he both proclaims and embodies.

> "The conformity of the man Jesus with the mode of existence and attitude of God consists actively in what we can only call the profoundly revolutionary character of his relationship to the order of life and value current in the world around him." (CD iv/2 p171)

and again

> "we do not really know Jesus if we do not know him as this poor man, as this partisan of the poor, and finally as this revolutionary" (CD iv/2, p.180).

A fourth way in which the concept of revolution is theologically integrated is in Barth's description of <u>justification</u> as "the revolution of God" (CD iv/i p.546). Gollwitzer's comment, that "the radicalism, of the Reformation doctrine or grace contains an image of revolution that was to remain decisive for Barth",[24] is apposite.

Holding these four dimensions together: the revolutionary power of God, the revolutionary incarnation of Jesus, the revolutionary justification of the individual and the revolutionary message and mission of the Christian community - it is clearly seen that God's revolution is not only the limit and <u>Krisis</u> of all human revolutions, but <u>also</u> the basis and grounding of the true and permanent revolution. Only this theologically centred revolutionary base is radical enough, as it is the only one which deals with the heart of all social and personal disorder; human rebellion against the command of God. Unless this sinful centre is dealt with, no revolution is

secure. Contrary to Marx, the 'new person' is not created by the 'new age', but 'the new person' is needed for the 'new age'. This means a revision of revolutionary priorities. The proclamation of God's kingdom involves both human and social revolution; it does does not exclude, but includes as an 'integral moment'[25] the struggle for freedom and liberation. Whilst for a time the link between these two was almost lost in Barth's theology, it was recovered, as shall be discussed more fully in the next chapter, by his change from dialectical to analogical theology in the 1930's.

P. Lehmann in a profound study on revolution and theology in his book '<u>The Transfiguration of Politics</u>',[26] argues that Barth's theology is one intended to secure the permanence of revolution.[27] In a passage which Barth himself could have written, he argues:

> "that the pertinence of Jesus Christ to an age of revolution is in the power of his presence to shape the passion for humanization that generates revolution, and thus to preserve revolution from its own undoing. All revolutions aspire to give human shape to freedom that being and staying human take; and all revolutions end by devouring their own children."[28]

Barth, argues Lehmann, secures this revolutionary centre with two safeguards; obedience to God which deabsolutises revolutionary hubris, and love of neighbour which secures its human form.

Having said all this, it is necessary to qualify what may seem to be an overstatement. There is no doubt that by, on the one hand, deabsolutising revolutionary struggle and, on the other, shifting its locus from the proletariat to the Church, there is a definite relativising of revolutionary praxis which is both in real contradiction to Marxian theory, and in danger of becoming practically ineffective.

> "The relativity of even the most radical attempt at reform in guise of 'revolution' simply proves again that whatever can be done by men or said by Christians in the directions of such attempts can only have a relative significance and force." (CD III/4 p.545)

But is this deabsolutising necessarily such a bad thing? Does it not preserve a revolution "from devouring its own children", to cite Lehmann? Certainly a deabsolutised ethic runs the real danger of praxiological paralysis, but this is not necessarily so. Barth seems ultimately to prevent this by the positive basis and dynamic he gives to his mature theology in his Christological centre. In his desire to discover the 'inner and necessary connection' between justification (God's revolution) and justice (human revolution)[29] which is discussed more fully in the next chapter, clear possibilities for being both revolutionary on the one hand, and non-ideological on the other are revealed.

Returning to the thesis, it is seen from this discussion that the Marxian concept of a total theoretical and practical revolution has been taken up by Barth into his theology, but in a new and different way. In so doing Barth has both radicalised and deabsolutised Marx's thought, and given it a new basis and centre. Accepting Lehmann's assessment of Barth's purpose, it can be maintained, in line with the rest of this work, that his intention was not to negate the human struggle for liberation, for the space to be human, but to give it a secure centre, Jesus Christ, and thus to preserve it from destruction at its own hands.

5.4 Religion and Ideology

Karl Marx's aphorism "Religion is the opiate of the people"[30] is both his most well known and most misunderstood statement on religion. Seen within the context both of the article in which it appears, as well as his greater work as a whole, the

statement does not infer that religion is a kind of narcotic administered to the people by outside forces, but rather that religion is an understandable, if illusory, response to an oppressive social situation; one that helps to make it endurable. It is both "the expression of real misery" and a "protest against real misery". It is "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions".[31]

This polemic needs to be located in Marx's broader theory of the social determination of all knowledge. Reality for Marx, has a material, and more specifically, economic, basis. The way in which the relations of production are organised within a specific society, its economic structure, is the "real foundation" of a society, "on which rises a legal and political superstructure to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness". The mode of production "of material life, conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness".[32] Religion, then, as part of human consciousness, is determined by this social, and fundamentally, economic, base.

Much has been written on this Marxian philosophy of knowledge and history, and the debate around the exact nature and extent of this 'determination' of knowledge and consciousness still divides not only Marxists from non-Marxists, but Marxists amongst themselves.[33] There is no intention to enter the debate at this point. Clearly this dissertation has revealed a rejection of any crass reduction of all ideas to a material base, whilst at the same time affirming a definite link between them. What is important for the study at this point is the understanding of the Marxian critique of religion. For this, it is necessary to join the analysis of the social basis of religion with two further insights.

Firstly, religion is a product of an alienated social totality. Feuerbach had argued that human beings project their own image into an imaginary heaven to provide compensation for their self-alienation. Marx advanced this approach significantly by locating human self-alienation in material and social conditions. There is thus in Marx, as in Feuerbach, a radical critique of religion which denies it any 'real' existence. Religion must therefore, be negated for the sake of human development. "I deny the fantastic phantoms of theology and religion in order to affirm the real being of man."[34]

By locating religion's aetiology in alienated social conditions, Marx develops Feuerbach's critique. Religion is not only illusory, but dangerous, as it masks and sanctions human alienation and therefore diffuses the possibility of a revolutionary transformation of society. Gregory Baum describes it as follows:

> "Religion tells the story of man's injustice to man, but tells it in such a way that it legitimates the present order and creates a hope for justice that remains forever illusory."[35]

Its negation therefore, is not an end in itself, it is a necessary and essential first step in the revolutionary transformation of society, the end of which is the negation of the conditions that gave rise to religion in the first place.[36]

In theological circles, Barth's attack on religion is as well known as Marx's. "The world that professes to be religious is actually the world in its worst form."[37] The theological contours of this rejection are also clear and well-known. Religion is a "criminal arrogance";[38] it is the ultimate human presumption in its grasping after God through piety, worship and morality. Instead of drawing people close to God, religion

has actually prevented them from hearing God. It has deceived them into a self-righteousness which is impervious to God's judging and redeeming Word. Humans' search for God is in reality their resistance to God, and it is here, at the religious centre, that human rebellion is greatest. Religion is the worst expression of 'the works of the law' by which 'no-one can be justified'.

Clearly, the theological basis of this critique is central to Barth. Faith is opposed to religion in Barth as in Luther and as in Paul. A reading of Romans clearly reveals these links. But having said this, it is equally possible to trace the impetus for this development in other directions as well; the direction of Barth's socialist praxis and his understanding of Marx and Feuerbach at this crucial period.

There can be no doubt that Feuerbach's and Marx's critique of religion did significantly influence Barth. It not only became the basis of his break with the liberal theological enterprise which began with Schleiermacher, but it also was the critique in light of which Barth attempted his theological reconstruction. Paul Lehmann argues that it is Feuerbach "who radicalised the perspective and format which make the Romerbrief and the Kirchliche Dogmatiek a single theological enterprise in which what began as a 'dialectical theology' becomes and culminates as a 'theology of permanent revolution'".[39] This needs to be further explicated.

Barth's readings of Marx and Feuerbach must have exposed him to their critique of religion. The actions of the 93 professors in support of the Kaiser's War effort convinced an already suspicious Barth of both the class-basis of liberal theology and its vulnerability to Feuerbach's and Marx's critique.[40] Both in theory and in practice, the liberal theological model confirmed, rather than overcame, this critique. For a short while the religious socialist hypothesis

held more promise, but both its failure in practice and its basis in liberal theological categories did not make it any more secure. Barth was thus forced both to affirm Feuerbach, and simultaneously to attempt to overcome him. His theology was therefore radicalised, and his construction of the God - faith axis was an attempt to overcome this critique. Barth then traced the roots of this vulnerability, first to Schleiermacher and then to Luther. "Theology became anthropology long ago; after Protestantism, especially Luther, turned its attention from what God is in himself to what God is for men".[41] Here we have the basis of dialectical theology, where the truth of God and of theology is rescued from the accusation of ideological suspicion. This can only be achieved, argues Barth, by making certain "that man's relation with God is in every respect, in principle, an irreversible relation".[42]

But there are further levels at which Feuerbach's and Marx's critique have shaped Barth's thought. Initially, there is Barth's concern to secure the reality of God from this critique, and this he does in two ways. Firstly, by his socially-reflected concept of God, where God can only be spoken "when the concern is with that reality of man"[43] This is located, secondly, in his Christological centre and his recovery of the 'two natures' doctrine, where God and human being are held together in an inseparable unity.[44]

Finally, there is Barth's concern to secure the relevance of God and faith from the charge of being an 'opiate'. Here the insights on revolution and on the God who changes everything that have already been reached, become important, as does the analysis of Barth's response to Feuerbach in terms of 'orthopraxis'.

> "The Church will be free of Feuerbach's (and Marx's-RMP) question only when its ethics have

> been radically separated from both the ancient and modern hypostases then the Church will again win belief that its God is no illusion - but never until then."[45]

The truth, reality and relevance of God and of Christian faith are thus the concerns of Barth in response to Feuerbach's and Marx's radical critique. Barth secures these in a kind of Hegelian 'aufhebung' of the critique, where it is both integrated and transcended. Religion, concurs Barth, is ideological, it does arise out of an alienated social totality.

> "The religion of man is always conditioned absolutely by the way in which the starry heaven above and the moral law within have spoken to the individual. It is therefore conditioned by nature and climate, by blood and soil, by the economic, cultural, political, in short, the historical circumstances in which he lives." (CD 1/2 p.316)

and again

> "Divinity is in this respect only the monstrous concave mirror in which the most various opinions of the creative mind are reflected and can be recognised." (CD 111/1 p.368)

and finally

> "atheism... is the negation of the over-world[46] of religion, the weakness and non-necessity of which are perceived and which become superfluous and irritating as a result of a change in the conditions of human existence" (CD 1/2 p.321).

Even the Christian religion as religion is part of this 'over-world', as was demonstrated so clearly in both the world wars. Thus far the integration. But then Barth attempts to transcend the critique by reversing the direction.

> "Our concern is <u>God</u>, the movement originally in <u>God</u>. The motion which <u>He</u> lends us... and it is not

religion."[47]

The Gospel is not a religion among other religions, a "truth among other truths", it is "not the door but the hinge".[48] It is concerned "with God as He is; (with) Him Himself and with Him only".[49] The only attitude that can correspond to this if faith, which Barth describes as follows:

> "faith is awe in the presence of the divine incognito; it is the love of God that is aware of the qualitative distinction between God and man and God and the world; it is the affirmation of the resurrection as the turning point of the world... the believer is the man who puts his trust in God, in God Himself, and in God alone."[50]

The whole of Romans, in fact, the whole of Barth's theology, is constructed around this dialectic, and hence around this Feuerbachian 'aufhebung'. This is carried over into the Church Dogmatics, where the revelation of God is described as the 'aufhebung' of religion[51] (CD 1/2 section 17).

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to analyse whether Barth's distinction between faith and religion is a valid one, or whether it drives Barth into a kind of 'theological ghetto' as has sometimes been maintained.[52] What is important, and what has been argued, is that in this distinction, we see once more the influence of Feuerbach and hence Marx, on Barth's thinking. That Barth was responding to both the theoretical and political challenge of Marx and Feuerbach is also apparent. His search was not just for the theoretical truth of religious statements, but the political relevance of theology and faith, and more specifically, God as the subject of theology and faith. Whilst neither Marx nor Feuerbach considered the possibility of a religion that could be relevant to the process of human liberation, Barth clearly was intent on doing so.

5.5 Work

Barth's analysis of this topic has already been discussed and its basically Marxian contours have been established.[53] These now need to be further elaborated, as do the important differences between Barth and Marx. Once again, therefore, the dialectic between indebtedness and freedom that has been sought in this study is revealed.

To facilitate the discussion, a brief cursory summary of Marx's theory of labour is presented, not to demonstrate plagiarism but to reveal a crucial convergence in thinking which must have a basis in Barth's theoretical knowledge of Marx and his socialist praxis that had verified it.

Work, or 'labour', is a crucial category in Marx's thought. In the Paris Manuscripts of 1844, Marx shows that at the root of the capitalist system is 'alienated labour'. The work of the worker, in a capitalist system, because of the private ownership of the means of production, is alienated in four ways. Firstly, "the worker is related to the product of his labour as to an alienated object", it confronts him as something alien, as an 'independent power'.[54] Secondly, the worker is alienated from him or herself; because labour is external to the worker, he or she does not affirm but denies him or herself in its production. "He feels at home when he is not working, and when he working, he does not feel at home", his or her labour is "not the satisfaction of a need, it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it".[55] Thirdly, human being's 'species life', social essence, is taken away in labour which does not represent the harmonious efforts of our species being. This leads, finally, to the worker's estrangement from others.[56]

Marx links this logically to private property. "If the product of labour is alien to me, if it confronts me as an alien

power, to whom then, does it belong?" It belongs of course, to the capitalist. "Private property, is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence of alienated labour".[57]

Turning to Barth, we find him dealing with the topic (in CD III/4) under the heading of 'The Active Life' which is in turn a subsection of S55 'Freedom for Life'; under which he also discusses 'Respect for Life' and the 'Protection of Life'. The general rubric under which these sections are developed is as follows:

> "As God the Creator calls man to Himself and turns him to his fellow-man, He orders him to know his own life and that of every other man as a loan, and to secure it against all caprice, in order that it may be used in this service and in preparation for this service." (p.324)

Three elements are thus important: work is work under the general command and ordering of God, it is work in service of others; it is and should be communal.

The section on the 'Active Life' begins with the general statement:

> "Our present concern is to see life as a task which God has imposed on man, and therefore to see the freedom to which he is summoned as the freedom for an active life." (p.470)

Barth demonstrates his freedom as a theologian by not beginning with 'work', but by locating it under the broader rubric of service; and then particularly, 'divine' service. He argues "we can hardly say that work in itself as such is the active life which God requires of man" as work even in its highest form "denotes the distinctive this wordly element of the active life required by man". (p.472)

Following his usual methodology, Barth derives his view of the

active life from a theological centre, the coming Kingdom of God. The active life must be an analogy, a correspondence to the activity of God. The first "concretion" of the command which flows from this therefore, is "man's direct or indirect co-operation in the task of the Christian community". (p.483) Although this may seem "narrow" "presumptious" and even "alien and impractical", it is "unavoidable", as it forms the centre which corresponds to the "covenant as the internal basis of creation". (p.483)

All this is significant, because here Barth shows his concern with the theological task. It is not just to accept and repeat in a 'mythologised' form what is already known in philosophy, sociology, economics and so on, but to 'freely move' within these disciplines, and to locate their insights within a theologically derived centre.

Having dealt with this 'centre', Barth turns to the 'circumference', and it is here where the "work of man corresponds to this providential rule" of God (p.512). Barth defines work as "man's active affirmation of his existence as a human creature" (p.518). For Barth, as for Marx, therefore, work is what characterises and distinguished the human from the animal. In strongly Hegelian terms Barth describes work as the "subjectivisation of the object but also the objectivisation of the subject" (p.519). The process of work results in the true synthesis of the human person; of soul and body, of external and internal, of subjective and objective experience. To work, therefore, is to be truly human, to be truly human is to work (p.520, 521). Again like Marx, but again from his own theological premises, Barth 'demythologises' the conception of work found in idealism, and argues that work has its origin in the "active affirmation of human existence", not in culture or any other super-structural sphere. (p.525)

He then turns to an analysis of 'honest' work. It is work that is objective i.e. it has an end in view, but it is in the selection of these ends that the problems arise. Here the critique of capitalism is particularly evident; firstly as an indictment of 'finance capitalism' that manipulates and controls vast amounts of 'demonic' capital (p.532), and secondly in the recognition that for most workers the question of 'ends' is irrelevant, they often "for better or for worse must accept (any work) if they are not to go hungry" (p.532). Labour is alienated if the ends are futile, and this results in the self-alienation of the worker. "If it is true that the worker grows with his higher ends, it is also true that he degenerates if the ends for which he labours become progressively futile". (p.533)

The next aspect of work Barth turns to is its "humanity", in the special sense of the "fellow-human" (p.535). Work that is human has two dimensions; it must be communal, 'comradely' (p.537); and it must not be profit-motivated (p.538). This exposes the two-fold evil of capitalism, it is both competitive and profit-motivated (p.539).

In capitalism, these become ends in themselves, and competition becomes conflict (p.540). Work under this sign is thus always inhuman (p.501). The apportionment of ends becomes inhuman when the means of production are privately owned. This is the basic principle of exploitation at the heart of the capitalist order (p.542).

The convergence between the thought of Marx and Barth cannot be ignored. It is this which compels one to recognise the extent to which Barth appropriates certain aspects of Marx's thought. What needs to be repeated however, is that Barth does this while maintaining a strict theological and Christological centre, exhibiting a freedom to use and integrate various forms of thought which contribute to his quest for theological

truth. This is apparent in his argument that the human revolution will never truly resolve this problem of alienated labour, as the basis of alienation is more fundamental, it lies in sin,

> "in a human aberration which necessarily gives rise to the exploitation of man by man in ever-changing forms - so necessarily that even the most well-meaning and rigorous attempts at counter-movements can arrest or modify but not entirely remove it." (p.545)

Sin has corrupted all human endeavour at the centre, bringing all of creation, and hence all work, under the curse of alienation. The Genesis curse is the theological basis of alienated labour; the Marxian critique of its modern form under capitalism must be subsumed under this broader theological framework even as it is integrated. But it must, itself, be subject to this centre, and the critique inherent in it; the "revolution of God against 'all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man'" (CD III/1 p.545).

This does not mean, of course, that attempts at transforming the social order must not be made, but it does mean that they need to be complemented, or better, spearheaded by the Christian community as a 'vanguard' proclaiming this revolution of God.

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3. Von Bathasar, H. 'The Theology of Karl Barth' (NY : Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971) p.57.
4. Barth, K. 'Theology and Church' (London: SCM, 1962) p.351.
5. T. Torrance, for instance, argues that Barth's consistent revision of his theology is a consequence of his "persistent listening to the mighty voice of Paul". ('Karl Barth : An Introduction to his Early Theology, 1910-1931. London : SCM, 1962 p.48 cited in Hunsinger op cit p.224). This comment is as reductionist as any that Marquardt makes, although from the opposite direction.
6. in Hunsinger p.30.
7. See also 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.321-326 for a further discussion on this point.
8. Fischer, F. 'Marx in his own Words' (London : Pelican, 1970) p.153.
9. Ibid p.153.
10. Ibid p.158.
11. Ibid p.157.
12. An interesting insight into this is an incident quoted by E.C. Williams in his unpublished thesis on 'A Critical Appraisal of the Granzfall in Karl Barth's Ethics' (Unisa: Pretoria, 1981) where he states that Markus Barth, on a lecture tour of South Africa, remarked that his father had said that if he were to begin his Dogmatics again he would do so under the rubric of Christian ethics!
13. F.W. Marquardt in Hunsinger p.68 and 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.110f.
14. Ibid p.67 and 'Theologie und Sozialismus' p.236 and 237.
15. Barth 'Theology and Church' p.234.
16. Ibid p.234.
17. Hunsinger op cit p.224.

18. Marx, K. 'Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League', in Selected Works in Two Volumes. Vol. 1 p.102,108, as quoted in Fischer, op cit p.130, 131.
19. 'Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth' in Hunsinger op cit p.53.
20. Ibid p.57 also 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.145.
21. Romans op cit p.463.
22. Romans op cit p.478.
23. Ibid p.493.
24. in Hunsinger op cit p.92.
25. 'Word of God and Word of Man' p.299.
26. 'The Transfiguration of Politics' (New York : Harper & Row, 1975)
27. see his superb article 'Karl Barth, Theologian of Permanent Revolution' in Union Seminary Quarterly Review Vol. 28, 1972. pp.67ff. In this, he appends a 'little list' of the revolutionary dimensions of Barth's theology which is repeated here:

    "1. The analysis of the role of revolution in a Christ-centred history under "the great negative possibility "of submission in Romans 12:21-13:7;
    2. The freedom of God for man and of man for God in an experienced movement from reality to possibility, centred in God's human presence in Jesus Christ and forming and transforming history as a predicate of revelation (KD 1/2 14);
    3. The priority of election over creation, of people over things, of a chosen people over a random people, whose vocation among all peoples is the overcoming of history within history (KD 11/2 33-34);
    4. Co-humanity as the basic form of humanity and people are being formed and fulfilled in their humanity in the reality and power of Jesus' relation to God and to man. In this reality and power, people are able to be for one another as

well as <u>with</u> one another in a shared and fulfilled humanity (KD 111/2, 45);

5. God is more certain than anything in creation and all things are instrumental to his human and humanizing presence in the world (KD 111/1 41);
6. The principalities and powers of this world have no ultimacy. They are radically instrumental to God's human and humanizing presence and activity (KD 111/3, 49 and 50);
7. The claim of God is the operational reality of his presence and activity in the world. The law is the form of the Gospel which means that patterns and structures of human relatedness in the world are never established in themselves and never self-justifying but instrumental to human reality and human fulfillment (KD 111/4);
8. The humanity of man to man has been shattered and reconciliation, exposed as the humanizing style of human life in the humiliation and exaltation of one human being whose living, dying and living again is the prototype and prospect of what humanity is to be. He makes the struggle to be human that doing of the will of God on earth as it is in heaven (KD iv/1);
9. There is an experimental community in the world, called and sent as the spearhead of that shaping of all men into the human reality, fulfillment and joy which God in Christ has begun and is carrying through towards that new heaven and new earth in which difference is a thing of beauty and joy forever, the humanity of humanity is real and complete and God is everything to everyone (KD iv/2 iv/3)." (p.79)

28. Ibid p.xlll.
29. Barth, K. '<u>Church and State</u>' in Herberg, op cit p.101ff.

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33. see for example P. Hamilton 'Knowledge & Social Structure' (London : Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1974)
34. Feuerbach, L. 'The Essence of Religion'.
35. Baum, G. 'Religion and Alienation' New York : Paulist Press, 1975. p.32.
36. Here we see a clear example of how simplistic it is to reduce Marx's historical materialism to an reductionist base-superstructure model. If it is only a change in economic and material forces that can alter consciousness, then clearly a negation of religion is unnecessary. All that is required for its true negation is a social revolution. But religious beliefs impede that revolution, and therefore need to be negated. In a back-handed way, therefore, Marx acknowledges the power of consciousness to shape social structure!
37. In 'Revolutionary Theology in the Making' op cit p.19.
38. Romans p.37.
39. Lehmann, 'Karl Barth, Theologian of Permanent Revolution' op cit p.73.
40. 'The Humanity of God' op cit p.14.
41. In 'Theology and Church' op cit p.226.
42. Ibid p.231.
43. Ibid p.231.
44. See Chapter 6.
45. In 'Theology and Church' op cit p.234.
46. The word here translated 'over-world', is the German word "Uberweld". Whilst this is not the technical Marxian word for 'superstructure', it has the same connotations.

47. Tambach Lecture 1919 in 'Word of God Word of Man' op cit p.285.
48. Romans Ibid p.35.
49. Ibid p.37.
50. Ibid p.39.
51. The English translation 'abolition' does not fully convey the Hegelian nuances of 'aufhebung'. 'Aufhebung' means both the establishing and the simultaneous transcending, or overcoming of something. For Barth then, there is a dual 'aufhebung'. Firstly, there is his 'aufhebung' of religion which is based on Feuerbach's and Marx's critique, and then there is his 'aufhebung' of Feuerbach and Marx which is the fulfilment (the re-establishment in a new form) of religion. This explains the passages in CD where he can speak positively of religion (see CD 1/2 S 17ff).
52. See for example W. Pannenberg 'Theology and the Philosophy of Science' (London : Dartmann, Longman and Todd, 1976) p.265-276.
53. See 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.331-333 for a further discussion of this.
54. Marx, K. 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' (Progress Publishers : Moscow, 1977) p.65.
55. Ibid p.66.
56. Ibid p.69.
57. Ibid p.72.

CHAPTER 6 : THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF KARL BARTH'S SOCIALISM

Both in this thesis and in other writings already cited,[1] has the clear link between Barth's theology and his politics been established. This is consistent with his own understanding of the theological task in general, and of his theology in particular:

> "The theology in which I decisively tried to draw on the Bible was never a private matter for me, remote from the world and man. Its theme is God for the world, God for man, heaven for earth. This means that all my theology always had a strong political side, explicit or implicit."[2]

Barth clearly believed that every theological statement was implicitly a socio-political one; even a neutral or apolitical theology was political in what it did not say. Moreover, any theology which was consciously neutral or apolitical was bad theology, as it was not based on the Gospel of the incarnate Word:

> "The timeless or supra-temporal Gospel which is neutral and avoids contemporary events is certainly not the pure Gospel." (CD 111/4 p.512)

Accepting this general thesis, therefore, it is necessary to integrate it with the understanding of the socialist contours of Barth's politics that have already been indicated. Schellong's careful statement bears repeating:

> "Moreover, if one asks what social politics Barth's dogmatics implies... then the term 'socialism' is not badly chosen."[3]

How then are the two held together? What is the theological basis of Barth's socialism? If what has been argued thus far is correct, and if Barth's stated rationale for writing Church Dogmatics is accepted, then clearly it is important to trace the links between his dogmatics and his socialism. Thurneysen's comment that Barth's socialism must be understood

theologically[4] makes this task all the more imperative.

If the whole of Barth's theology is as strongly political as he maintained, then obviously it is necessary to analyse his theology _in toto_ to make these links clear. This is clearly an impossible task given the confines of this dissertation. It is therefore necessary to identify and highlight the areas where these links are made most explicitly. The other less significant areas are briefly indicated as well, but not discussed in any detail. There is also the need to concentrate of the mature theology of Barth's _Church Dogmatics_ and later writings, although naturally, the early developments of his thought are important for understanding the process by which Barth arrived there. This process is therefore briefly described, and the continuities and changes discussed.

6.1 _The Development of Barth's Thought_

The biographical background to this section has already been covered in an earlier chapter,[5] and is not repeated here except where deemed important. What follows is a brief analysis of certain of Barth's writings that best indicate the changes and continuities in the theological grounding that he gives his socialist praxis. These are his essay from 1911, "Jesus Christ and the movement for Social Justice"; his Tambach lecture of 1919; "The Christians Place in Society" and the revised version of _Romans_. His essays "Gospel and Law" (1935); "Church and State" (1938) and "The Christian Community and the Civil Community" (1946) are also important in this respect.[6]

The most striking continuity between the 'early Barth' and the 'late Barth' is the continuity of _intention_. In 1911 he expressed his aim as follows:

> "We want to demonstrate the _inner connection_ (my

> emphasis) that exists between what is eternal, permanent and general in modern socialism and the eternal Word of God."[7]

In 1938 he states his intention as follows:

> "Is there, in spite of all differences, an inner and vital connection between the service of God in Christian living... and ... what may be described as a 'political' service of God."[8]

A further quotation from Church Dogmatics cements this common intention, when speaking of the possibility of the Church hearing a 'true word' from the secular world, and here he specifically mentions socialism, he states that:

> "The feature of all of them (true words)... is that they point to something lasting, permanent and constant." (CD iv/3 p.142).

There is thus a coherence of purpose which runs through all of Barth's theology, a consistent seeking for an adequate basis for his political praxis, a theological grounding of his socialist commitment. In the process of seeking this ground, Barth's theology, and his socialism, undergo significant changes, but these changes must never be isolated from the continuities, or both his theology and his political praxis will be misunderstood.[9] What are the changes? These now require closer analysis.

The 1911 essay is a classic expression of the religious-socialist movement with which Barth was in basic agreement at the time. The hyphenation of the two, and the possibility then of reversing them, against which Barth was later to react so vehemently, is clearly seen in this essay. "Jesus Christ is the movement for social justice, and the movement for social justice is Jesus in the present."[10] Methodologically, the links he draws between Jesus Christ and socialism function in the same manner. He draws parallels between socialism and the gospel that begin with the eternal in socialism and proceed to

the parallels in the gospel. Thus:

> "Socialism is a movement from below to above",

and

> "humanly considered, the Gospel is a movement from below to above".[12]

Socialism looks for a material transformation of society, leading to the overcoming of alienation and separation: Christianity looks for the coming kingdom of God on earth.[13] Socialism sees capitalism as the hindrance to the new society's attainment; Christianity sees sin, both personal and structural as the hindrance to the kingdom[14]. Socialism means the overcoming of private property; Christianity identifies private property as sin.[15] Socialism is built on the basis of solidarity; Christianity is a "religion of solidarity".[16] Socialism demands self-giving on behalf of others; this is exemplified in the cross as the central Christian motif.[17]

Such is the substance of the essay. The identity between socialism and Christianity is unmistakable and therefore reversible. The liberal presuppositions of this essay are apparent, the relation between God and humans is merely transferred from the individual to the social. This is further identified by Barth's instructive comment in his "Reply to the Open Letter of Mr. W. Hussy" where he states, in justification of his position:

> "I believe in the moral progress of humanity."[18]

There is clearly a vast difference between this early position and Barth's mature theology. If his socialist praxis was to be more substantially grounded, it was necessary fundamentally to revise it, and to develop a radical theology for a radical

praxis.[19]

The epoch-making Tambach lecture of 1919, represents the first indication of Barth's break with religious-socialism. In it one breathes a completely different atmosphere to that of 1911, an atmosphere of judgement (Krisis), of transcendence, of revolution. Firstly, and giving indications of what was to become his theological centre, "The Christian is the Christ", not just religious individuals who bear his name.[20] It is his presence in us, in society, that is the basis of our hope, and not any religious or socialist ideal, let alone "the moral progress of humanity!" The hyphens upon which Barth had once based his relation between the gospel and socialism, between faith and the world, are now "dangerous short circuits".[21]

> "Clever enough is the paradox that the service of God must become the service of man; but that is not the same as saying that our precipitate service of man, even when undertaken in the name of the purest love, becomes by that happy fact the service of God."[22]

When there is no hyphenation, there can be no reversal of direction. God and the world are totally separated,

> "The Divine is something whole, complete in itself. It does not persist of being applied, stuck on, and fitted in... It does not passively permit itself to be used, it overthrows and builds up as it wills."[23]

The separation is complete:

> "Where then has the world of God any available connection with our social life? How do we come to act as if it had?"[24]

Both the way of secularising Christ, of talking of a 'Social Christianity', and the way of 'clericalising society', attempting to furnish it "with an ecclesiastical cupola or

wing"[25] are closed.

The problem therefore, is that on the one hand there is "a great promise, a light from above which is shed on our situation", but on the other hand "an unhappy separation, a thorough going opposition between two dissimilar magnitudes."[26]

Here both the continuity and change in Barth are clearly seen. First there is the continued goal and desire to participate in God's act of transforming the world, of bearing witness to the 'light from above', but on the other hand there is the new recognition that this cannot be done in any of the old ways, either by a hyphenated religious-socialism which both secularises Christ and clericalises society, or by retreating to pious individualism. "There is only one solution, and that is in God himself."[27]

What is needed is a "movement from above", from God, that "transcends and permeates" all human movements, the "movement of God in history", "whose power and import are revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".[28] Although Barth acknowledges that this is "the weakest part" of his exposition, he recognises it as his most important.[29] The parameters of his future theology are clearly being established, although the development of them is only in its embryonic, and weakest form.

The way from God to humans is seen as "the miracle of the revelation of God". It is God's revelation to us that breaks the separation, but retains the reserve. God's revelation cannot be mastered, apprehended, 'tacked-on'; it is primal, decisive and new, and therefore cannot be reversed. God is the 'Wholly Other' "resisting all secularisation, all mere being put to use and hyphenated".[30] It is this God, this living God, who both kills us and gives us life; judges and redeems us. It

results however, "in the last end, simply in the annulment of the creaturehood in which, in contrast to God, we live our life on earth".[31]

Barth is aware of the dangers of this radical separation between God and humans, and the resulting denigration of the human and the possibility of a false, demonic transcendence. His intention all along is not to lead people to ethical paralysis, but to provide "an Archimedian point from which the soul, and with the soul, society is moved".[32]

Having placed God's No! on all human aspirations, Barth is left with the question of how then to ground our ethical, and hence, social action. How is God's lever applied to the world? Here Barth begins to develop what becomes a significant feature of his future theology. Because God is the creator of all, and the end of all, it is necessary to understand "particular social orders as being caused by God, by their connection with God".[33] This leads, naturally, "not to a denial but an affirmation of the world as it is". It is only out of this affirmation that the "genuine, radical denial which is.. the meaning of our movements of protest"[34] can come. Because of this, even the "regnum naturae is the kingdom of God with the addition of - and we might add, in spite of - the veil which now covers its glory".[35]

But here Barth runs into problems. The separation between God and humans is so great that he is unable to provide this grounding he is seeking. He has discovered an Archimedian point, but he cannot bring the lever truly into contact with the world. He is forced to resort to a Platonic and neo-Platonic linkage, where the 'idea' is "at the same time the oldest thing in existence",[36] the "divine spark which needs to be rekindled".[37] He does however, begin to develop something significant, the concept of parable as a picture of the relationship between life and the kingdom of heaven. With

this concept he moves away somewhat from Plato, but he does not, in the last instance, manage to break the Platonic cast of his thought. What he is lacking at this point is a Christological foundation, an incarnational model of the relationship between God and humans that breaks the demonic transcendence yet preserves its critical separation. At this point his dialectic is so strong, however, that the incarnation itself almost seems impossible. Not only that, but in spite of all his efforts to prevent it, this position leads both to a denigration of human activity and a possible ethical paralysis.

The break from 1911 is clear, but the continuity of purpose must not be forgotten. Moreover, there are clear intimations in the stress on the Christ as a Christian and the concept of parable within this essay that will lead Barth to the resolution of the problems he encountered, thereby securing his intention on a solid theological base.

The three essays published in the book '<u>Community, State and Church</u>' are representative of the mature grounding of Barth's socialism. The first 'Gospel and Law', lays the general theological foundation for it, the second, 'Church and State' develops this in terms of the theological basis of Church and State, and the third 'The Christian Community and the Civil Community', is a more precise explication of it.

In the essay 'Gospel and Law' Barth reverses the usual order of the pair, clearly marking his break with the traditional Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms.[38] Here the Christological centre is developed in full, and humanity is fully and finally given its place alongside Divinity.

> "The Gospel, consists therefore simply in the fact that Jesus Christ, with his humanity, which he assumed in his birth, preserved as obedience in his death, glorified in his resurrection - he

> himself and he uniquely intercedes for us with our humanity."[39]

Turning to the law, Barth makes the bold assertion that we cannot separate the law from the person of Christ either. The Law "is nothing else but the form of the Gospel, whose content is grace".[40] Gospel and Law are thus united in the person of Jesus Christ, the One Word of God.

What does this mean for the theological grounding of his socialism? Firstly, it means that God and humans, faith and society, dogmatics and ethics, cannot be separated. Unlike the Lutheran two-kingdoms, the kingdom of Christ has direct relevance to society. There is no mediation by ethics derived from natural law or philosophy that is required. There is an inner, necessary connection between the Jesus and the movement for social justice, between Church and State, between theory and praxis, that is discovered in this model. The goals of our praxis are not 'autonomously elected' but are directed by the command of God. Socialism is a predicate of the Gospel.

Secondly, it also means that there can be no identity between the two. Gospel precedes Law; God's redeeming and saving work, his Yes!, precedes and directs Law. Law is therefore not autonomous, but is shaped by the Gospel, by Jesus Christ. As Gollwitzer puts it:

> "The gospel itself gives the goal, contents and direction of human action and not only the power for goals gained or imposed from elsewhere."[41]

There is no identity, therefore, as in Safenwil, but there is a new concept, seen in embryonic form in Tambach and now developed to the full, an 'analogy', a 'parable' between God's action and our response, between God's kingdom and our human struggles for justice.

This Barth spells out more precisely in 'Rechfertegung und Recht', where the 'inner and vital connection' between Justification and Justice (Gospel and Law; Dogmatics and Ethics; theory and praxis; God and humans etc.) is spelt out more precisely. Here Barth argues that the State belongs to the order of redemption, it is taken up into Christ and subordinated to his Lordship. The essence of the State is its 'exousiai', the powers which are defeated by Christ and render tribute to him. The Church must therefore be the centre of the State, its heart, its servant, its restless vanguard, pointing it to its possibilities, the new true State, the heavenly Jerusalem. The Church must challenge the State to be the State, subject and obedient to the command of God, its life and human form being a parable of the coming Kingdom.

The parameters of the just state as an analogy to God's justice and justification, are then developed more precisely in his 1946 essay 'The Christian Community and the Civil Community'. Here Barth steers his way very precisely between the twin dangers of secularising Christ and the Gospel, and sacralising human society. Firstly the Church is the "inner circle of the Kingdom of Christ",[42] having its own task and calling to proclaim "the rule of Jesus Christ and the hope of the kingdom of God". It thus has its own centre and being in the life of Jesus, dependent on the Word he speaks and the direction he gives. Barth thus preserves the identity of the Christian community and the special nature of the Gospel.

But the Christian community is also involved in human society, in its struggles for justice and humanization. It shares the task of the civil community by fulfilling its own task. The Christian community is part of the civil community, and thus has two tasks. It must pray for the community, but it must also work in the community as the community.[43] In making itself responsible for the civil community however, the Church

must not sacralise it:

> "it has no exclusive theory of its own to advocate in face of the various forms and realities of political life."[44]

Here is the Tambachian separation from religious-socialism. But now the new element which has echoes of Safenwil with the necessary dialectical qualifications.

> "but (it has) a direction and a line that must be recognised and adhered to in all circumstances."[45]

This line is not derived from 'natural law'[46] or any autonomous ethics, but from the command of God which is the Kingdom of Christ.

> "It is this reliance on a spiritual norm that makes the Christian community free to support the cause of the civil community honestly and calmly."[47]

It does not do this by simply taking the Kingdom of God directly into the civil arena, that would be the naive identification of the Safenwil period, but by "reminding men of God's Kingdom". It bases its "judgement, purposes, and ideals in political affairs on the analogical capacities and needs of political organisation."[48] The mature and proper mode of linkage is thus as follows:

> "Political organisation can be neither a repetition of the Church nor an anticipation of the Kingdom of God. In relation to the Church it is an independent reality; in relation to the Kingdom of God it is (like the Church itself) a human reality bearing the stamp of this fleeting world."[49]

The analogical method here unfolded is to be more fully discussed in a later section due to its importance, and so is not developed at this point.

This analysis has shown how it is possible to trace both the fundamental continuity of intention in Barth's thought amidst all the significant changes. In a real sense, his later essays have turned the full circle back to Safenwil, but with a far stronger and more secure theological base that he achieved through the use of dialectical separation and analogical unification. The process could almost be described as one of successive aufhebungs, with the final position integrating and transcending both the previous ones.

The study of this process has indicated certain areas that need further development. There is firstly the doctrine of God which as Marquardt pointed out, is so central to this theological process. Secondly, the mature Christology of Barth is obviously the centre of his theology, and this requires further elaboration. From these centres, and using the analogical methodology which is to be further discussed, it will be possible to draw the threads of the argument together.

6.2 God

"God himself and God alone, his Spirit, his Word, are the centre, the unequivocal ground and beginning and thus the total secret of Barth's theology."[50] No one who has read the Church Dogmatics can doubt this statement. Barth was "consumed with a passion for God",[51] and this passion burns deeply through all his writings, particularly Romans and Church Dogmatics. But in asserting and concurring with this, a strong word of caution needs to be made, a caution which Barth himself never tired of making:

> "The Word, and therefore God himself, does not exist for us apart from the human-being of Christ." (CD 1/2 p.166)

His theme, his passion, was not God in isolation, in lofty

transcendence, a God to be mystically adored and contemplated. No, his theme was always and without fail, "God for the World", "God for us".[52] There is no contradiction, therefore, in the assertion that Barth's intention in his doctrine of God was to theologically ground his socialist praxis. His passion is both for God and for humanity. There is a dialectic here in Barth's theology that must not be broken. It is to Marquardt's credit that he has recovered the one half of the dialectic which for so long has been lost in the emphasis on the first. However, as with most pioneering works, he tends to lose the other half of the dialectic in the process. Barth's passion is for God, this must never be forgotten or ignored. But equally, in its right place, this passion is to link this God, the God "who materially transforms all things", with the world which is alienated both from God and within itself. Barth consistently holds together God's being and act, God's essence and revelation, and these must not be separated as is so often done, neither must they be dissolved into each other as is the second temptation.

"God is who He is in His work", but not "only in His works." (CD 11/1 p.260) "His being and nature are not exhausted in the encroachment in which He is God among us and for us." (CD 11/1 p.75)

Given these qualifications it is possible to agree with Marquardt that Barth's concept of God is 'socially reflected', that the transcendence he develops is not metaphysical but social, and that Barth's doctrine of God is partly determined by his attempt to ground his socialist praxis.[53]

Where is this apparent? It is seen, firstly, in his understanding of the triunity of God. Barth begins his exposition on God in the first volume of his Church Dogmatics, where he extensively discusses the doctrine of the Trinity under the heading 'The Revelation of God'. Barth's theology is

fundamentally and consistently a trinitarian theology. It is here that he lays the basis for his theology that both preserves it from becoming an anthropology, and God from becoming a projection of the human mind. Only a trinitarian concentration on what 'God is in Godself', and only then on what God is for humans, could overcome the Feuerbachian critique already discussed. Not only that, but only a concept of God who is all-sufficient and free in Godself, can truly allow for a free and independent humanity, bound to God not through compulsion but through loving grace in partnership and covenant.

> "The doctrine of the Trinity tells us... how far the One who reveals Himself according to the witness of Scripture can in fact be our God and how far He can in fact be our God." (CD 1/1 p.383)

Because God is God in the triune freedom in which God is equal to Godself, sufficient in Godself, God can be God. But again, because God is God in triune freedom, God can be our God in creation, reconciliation and redemption, as

> "The whole being, speech and action in which He wills to be our God, have their basis and prototype in His own essence, in His own being as God." (CD 1/1 p.383)

There is no intention at this point to discuss the details of Barth's trinitarian model. What is of concern is to relate it to this thesis. How does a trinitarian theology ground a socialist praxis? Of course this was not the only motive behind Barth's method, but it certainly was one of them, and it is this that is therefore of concern. Firstly, Barth's concern in this understanding is clearly to overcome Feuerbach's and Marx's theoretical objections to the concept of God. Only a God who is both sufficient in Godself and who takes and maintains the initiative in revelation of Godself to humans can be free from the criticism of projection and

ideology. But secondly, there is also Feuerbach's and Marx's practical criticism to be met. Even a God self-sufficient in Godself could be a God of the status-quo, a God who sanctions human alienation, a God whose lofty transcendence is unrelated to the transformation of the human condition. Barth meets this by discussing the trinity under the rubric of revelation. God's essential and revelational trinity are inseparable, God's being is only known in God's act, and God's act is a repetition of God's being. The God who loves in Godself becomes thus the God who loves in revelation of Godself to humans. The God who is community in Godself becomes the God who establishes and creates community with and among people. The God who is freedom in Godself is freely revealed to humans and is creative of freedom amongst them.

This holding together of being and act without allowing them to fuse into each other becomes the heart-beat of Barth's theology, the controlling paradigm for a whole series of parallels that one finds consistently repeated. God's being and God's act; the 'two-natures' Christology that preserves the difference between and yet unites the Divine and the human; theory and praxis; dogmatics and ethics; grace and nature; gospel and law; God's kingdom and human kingdoms; Church and state; justification and justice; soul and body; the gospel and socialism; God's revolution and human revolutions. In each one of these parallels there is a common structure that has its basis in the paradigm of 'being and act' : in the very nature of God.

The common structure can be explicated as follows: there is both a separation of the divine and the human and a priority of the divine that does not allow either a confusion of the two or a reversal of the two. This could be seen as the limiting structure of the paradigm. But secondly there is a unity between them that is unbreakable and yet preserves the distinction and the priority of the former. This becomes the

foundational structure of the paradigm. Applying this to the parallel of gospel and socialism, the following structure becomes apparent. Firstly there is a distinction between the gospel and socialism that prevents any form of hyphenation between them. There can be no religious-socialism or Christian politics. Both the gospel and socialism are secured in their respective spheres. The former is not secularised, the latter not sacralised. Secondly the gospel has the priority over socialism in the sense that it must control the features of the latter and not vice versa. The gospel is thus the limiting feature of socialism, preventing it from becoming an ideology, something to be believed in. But thirdly, the gospel and socialism are held together in an unbreakable unity which preserves these distinctions. The gospel becomes the basis for socialism and socialism becomes a predicate of the gospel.

Tracing this back to our paradigm, the socialist dimensions of God are seen in the communal nature of the trinity, which does not result in a 'collectivism' but a communalism of love and freedom. The contours of a socialism thus derived from this paradigm must hold these dimensions together. Further contours can be, and must be derived from other aspects of the trinity, as shall be discussed under the section on Christology and the Kingdom.[54]

It has been pointed out already that the means of preserving the unity of the parallels, of God in Godself and of God for the world, underwent a shift in Barth's theology from a Platonic to a Christological basis. It is thus important for this study to discuss Barth's Christology, as it is here that the paradigm of 'being and act' is more clearly revealed, and more securely grounded. Therefore this is taken up in a later section. But prior to this are further dimensions of Barth's doctrine of God that must be pursued.

In CD 11/1 and 2, Barth further unfolds his doctrine of God.

Again, the points that are relevant for our discussion will be isolated and discussed, recognising that this in no way can hope to cover the full dimensions of this great exposition. The object of it is to substantiate the assertion that Barth's doctrine of God is socially reflected and provides a central foundation for the grounding of his socialist praxis.

Firstly, Barth's epistemology. God is never discussed 'in Godself', but always in relation to human beings. Thus s25.1 'Man before God', finds its locus in the God-human encounter which is initiated by God in revelation which establishes God's objectivity, but which must be met by the corresponding human act of faith.

> "This history (of God and humans in history) begins with a voluntary decision of God and continues in corresponding voluntary decision of man. This history develops systematically and completely. The will of God offers itself as good will towards men and is met by faith. Man with his will yields and becomes submissive to the will of God. Faith becomes the determination of his existence and therefore obedience. And in this way the knowledge of God takes place." (CD 11/1 p.29)

Knowledge is thus obedience; to know God is to obey God. Knowledge is also practical; God is known in God's act and we know God in our corresponding act of obedience. Theory and praxis are thus held together in Barth's epistemology. But this must be secured from any reversal, so Barth balances it with another chapter, 'God before man', where the priority and primacy of God in this relationship are clearly asserted. Only this will prevent us "from making God in our own image" (CD 11/1 p.43).

Secondly, in the next section 'The Readiness of God', which deals with the 'arch enemy of all true theology', the problem of natural theology, the link is maintained. The focus of the discussion in the early part deals with the problem of

reversible analogies. Do we know Jesus as Lord, or God as Father, by projecting our images of Lordship and fatherhood into infinity? Do we have an earthly analogy by which we can know God? Barth's answer is unequivocally No!

> "We possess no analogy on the basis of which the nature and being of God as the Lord can he accessible to us." (CD 11/1 p/75)

All we have is God's revelation of Godself, and on this basis we know God as Lord, Father, Creator and Redeemer. Again, however, Barth's concern is not just with God at this point, but also with human being. Natural theology produces both a false God and an apotheosised humanity. On this basis God can neither be freed from the suspicion of projection and ideology, nor can God pronounce the radical No! and Yes! needed to liberate alienated humanity. Nor indeed is this radical word necessary, because humanity is not truly alienated and in need of it. The revolutionary God thus becomes a meek reformer, and the salvation that God offers is not liberation and justification, but amelioration, progress and reform.

> "Can we ever speak properly of grace and faith if at the very outset we have provided ourselves with a guarantee of our knowledge of God that has nothing to do with grace and faith." (CD 11/1 p.85)

Gollwitzer correctly identifies this concern when he argues that Barth's vigorous attack on Brunner's natural theology was because "in him he saw a regression to this reformism".[55] For Barth, "Justification and rebirth must be understood as revolution in the strict sense, not as a reform... For Barth the qualitative leap was decisive, whereas Brunner focused abstractly on the permanence of the 'formal personality'".[56]

Barth's attack on natural theology thus has three strands; it

is a desire to rescue God from the suspicion of ideology implicit in any 'reversal'; it is a desire to assert the radicality of the alienation of humanity in order to preserve the priority of God's initiative and revelation; and it is a desire to assert the revolutionary nature of grace and justification, not only because it so preserves the sovereignity of God, but also because of its ethical connotations. Justification and justice must be held together; God's revolution is paradigmatic for ours.

Again therefore, both the link between God and humans, between theory and praxis, dogmatics and ethics, justification and justice and the priority of the former are maintained.

The political issues at stake in this debate are also apparent, as is seen by Barth's inclusion in the next section, 'The Readiness of Man', of an exposition of the Barmen declaration (CD 11/1 p.172-173). The focus of Barmen's critique is on the new form of natural theology then taking shape in the German Christian movement. This was to Barth the logical consequence of the 'reversal' begun with Schleiemacher, where theology had become anthropology. Again, the passion with which Barth attacked this new form of natural theology had both theological and political roots, and one aspect must not be seen in isolation of the other.

Barth's seeming-hyperbole of a few chapters later becomes meaningful in this context:

> "No sentence is more dangerous or revolutionary than that God is One and that there is no other like Him. All the permanencies on the world draw their life from ideologies and mythologies, from open or disguised religions, and to this extent from all possible forms of deity or divinity. It was on the truth of the sentence that God is One that the 'Third Reich' of Adolf Hitler made shipwreck." (CD 11/1 p.444)

Thirdly, Barth's primary description of God as the 'One who loves in freedom' (CD 11/1 pp.257ff) again breaks a sterile ontology and preserves the link between being and act that is so important. 'God is' means 'God loves' (CD 11/1 p.283). Notice that Barth at this point rejects the temptation to digress into an analysis of God's being, in itself, even under the tempting rubric 'God is love'. This is not important to Barth. What is important, is that God loves. (CD 11/1 p.275)

God's freedom is a freedom to reveal Godself, to enter into covenant with human beings, to love and to give. God's loving is therefore grounded in God's freedom, and hence "needing no other, and yet also not lacking in another, but in sovereign transcendence giving and communicating itself to the other" (CD 11/1 p.231).

God's freedom and God's love are ultimately and centrally grounded in the person of Jesus:

> "In Him God has loved Himself from all eternity. In Him He has loved the world. He has done so in Him, in the freedom which renders His life divine, and therefore glorious, triumphant, and strong to save." (CD 11/1 p.321)

There are many more examples of how Barth's doctrine of God maintains the unity of being and act, and therefore the unity of God and humans, of gospel and law, of grace and nature, of theory and praxis and so on. All of these substantiate the thesis being argued; that Barth's concept of God is consistently socially reflected, and is a fundamental basis of his socialist praxis.

6.3 Creation and Anthropology

Before turning to the most crucial section of this chapter, that on Barth's Christology, it is necessary to isolate various areas in his doctrine of creation that are important for this work. The radical transcendence of God found in the dialectical period of Barth's theology had its counterpart in the enclosed and alienated social totality of the created order:

> "Society, also a whole in itself, broken within perhaps, but outwardly solid - without connections to the kingdom of heaven. Where is God in all the human?"[57]

Thus the early Barth. This position, as has already been indicated, though necessary at the time, was unsatisfactory in the long run, as it did not really allow God's gracious 'Yes' to humans and to creation, which is spoken in Jesus Christ, to be heard. Church Dogmatics begins on a completely different footing, following the same structural paradigm that has been explicated in relation to God.

> "The purpose and therefore the meaning of creation is to make possible the history of God's covenant with man which has its beginning, its centre and its culmination in Jesus Christ. The history of this covenant is as such the goal of creation, as creation itself is the beginning of history." (CD 111/1 p.42)

Therefore:

> "Creation (is) the external basis of the covenant" (CD 111/1 p.94ff)

and

> "the covenant (is) the internal basis of creation" (CD 111/1 p.228ff).

In analysing these statements, their relationship to the paradigm becomes apparent. In the covenant-creation parallel the covenant has priority, creation is for the sake of the covenant. It is also the limiting factor of creation; creation is not something that exists in and for itself, it has a limiting purpose, the covenant that God makes with humans. The covenant however, is also the ground of creation, establishing it in its rightful place and giving it an independence and necessity of its own within this context.

Within this broader theology of creation, therefore, it is possible to locate further indications of Barth's concern to ground his socialist praxis. Again, at the risk of being repetitive, it must be asserted that this, of course, is not the only reason for the particular shape that Barth's theology, and at this point, his doctrine of creation, takes, but given all that has been argued thus far, it surely is one of the reasons. Perhaps this could be stated another way for a final time. Barth's theology cannot be reduced to his politics, it has a dynamic and power of its own derived from its object, God, and its source, the Bible and Christian faith and practice. Nevertheless, as he himself was aware, all theology has an explicit or implicit political basis.[58] Barth's politics were socialist, and his theology arose in this context. Barth's political ethics were socialist, and given his own ethical method of deriving all from God's command, God's command is therefore socialist. But God's command cannot be divorced from God's being, it is not just derived from natural law or philosophy. So, clearly, God is, in some form, 'socialist'. Theology in all its contours must therefore reflect this, without reducing it all to this.[59] One further clarification; God's command is not directly translatable into the political arena, socialism has an independent life of its own, and is, in its modern form, a recent phenomenon. What exists, therefore, is a socialist tendency in God[60] which must be translated analogically into

the political arena in whatever form best fits the time and the circumstances.

Having set these qualifications, how does Barth's doctrine of creation ground his socialist praxis? A few areas will be briefly indicated.

Firstly, the new basis of this doctrine allows Barth to overcome what was a basic flaw in his Romans stage, the negation of the human. Barth once could affirm that the implications of God's transcendence

> "consist in the last end, simply in the annulment of the creaturehood in which, in contrast to God, we live our life on earth."[61]

This statement is obviously too dialectical, and would result in the view that human beings are alienated from God by nature. It is their creatureliness and their finiteness, as well as their sinfulness that separates God from them. The basic theological schema which undergirds Romans, 'God is in heaven and thou art on earth' expresses this God-human dialectic.

Even in the earlier volumes of Church Dogmatics this problem is not completely overcome. Although Barth now states that it is the fall which has brought about the separation of God and humans, and not their finiteness in itself (CD 1/1 p.239), he still cannot bring himself to affirm the human fully as human.

> "As scripture sees it, man as such has no dignity of his own, nor has the fellowship of man with man. What he is as an individual and in fellowship, he is under judgement." (CD 1/2 p.402)

It is only 'in Christ' that the human has any dignity, any relation to God.

> "We cannot take both Jesus Christ and man as such seriously, but only Jesus Christ and man only in Him." (CD 2/1 p.170)

This anthropology has been severely criticised for failing to see the human as human. As Ernle Young argues, it is only human being in Christ that is important for Barth. With reference to the persecution of the Jews under Hitler, Young writes:

> "For Barth 'the Jewish problem' was chiefly a problem of 'Israel', not the dire need of actually suffering persons who were Jewish."[62]

In CD 11/2, which was first published in 1942, a subtle change emerges that blossoms in 111/1/2/3. Concurrent with this shift is Barth's clearer recognition and acknowledgment of the political dimensions of the 'Church Struggle', and his desire "to say 'Yes'" more loudly than the No! of former years.[63]

> "But He wills and fulfills and reveals Himself, not only in Himself but in giving Himself, in willing and recognising a distinct reality of the creature, granting and conceding to it an individual and autonomous place side by side with Himself." (CD 11/2 p.178)

Of course, maintaining the paradigm that has already been discussed, there can be no equality of partnership, or any deification of the human (CD 11/2 p.577). The 'infinite qualitative difference' between God and humans is not abolished. But this is for an important reason; it means that "whatever the action demanded of us will be, it will be our action, a human action" (CD 11/2 p.578).

In 111/1 this new emphasis[64] is even more apparent. Creation is good, God has said his gracious Yes! to it. God's No! is never expressed to creation as such, "but to the nothingness by which creation is surrounded and menaced" (CD 111/1

p.386). God's No! is not to the human as such, but to the abuse of the human by humans. Because of God's grace, the divine and the human can never be totally alienated:

> "His divine determination and his creaturely form, his humanity, are certainly two very different things. But they cannot contradict each other, they cannot fall apart and confront each other in neutrality, exclusion or even hostility." (CD 111/2 p.205).

Previously for Barth, the image of God in humans had been totally obliterated by the fall, and the being of human being was threatened by this radical antithesis. But now "the good creation of God knows nothing of a radical or absolute dualism in this respect" (CD 111/2 p.205), and there remains

> "something constant and persistent, an invisible particularity of his creaturely form which cannot be effaced or lost or changed or made unrecognisable even in sinful man." (CD 111/2 p.206)

But caution needs to be exercised here. That which remains is not inherent in human beings, some area untouched by sin and alienation, on which a relation between God and humans can be established. It is always, first and last, because God has said 'Yes' to humans in Jesus Christ, because God has taken on the form of sinful humanity, because Christ is the internal basis of creation. Thus, warns Barth, "we must continue to base our anthropology upon Christology" (CD 111/2 p.207).

This will be further elaborated in the section on Christology which follows. What must be remembered at all times, however is this Christological basis. This new basis gives Barth a profound way of overcoming the traditional 'Achilles heel' of Reformation Theology, its anthropology, whilst retaining his distance from the Catholic nature-grace continuum. In a number of passages, this new dimension is spelt out:

> "We do not associate ourselves with the common theological practice of deprecating human nature as much as possible in order to oppose to it more effectively what may be made of man by divine grace." (CD III/2 p.274)

And again:

> "There is no reason for surprise that in light of the divine grace shown in the existence of the man Jesus, there has to be ascribed to human nature as much as we have ascribed to it... Half measures are obviously illegitimate at this point, and we are justified least of all by anxiety lest too little will remain for divine grace if we concede too much to human nature." (CD III/2 p.277)

This is the case even when there is no direct revelation and knowledge of Jesus Christ (CD III/2 p.276), and even with human's natural knowledge of themselves, they are still in the sphere of divine grace, "in the sphere in which Jesus too was a man" (CD III/2 p.277).

In these passages, it is possible to see the humanist, socialist Barth, concerned with both treating the human as human (no religious-socialism!) and with affirming the human in its rightful place. Having said No! to natural theology, to human pride and pretentiousness, to religion as a human grasping of God, to socialism as an ideology to be believed in, he is able to say Yes! to the human project, to socialism as a human struggle, analogous, but not identical, to God's struggle, with a voice louder and clearer than any liberal theologian ever was.

It is still necessary for the basis of this 'Yes' to be more closely scrutinised, but as it falls more logically under the rubric of 'Christology', it will be deferred until then. There are three final important areas of Barth's anthropology that need to be briefly discussed as further indications of his desire to ground his socialism in his theology.

Firstly, there is his stress on the freedom of human beings under the command of God; God's desire for humans is freedom; the freedom of the children of God. Only God who is perfectly free[65] can secure this freedom. The parameters of this freedom are discovered in the 'patience of God' (CD 11/1 section 30) which is

> "His will, deeprooted in His essence and constituting His divine being and action, to allow to another... space and time for the development of its own existence, thus conceding to this existence a reality side by side with His own, and fulfilling His will towards this other in such a way that He does not suspend or destroy it as this other but accompanies and sustains it and allows it to develop in freedom!" (CD 11/1 p.410)

Again in his ethics,

> "The command of God is permission and it sets us free.. (what).. in content... is commanded is simply the liberation of man" (CD 11/2 p.599).

This freedom is not just an existential or spiritual freedom, although it is that as well. It is far more also the total freedom and liberation of human beings from the various hypostases and powers that hold them in bondage. Among these, as has been pointed out continually, is the bondage of capitalism, where some human beings are treated as instrumental to others, and against which God's command, which sets us free, is always directed.[66]

Secondly, there is the affirmation, far removed from liberal individualism, and resonant with socialist undertones that:

> "humanity is to be described unequivocally as fellow-humanity" (CD 111/2 p.208);

and

> "the way of humanity lies in a togetherness which is accepted gladly and in freedom... (where)... man is neither a slave nor a tyrant... but both are companions, associates, comrades, fellows and help-mates" (CD III/2 p.271 my emphasis).

The strong Safenwil echoes are apparent, but are now integrated into a theological centre which protects both the Gospel from dilution or confusion, and the human from divinisation, whilst maintaining and securing its worth and dignity. God and humans are bound together in the struggle for humanity, for humanisation, which is the ultimate ground and goal of human existence, and is achieved in the freedom created by the God who loves in freedom. The human project of socialism can thus be affirmed as the particular command of God, taken up by the Christian community in co-operation with the secular, in the power of the freedom of God's liberating spirit. The Christian community as the 'vanguard' of this struggle,[67] affirms at once the priority of God and the primacy of the human, with no conflict, no separation and no confusion.

The third and final area to be discussed is the doctrine of 'human being as body and soul'. The Barth of the first edition of Romans could see in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body an analogy of the Marxian hope for a material transformation of all things.[68] Similarly, the Barth of Church Dogmatics sees in the separation of soul and body in traditional Christian teaching

> "A culpable indifference to the problem of matter, of bodily life, and, therefore, of contemporary economics (Marxism-RMP). Has it (the Church) not made a point of teaching the immortality of the soul instead of attesting to society, with its proclamation of the resurrection from the dead, that the judgement and promise of God compass the whole man and therefore cannot be affirmed and

> believed apart from material and economic reality" (CD 111/2 p.390).

Soul and body are held together in absolute unity by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Again, however, Barth's paradigm is apparent. One cannot reduce the one to the other; crass materialism denies the fulness of the human. The soul is the heart of the human person, the basis of all humanity, but it is not and cannot be separated from the body. It is not a negation of the body to stress the primacy of the soul, it is an affirmation of its true worth and value. Transposing this, as Barth does, to an analysis of Marxian theory, economic materialism that reduces the human to the material is clearly rejected.

> "It thus came about that the scientifically inadmissable deduction that the soul is material because materially conditioned became the received dogma of historical materialism" (CD 111/2 p.389).

The end product of this materialism is that it begins to "take on more and more of the spirit, or lack of spirit, of that robot man" (CD 111/2 p.389)

Here, once more, the dialectic between Barth's theology and his socialism is seen. His theology at this point clearly shapes the nature of his socialism. It enables him to critique a materialism that denies to the 'soul', or consciousness, of the human person any real value. At this point Barth decisively rejects a vulgar Marxian position, but does not at the same time reject the truth which is inherent in it. Marxism challenges the Church profoundly; as the church has not done anything to prevent the rise and dominance of this crass materialism, this soulless person.

> "Has it not always stood on the side of the ruling classes?... has it not always been the secret guarantee of the existence and continuance of an

> order of classes which technically cannot be understood otherwise than as the order of superiority of the economically strong?" (CD 111/2 p.390)

Barth's theology at this point stands very close to many expressions of neo-Marxian thought that seek to hold together 'soul' and 'body', consciousness and material existence, without reducing the one to the other.[69] His clear rejection of Marxism at this point is a rejection of the philosophy as developed under the rubric of dialectical-materialism, with a 'base-superstructure' model of knowledge structured according to an architectural analogy.[70]

From this discussion of creation, the grounding of Barth's socialism is seen both in the overall framework of the doctrine and in some of its specific details. His concern with reality is incontestable, as is his clear desire to locate this within his understanding of God. What is lacking in the discussion so far is the basic structure that enabled Barth to do this, his Christology, which provides the foundation for his whole project. It is this therefore, that is finally addressed as a culmination to the whole discussion.[71]

6.4 The Christological Centre

In leaving to last the analysis of Barth's Christology, it is necessary to be reminded of his own warning:

> "One cannot subsequently speak Christologically, if Christology has not already been presupposed at the outset" (CD 1/2 p.123).

As this section unfolds, it is clear that this is the case. All that has been said to this point needs to be seen and located within this context. Hopefully it will become apparent as all is recapitulated under this Christological rubric that it has been the presupposition and basis of all. Without this

recognition, it cannot truly be said that it has been Barth's theology that has been discussed, as without its intensive and extensive Christological basis, Barth's theology cannot be understood.

Indeed, because of the scope and depth of Barth's Christology, parameters need to be set on this discussion. To do full justice to his Christological concentration would require a whole thesis at least as long as this one. Hence there is a selection and concentration here on certain aspects of Barth's Christology central to the discussion in progress, namely, the theological grounding of Barth's socialism. These of necessity need to be located within the broader strokes of his Christology, his recovery of, and concentration on, the Chalcedonian 'two-natures' formulation. In fact, it is at this Christological centre, that, amongst other things of course, the true grounding of his socialism is located. Marquardt's statement that

> "Barth's recovery of the two-natures doctrine... is an objective theological expression for the experience of Christian-socialist solidarity"[72]

is valid if it is seen as part of Barth's broader theological concern. It needs, however, to be carefully explicated and qualified.

In the section on 'God' at the beginning of this chapter,[73] it was argued that the 'being-act' structure of Barth's trinitarian theology provides a basic paradigm for the whole of Barth's theology, a paradigm that throbs like a pulse through the complete structure of his work. This statement, however, needs to be modified. The 'being-act' structure of the trinity is not the most central paradigmatic structure of Barth's theology, that place goes to his 'two-natures' Christology. Here, in the incarnation of the Son of God, it is clearly seen how God and humans are held together in

inseparable unity, which at the same time preserves the necessary distinctions and lets 'God be God' and the 'human be human'. This does not contradict the earlier assertion of the priority of the 'being-act' paradigm, as the two-natures paradigm has the same structure and in fact flows from the 'being-act' paradigm. The reason that the two-natures paradigm becomes central, however, is that firstly it concretises in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth what was before a fairly abstract philosophical concept, and secondly, it has a noetical priority - even the 'being-act' paradigm is only known through it. Here Barth's argument that the trinity is only known through the revelation of Jesus as Lord, is important.[74]

Uncovering the structure of the Christological paradigm, the following aspects become clear. Firstly the 'two-natures' doctrine means that God and humans are distinguished from each other, and a priority is given to God in the relationship. "The Word <u>became</u> flesh". This means that God is truly God, not merely a projection of human desires or a product of human alienation. Here Barth retains the passionate tenor of his earlier works. There is still no talk of a God-human continuum that could be reversed in either direction. His rejection of the Lutheran '<u>communicato idiomatum</u>' is part of this process.[75] But it also means that the human remains human, there can be no talk of divinisation of the human person or the sacralising of human action and struggle. This clearly locates the rejection of religious-socialism, along with all other hyphenated hybrids, within a Christological centre. The project is ruled out from the start by the distinction of the divine and the human in Christ. Christologically, therefore, there can be no reversal of the relationship between God and humans, a position essential both to repel Feuerbach's attack on God[76] and to make a place for the human as human.

Barth expresses this in another place:

> "Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and man is not a third, midway between the two. In that case God has at once ceased to be God and likewise He is not a man like us. But Jesus is the Mediator, the God-man in such a way that He is God and man." (CD 1/2 p.161)

There is thus an important distinction, or disparity, between the two natures (CD 111/2 p.219). The humanity of Jesus is the image of God, but as such it is only indirectly and not directly identical with God. "It belongs intrinsically to the creaturely world, to the cosmos" (CD 111/2 p.219).

This distinction has political connotations, seen in the analogically parallel two-fold determination of humans:

> "The correspondence which alone can be considered in this connexion cannot and will not mean abolition of the 'infinite qualitative difference' between God and man. It is a question of responsibility and therefore of a correspondence in which God and man are in clear and inflexible antithesis. It is a question of displaying the image of God, and not the creation of a second God in human form, or of mixing or changing the human form into the one divine form... Whatever the action demanded of us may be, it will be our action, a human action. It will have to attest and confirm the great acts of God; but it will not be able to continue or repeal them... the covenant remains, but there is no development of an identity between God and man." (CD 11/2 p.577 & 588)

There is not even an identity that develops Christologically, the distinction must be maintained. Obviously this Christological model is one-sided in a manner similar to Barth's earlier theocentric theology.[77] What becomes important, in fact central, to the Church Dogmatics and Barth's mature theology, is the second aspect of the paradigm, the unity of the two-natures. Significantly, the words that Barth uses to describe the need for this stress are those

already encountered in the 1911 lecture and the 1938 article already discussed.[78] It is necessary, Barth states, when talking about Christ, to discover "the inner material connection" between the divinity and the humanity in Christ, whilst not forgetting the "formal parallelism" (CD 111/2 p.217). Clearly if this connection cannot be adequately made, then Barth fails both Christologically by not being able to affirm the incarnation, and politically, by failing to ground his praxis in a theological base. Thus although the distinction between the two natures must never be forgotten, the focus must be on the nature of the unity, on an understanding of the incarnation.

Before discussing the manner in which Barth maintains the connection in its distinction, it is necessary to see its significance. For the whole of Barth's theology, in fact for the Christian faith itself:

> "The Word, and therefore God Himself, does not exist for us apart from the human being of Christ." (CD 1/2 p.166)

In fact, the revelation of God in Christ, the revelation of the 'humanity of God', is the only way in which we know God. "God's deity does not exclude, but includes His humanity".[79] Barth himself acknowledges that his earlier theology tended to forget this, seen for instance in his implicit criticism of Romans:

> "We may believe that God can and must only be absolute in contrast to all that is relative, exalted in contrast to all that is lowly, active in contrast to all suffering,... transcendent in contrast to all immanence, in short that He can and must be only the "Wholly Other". But such beliefs are shown to be quite untenable and corrupt and pagan, by the fact that God does in fact be and do this in Jesus Christ." (CDiv/1 p.186)

Not only this, but the knowledge of Jesus as 'truly human' means that Jesus' humanity becomes determinative for all humanity, the ontological basis on which the human is founded and judged.

> "As the man Jesus is Himself the revealing Word of God, He is the source of our knowledge of the nature of man as created by God." (CD 111/2 p.41)

Both God and human being, and the relationship between them, are thus known through the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The implications of this are spelled out at a later stage in this chapter. What is important at this point is to discover how the divine and the human are held together in Christ.

The primary section where this is discussed is in Volume 111/2 of Church Dogmatics, where Barth lays the foundations of his anthopology. This is another reminder of the link Barth always maintains between his Christology and his anthropology, his concern about God is also a concern about humans. The overall statement in which the various specific features must be located reads as follows:

> "There is obviously no distance, alienation or neutrality, let along opposition, between this human definition and the divine. His humanity is not, of course, His divinity. In His divinity He is from and to God. In His humanity He is from and to the cosmos. And God is not the cosmos, nor the cosmos God. But His humanity is in the closest correspondence with His divinity. It mirrors and reflects it. Conversely, His divinity has its correspondence and image in the humanity in which it is mirrored. At this point, therefore, there is similarity. Each is to be recognised in the other. Thus even the life of the man Jesus stands under a two-fold determination. But there is harmony between the two. As He is for God, so He is for man, and as He is for man, so He is for God." (CD 111/2 p.216)

The inner material connection is not therefore an 'analogia entis', but an 'analogia relationis' (CD 111/2 p.219). It is

an analogy of the relationship of love within the inner divine being which is repeated and reflected in the person Jesus in his being for humanity.

> "This correspondence and similarity consists in the fact that the man Jesus in his being for man repeats and reflects the inner being or essence of God and this confirms His being for God." (CD 11/2 p.219)

and again

> "The correspondence and similarity consists in the fact that the eternal love (within the trinity RMP)... is also the love addressed by God to man. The humanity of Jesus... His being for man as the direct correlative of His being for God, indicates, attests and reveals this correspondence and similarity... It follows... the essence, the inner being of God." (CD 111/2 p.220)

and finally

> "Jesus lives 'kata theon', after God. As a man he exists <u>analogously</u> to the mode of existence of God. In what he thinks and will and does, in His attitude there is a correspondence, a parallel in the creaturely world to the plan and purpose and work and attitude of God." (CD iv/2 p.166 my emphasis)

This section is important. Firstly, it lays the Christological foundations for the analogical method of holding together God and humans, that allows for the closest harmony without identity. It therefore both limits and grounds the relationship. It prevents, for instance, religious-socialism (or Christian-nationalism!) and yet allows a grounding of socialist praxis as an analogy of the image of God as co-humanity. Clearly this Christological paradigm is repeated in the series of parallel that have already been alluded to in the sections on God and Creation. This is the ultimate basis and structural grounding of all Barth's theology, including

his expression of "Christian and socialist solidarity", pace Marquardt. In fact the word 'solidarity', which Barth first uses as a link between the socialist struggle and the Kingdom of God in the 1911 lecture, is a good description of this analogy, as it conveys the closest possible relationship that does not become an identity. Its danger of course, is that it does not ultimately preserve the irreversibility of the relationship which is so important.

Returning briefly to the Christological grounding of anthropology alluded to at an earlier point,[80] a further implication for this discussion is clarified. Jesus' humanity as the "ontological determination of humanity" (CD III/2 p.132) is based in his being both for God and for others. True humanity, therefore, consists in being both for God and for others. "To be man is to be with God" (CD III/2 p.134) but also "every supposed humanity which is not radically and from the very first fellow humanity is inhumanity" (CD III/2 p.228).

The political implications of this are self-evident, and it is no coincidence that Barth's section on 'Work' already cited, in which capitalism is criticised as inhuman in that it treats people as instrumental to capital, appears under the rubric of "Ethics as a task of the doctrine of Creation" (CD III/4 p.1). In the same volume, the assertion that "Humanity which is not fellow-humanity is inhumanity" (CD III/4 p.117) is repeated. This is a further indication of the theological grounding and shaping of socialist praxis.

One final and brief implication of the paradigm needs to be discussed. As has been stated, 'no identification' means that the possibility of illicit reversal is prevented. Locating this general structure within the locus of Barth's conception of revolution already discussed, it is possible to identify a probable concern of Barth's which has been made clear by

Lehmann, the concern to prevent the 'Revolution from devouring its children'. The paradigmatic 'no reversal', when analogically located within a context of revolutionary praxis, prevents the disintegration of a revolution into a 'Reign of terror', where "the divine right of power becomes power by divine right, the vox populi become the vox dei".[81] Barth himself never draws this parallel, but it is this theological paradigm which provides the basis for it.

Thus far the overall paradigmatic structure of Barth's Christology. What follows are two further important ways in which Barth develops his Christology under this broad structure, ways which again point to the accuracy of the general thesis of this dissertation.

Firstly there is the development of the implications of the positive Yes! that God speaks to us in Christ, as seen in the re-integration in Christ of religion, natural theology, philosophy, and even socialism. The basis for this re-integration is the Christological paradigm, where humanity is exalted, re-integrated, restored. It is of course prefaced by the negation

> "there is no natural religion, no natural theology, no natural law. In all these concepts 'natural' means apart from Jesus Christ... The antithesis for this 'natural' is not in the first instance the concept of revealed, but that of human nature once for all and definitely exalted in Jesus Christ" (CD iv/2 p.101).

But this negation cannot be isolated from the affirmation of humanity and the human project which is so important to Barth. He had begun in 1926 to deal with this reintegrating process in his essay 'Church and Culture'.[82] Here he displays an astonishing positiveness to human culture, given all he had said previously. Using the concept of the '<u>extra-Calvinisticum</u>' he argues that the Church must not forget that

the divine Logos, "while he is wholly man in Jesus of Nazareth, none the less fills heaven and earth; (and therefore) that the Church's own invisible truth is truth also beyond the visible reality of the Church."[83] On this basis, and having once more asserted the negation of it in the priority of God's grace; "Natural theology is included and brought into clear light in the theology of revelation... in the reality of divine grace is included the truth of the divine creation". In this sense "Grace does not destroy nature but completes it".[84] Thus from the point of view of creation as God's creation, seen once more in the light of revelation, human culture "can be a witness to the promise which was given to man in the beginning. 'It can', I say. In Christ it is".[85] Thus "the Church will not see the coming of the kingdom in any human cultural achievements, but it will be alert for signs which, perhaps is many cultural achievements, announce that the kingdom approaches."[86]

But culture can also be viewed from the standpoint of reconciliation. Here the promise is made law: "What God demands from men is called humanity...; sanctification, election for God, doing the will of God is always in content being human."[87] Obedience to the command then has to do with the goal of a kingdom of peace, justice and truth among people, a goal that is not possible to achieve fully, but a goal that is under the command of God.[88]

Finally, seen from the standpoint of redemption, culture is a limit set for humans, the other side of which stands God "who makes all things new". This is the eschatological proviso which does not undervalue cultural achievement, but gives it the "highest possible goal for which it sees all cultural activity striving."[89] It must be taken with seriousness, but not an ultimate seriousness.[90]

What is the importance of this discussion for the present

thesis? Simply that it is on this basis that Barth is able to speak of the 'true word' which socialism has to speak to the Church. It is on this basis that he talks of the "Christian significance or impulse of certain more or less purely humanistic, a-Christian or even anti-Christian uprisings such as socialism" (CD iv/3 p.97). Here the community is addressed by true words from the secular community. These words are guaranteed because

> "We come from the resurrection of Jesus Christ... from the revelation of man's exaltation in the person of the Son... therefore 'de iure' all men and all creation derive from this cross, from the reconciliation accomplished in Him, and therefore are ordained to be the theatre of His glory... We can and must be prepared to encounter parables of the kingdom in the full biblical sense... in the secular sphere" (CD iv/3 p.117).

These truths are one of the many 'lights' of Creation, illuminated by the one Light (CD iv/3 p.141). The basic feature of them, and here the echoes of Safenwil 1911 are unmistakable, "is that they point to something lasting persistent and constant" (CD iv/pp.142).

These lights, these truths, among which are the truths of socialism, are human and not divine, they are challenged and relativised by the truth of God, but they are also established by it.

> "The integration, the conscription to service, which comes to the self-witness of the creature in its encounter with the self-witness of God, consists in the fact that it is taken up by the latter, and that its limited power to bind can be invested with the absolute power of the Word of God, or conversely, that the absolute power of the Word of God can invest itself with the limited power of creaturely self-witness... (they) thus can be integrated by the Word of God and achieve what they could not be or do of themselves" (CD iv/3 p.157).

The whole process of qualification and reintegration results

in the grounding of Christian life and its relation to the common human struggle for justice, peace and freedom that resolves the 'identity-involvement' dilemma for the Christian community. It

> "is now free for unqualified participation in the cause of God and <u>therefore</u> in the cause of the world of men" (CD 14/3 p.248 my emphasis).

It is necessary to identify and explore one final area; the identification of God in Christ with the poor, oppressed and exploited of this world. This theme, so central to contemporary theology,[91] is expressed with great clarity and conviction by Barth. The identification is located at many places within his theological schema, and provides a strong basis for the theological grounding of his socialist praxis. It is discussed here under this section on Christology, as its basis lies in the incarnation of God in the weak, suffering, oppressed person of Jesus. Because of this

> "our fellow-man in his oppression, shame and torment confronts us with the poverty, the homelessness, the scars, the corpse, at the grave of Jesus Christ" (CD 1/2 p.428).

God in Christ assumes the form of sinful flesh, of alienated and suffering humanity. This is the fundamental and paradigmatic identification. It has its direct analogy however, in God's identification with all who are in this situation. God's identification is one of judgement and liberation, it judges the situation and liberates the oppressed:

> "God always takes His stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and on this side alone: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly; against those who enjoy right and privilege on behalf of those who are denied it and deprived of it" (CD 11/1 p.386).

In two exegetical passages, Barth pursues this theme. Firstly, the Year of Jubilee is "'the locus classicus' for all theological opponents of the doctrine of a free economy", and "this extraordinary year is adopted by Jesus as a type of his own time" (CD 111/2 p.456 and 457). Secondly, in the parable of the Last Judgement, the Christian community is confronted with Jesus

> "present, though hidden in all who are now hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick and in prison. With... these... He has made Himself one and declared Himself in solidarity" (CD 111/2 p.508).

The call, in response to this, is to be human, to simply respond to the human suffering of people. Jesus is hidden in them, but this does not mean we serve merely Jesus in them. Those who are blessed are those who responded to the human need of the suffering, "they were simply concerned with men as men, and therefore treated them as brothers" (CD 111/2 p.508). This is "the 'Magna Carta' of Christian humanitarianism and Christian politics" (CD 111/2 p.508), and from this and the understanding of God's identification with the poor and oppressed flows

> "a political attitude, decisively determined by the fact that man is made responsible to all those who are poor and wretched in his eyes, that he is summoned on this point to espouse the cause of those who suffer wrong" (CD 11/1 p.387).

The socialist parameters of this decisive political attitude are readily apparent.[92]

Drawing these threads together, it becomes clear that Barth's Christology, within its patristic and reformed contours, is the centre of his theology. It enables him finally to achieve what he had intended since his earliest days: to speak clearly of God and humans in one voice, without confusing the two but without separating them. In it Barth secures in a solid

theological base the 'inner and vital connection' that had been a consistent theme of his theology, in a manner that removes any possibility of identity and therefore of reversal. In this way, echoing Gollwitzer, "Jesus Christ is the movement for social justice, and the movement for social justice is Jesus Christ."[93]

6.5 The Kingdom and Analogy

There is one final area that needs to be addressed, and this is a brief analysis of the proclamation by Jesus Christ of the kingdom of God, and its relationship to our human struggles for justice. The lines along which this is developed are already apparent. There is firstly a clear separation, "believing man (cannot) work for the coming of God's kingdom (as)...These are ideas which are possible only on the basis ... (of a) co-ordination... and finally identity between grace and nature" (CD 1/2 p.791).

But this separation is only the first word. Within the basic paradigm that has already been isolated, there is also an 'inner and necessary' connection, a connection on the basis of analogy and 'parable' that Barth first developed in his Safenwil days. Hence

> "If the Kingdom of God had not come on earth to be manifested one day in power and glory as His Kingdom, there would be no hope at all in the social question, not even the relative hope or hopes which we continually need, if, in spite of everything, we are to resolve and act and persist in the direction of these relative counter-movements, at least in immanent opposition against the system, at least in inward but constantly open freedom in face of the exploitation which obviously cannot be removed without great repentance, at least with a readiness to do everything we can within the evil presupposition to mitigate the prevailing injustice and its consequences. The Christian community both can and should espouse the cause of

> this or that branch of social progress, or even socialism." (CD 111/4 p.545)

The analogy of the Kingdom gives the world, and the Church as God's agents within the world, its orientation and goal. But it is not a purely future eschatological reality, whose shape is only dimly perceived, it is rather grounded in the person of Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, the one who both proclaims and embodies the Kingdom. The community is thus located 'between the times' of God's two comings as God's agent of change, proclaiming in word and deed the rule of the One 'who makes all things new'. Both the Church and the world are heading in the same direction. The former acts as the latter's true centre, in pointing it to its destiny. This destiny is a political destiny, the heavenly Jerusalem.[94] The role of the Church is thus a political role, pointing analogously to the shape of the kingdom.

> "In the form in which she exists among them she can and must be to the world of man around her a reminder of the justice of the Kingdom of God already established on earth in Jesus Christ, and a promise of its future manifestation. 'De Facto', whether they realise it or not, she can and should show them that there already exists on earth an order based on that great transformation of the human situation and directed towards its manifestation." (CD iv/2 p.721)

Barth develops this analogical methodology in relation to the state as a parable of God's Kingdom in the essay 'The Christian Community and the Civil Community'.[95] The State is 'an allegory, a correspondence and an analogue' to the Kingdom of God.[96] In the contours of this state as an allegory of the Kingdom, we find a clear rejection of capitalism, and an affirmation of socialism. Because the Kingdom consists in the seeking and saving of the lost, the state as an analogy of Kingdom always has "the poor, the socially and economically weak and threatened (as) the object of its primary concern". As a consequence it must opt for socialism:

> "in choosing between the various socialist possibilities... it will always choose the movement from which it can expect the greatest measure of social justice."[97]

Herberg rejects this analogical methodology for two reasons. Firstly, he claims that it is arbitrary: "Barth... is adjusting his Christological arguments to conclusions already reached on other grounds",[98] and secondly, the warrant for the method of analogy is not Biblical, "but is a hang-over from the Platonic-Originistic content of 'Romans'".[99] The latter argument is invalidated by an understanding of this paper. The former has an element of truth, the dialectical relationship between Barth's theology and his socialist praxis has been the emphasis of this thesis. But Herberg is incorrect when he agrees with the assertion that the content of the analogy is the same as that achieved by an understanding of natural law.[100] No 'natural law' has ever negated private property, or affirmed socialism in any form. He is also incorrect in that he fails to see the depth of the theological grounding of this analogy in Barth's Christological paradigm.

H. Gollwitzer's article, 'Kingdom of God and socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth' already cited, has an excellent analysis of this analogical relationship. There is no need to repeat all that he argues at this point, but his description of the development and continuity of this analogical grounding is worth quoting in conclusion. Through this method, he argues, it is seen how as a

> "theological thinker and teacher, the former pastor of Safenwil, through a long intellectual journey, answered the questions that had arisen for him through sobering historical experiences regarding the connection he had once perceived between God's kingdom and socialist activity. That is how he set his hopes on the Christian community, against all appearances, as the agent of the necessary revolution; and that is how he

wanted to equip her for this mission. He changed language, disposition, and style of thought. He became more soberly pragmatic than he once was about politics, but he never abandoned the radical and revolutionary orientation for work in society that he had received from the message of the Kingdom of God."[101]

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1. see Herberg op cit, Hunsinger op cit, etc.
2. 'Final Testimonies' p.24.
3. 'On reading Karl Barth from the Left' in Hunsinger op cit p.155.
4. in the review of his book by Hartwell already cited p.95.
5. See Chapter 3 above.
6. in, respectively: Hunsinger, op cit; The Word of God and the Word of Man op cit, Romans op cit; Herberg, W. op cit for the last three essays.
7. in Hunsinger op cit p.21.
8. 'Church and State' in Herberg, W. op cit. The German title the essay 'Rechfertigung und Recht' exposes this intention far more clearly than the English title 'Church and State' may indicate.
9. As has been seen in both Herberg's and Niebuhrs's criticisms of Barth already cited.
10. Hunsinger op cit p.19.
11. Ibid p.23.
12. Ibid p.27.
13. Ibid p.29.
14. Ibid p.29.
15. Ibid p.32.
16. Ibid p.34.
17. Ibid p.35.
18. Ibid p.43.
19. At the extent of labouring the qualifications it is necessary to repeat that this was not the only motivation for Barth's revision. What can be asserted is that it was an important one amongst many others already identified.
20. 'Word of God and Word of Man' op cit p.275.
21. Ibid p.276.
22. Ibid p.276.
23. Ibid p.277.
24. Ibid p.277.

25. Ibid p.280.
26. Ibid p.281 and 282.
27. Ibid p.282.
28. Ibid p.283.
29. Ibid p.283.
30. Ibid p.288.
31. Ibid p.285.
32. Ibid p.295.
33. Ibid p.299.
34. Ibid p.299.
35. Ibid p.300.
36. Ibid p.302.
37. Ibid p.308, p.310.
38. I am aware of the important debate regarding the 'Gospel and Law' and the 'Two Kingdoms', see for example the essay "The Law-Gospel debate as a possible basis for a theological ethic" by K.Nurnberger in 'Theologia Evangelica' Vol. 14 No 2, 1981 (Pretoria : UNISA). However, no reference is made to it as it does not have strict relevance to the discussion.
39. in Hunsinger op cit p.75.
40. Ibid p.80.
41. in Hunsinger op cit p.85.
42. in Herberg op cit p.157.
43. "Ora! and therefore Labora!" (CD 111/4 p.534).
44. Ibid p.160.
45. Ibid p.163.
46. Barth's rejection of natural law is not only theological, but also has its context in his awareness of its vulnerability to the critique of ideology. Barth, under the influence of Marx, is suspicious of the 'natural', because it actually masks true reality. Here the convergence of his theology and the influence of Marx is again apparent.
47. Ibid p.165.
48. Ibid p.168.
49. Ibid. p.168.

50. Thurneysen in Hartwell op cit p.95.
51. Von Balthasar op cit p.151.
52. see 'Final Testimonies' op cit p.24.
53. in Hunsinger p.68 and p.188 and 'Theologie und Sozialismus' p.242-243.
54. 'Theologie und Sozialismus' p.242-243.
55. Ibid p.92.
56. Ibid p.92.
57. Tambach, 1919 'Word of God and Word of Man' p.279.
58. See his statement on the motivation for writing the Church Dogmatics already cited, and his comment "all my theology always had a strong political side, explicit or implicit" ('Final Testimonies' op cit p.24)
59. God's being is always more than God's act, although God's act cannot be divorced from God's being.
60. Grounded, as has been seen, in God's being-in -community, in the revolutionary transformation God brings, in God's election of humanity as co-humanity. All the parallels Barth drew in his 1911 essay still apply, but with the qaulification necessary to ground them more substantially.
61. Ibid p.288.
62. in an unpublished paper "A summary analysis of Karl Barth's developing views concerning the relations between Church and State".
63. 'How I changed my Mind' op cit p.51.
64. 'emphasis' being the best word to describe the change, for Barth does not fundamentally negate what he once said, even in his most dialectical days.
65. See also the article 'The Freedom of God in the theology of Karl Barth' by G.S. Hendry in Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 31, 1981 pp.229-244. Hendry locates this freedom within a Kantian transcendentalism. This needs to be complemented and corrected however, with Marquardt's analysis of the basically Socialist contours of this concept of freedom. See 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.237,238, also in Hunsinger op cit p.67.

66. See CD 111/4 p.544.
67. See pages 122f below for a further discussion on the church.
68. see in Hunsinger, op cit p.62 and 63.
69. seen for e.g. in the work of Barth's contemporaries: G. Lukacs 'History and Class Consciousness' (London, 1971) and A. Gramsci 'Selections from Political Writings: 1910-1926' (London : 1978) and 'Selections from the Prison Notebooks' (London : 1971). Common to both Lukacs, Gramsci and Barth is the influence of Hegel, and the renewed stress on the active subject. See also the work of the Frankfurt Critical Theorists ; Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm and more recently, J. Habermas, 'Knowledge and Human Interests' (London, 1972).
70. see the rejection of this model in Fischer, K. 'Marx in his own Words' op cit p.90, 91; "Social being is more than just the sum of economic conditions".
71. Strictly speaking, of course, his Christology should have come first, but the logic of this paper has dictated otherwise. Nevertheless, it is clear that Christology has been assumed from the start, as is seen in the next section.
72. in Hunsinger op cit p.64.
73. see pages 90 above.
74. see CD 1/1 p.384, p.399, p.448.
75. see CD iv/1 p.82. G. Wingren sees in this an 'inversion of liberalism' by Barth. ('The Living Word' London : SCM, 1960 p.31 cited in Jonsson, J.N. 'The Thought of Gustaf Wingren and its relationship to some modern theologians' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Pietermaritzburg, 1966)). This charge ignores, however, Barth's consistent desire to preserve the inner necessary unity of the divine and the human, without confusing them into divine-human hybrid. It is only this unity in separation that can preempt Feuerbach's critique.
76. "To rebuke Feuerbach's attack effectively one must be

certain that man's relation with God is in every respect, in principle, an irreversible relation" Essay on 'Ludwig Feuerbach' in 'Theology and Church' op cit p.231. See also Barth's discussion on this in CD iv/2 p.83-83.

> "Is not its characteristic inversion of above and below, heaven and earth, God and man, a realisation, at bottom, of the possibility which as the apotheosis of human nature had long since been prefigured by the Lutheran forms of the doctrine of the idiomata, although still enclosed in its Christological shell?" (CD iv/2 p.83)

77. see the essay 'The Humanity of God' in Barth, K. 'The Humanity of God' (London : Collins, 1961, p.37).
78. see pages above.
79. Ibid p.49.
80. see page 99 above.
81. Lehmann, P. 'The Transfiguration of Politics' op cit p.15.
82. in 'Theology and Church' op cit p.334ff.
83. Ibid p.342.
84. Ibid p.347.
85. Ibid p.343.
86. Ibid p.344.
87. Ibid p.346.
88. Ibid p.347.
89. Ibid p.349.
90. At this point it is necessary to refer to the criticism by H. Diem of Marquardt's use of the 'Extra-Calvinisticum' as a basis for grounding Barth's socialism in his theology. (See H. Diem 'Karl Barth as Socialist : Controversy over a new attempt to understand Him" in Hunsinger, op cit p.121ff). Whatever the technical details of this argument, it seems clear that, firstly: the 1926 article under discussion seems to support Marquardt's thesis on the reintegration of natural theology (see Marquardt's 'Theologie und Sozialismus' op cit p.263ff) against Diem. Secondly, Hunsinger's editorial comments on the realist and political aspect of Marquardt's use of 'anhypostasis'

and 'enhypostasis' also appears to be valid (pp. 136, 137, 134).

91. See G. Gutierrez 'A Theology of Liberation' (London : SCM, 1973), 'The Power of the Poor in History' (London : SCM, 1983).

92. As seen more specifically in the essay 'The Christian Community and the Civil Community' op cit, where as an analogy to God's identification with the poor and oppressed, the Church must make "the poor, the socially and economically weak and threatened... the object of its primary and particular concern". (p.173) This means that it must stand "for social justice in the political sphere" and "in choosing between various socialist possibilities ... it will always choose the movement from which it can expect the greatest measure of social justice". (p.176 my emphasis)

93. see Hunsinger op cit p.87.

94. 'Church and State' in 'Community, State and Church' op cit p.124.

95. in 'Community, Church and State' op cit.

96. G.A. Butler 'Karl Barth and Political Theology' in Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 27' 1974 p.447) perceptively points out the similarities of Barth's use of analogy to J.H. Oldham's 'middle axioms'. In both, "the goal is to allow the Church to develop some ethical principles without giving these principles the status of a creed or timeless system." p.447.

97. Ibid p.173.

98. Ibid p.36.

99. Ibid p.37.

100. Ibid p.

101. in Hunsinger op cit p.89.

CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to analyse both the nature of Barth's socialism and the manner in which he grounded it theologically. There has been no real attempt, however, to engage him in critical debate, as this would have taken the discussion far beyond its limited parameters. It was deemed important enough merely to identify the socialist shape and grounding of Barth's theology. This was because firstly, it is difficult to undertake this analysis given the vast spread of his work, and secondly, it is an important side of Barth not often acknowledged, and one which is subject to great controversy even when it is acknowledged. It is further of both theological and political concern, as Marquardt correctly states,

> "to rescue Karl Barth from the clutches of conservative or liberal social forces which misuse his theology as an apolitical legitimation for existing relationships or for the glossing over of real political conflicts through a cheap reconciliation".[1]

Of course, there have been serious questions raised against Barth's theology as a whole. From the ranks of his own pupils have come both substantial critiques and developments of his theology.[2] From Brazil, Ruben Alves has stated that Barth's theology is not relevant "to those committed to the creation of new future, as an exigency of humanization and as an expression of man's transcendence".[3] Equally devastating and difficult to counter are the critiques of the feminist theologians, who correctly, it seems, identify a clear patriarchal bias at the heart of Barth's theology that colours his whole project.[4]

There are clearly substantial areas of Barth's theology that need to be challenged and reworked. These however, must not detract from the crucial gains Barth has made in clarifying

the link between faith and praxis. This constitutes his lasting significance, the bed-rock rootedness of his theological basis for liberating praxis.

The concern to 'rescue Barth' is thus not merely to vindicate his name. Far more important is the way in which he can be located within a broader concern; the attempt to develop within the South African context a theology of liberating socialist praxis with a Reformation centre. In this context, the temptations to simply substitute the 'Christian Nationalist' model with a 'Christian socialist' model of similar structure are always present, and it is here that Barth's model becomes extremely useful, providing as it does a 'third way' which avoids the dangers of identification and yet indicates a clear direction for political praxis towards a socialist, non-racial society. It also provides a basis for resolving the pressing dilemma of 'identity and involvement'; the question of how one engages, as a Christian, in political and hence secular struggle for liberation, without either losing one's identity as a Christian or divinising the struggle. These are important and pressing concerns in the present context, and the hoped-for relevance of this study is found in the way in which these questions can be answered on the basis of Barth's theology.

Marquardt has the final word:

> "Where the bourgeois class in the profusion of even its intellectual wealth can without serious reservations declare that God is dead, where it can 'demythologise' and rationalize the Biblical traditions to make them more suitable for bourgeois self-consciousness; when it simply emasculates and abandons dogma and dogmatics, at such points there lives in Barth as in the poor of this earth, who indeed cry out not only for bread, but also for spirit, a knowledge of the indispensibility of every particular historical moment of truth. Precisely in the most alienating features of dogma, Karl Barth saw the most

far-reaching promises for us as persons. In that way as a theologian he was completely unbourgeois. He did not clear difficulties away : he broke them open. Precisely that is the hermeneutic of the poor. They do not disrupt, neither do they despise. They knock to see whether it will be opened to them and whether there is something there 'for the present day'. And if not, they simply wait."[5]

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1. In Hunsinger op cit p.74.
2. e.g. W. Pannenberg 'Theology and the Philosophy of Science' op cit (p.265-276); 'The Apostles Creed in Light of Today's Questions' (London : SCM 1972, p.20) and Moltmann, J. 'The Theology of Hope' (London : SCM 1967 pp.44, 45, 50-57) and 'The Crucified God' (London : SCM 1974 p.320, 321).
3. Alves, R. 'A Theology of Human Hope' (New York : Anthony Clarke, 1972) p.55.
4. cf M. Daly 'Beyond God the Father' : Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation' (Boston : Beacon, 1973).
5. In Hunsinger op cit p.75.

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