

1. Frei's typology is not clear, primarily because just what he means, and does not mean, by "the two basic views of theology" that generate the typology seems confused.

2. By contrast, the typology one could develop by employing the two basic criteria of the adequacy of witness and theology to their content—namely appropriateness and credibility—seems clear and very much to the point.

3. This second typology, like the first, would distinguish five main types (reading from "left" to "right"):

(1) understandings of theology as concerned solely with the credibility of Christian witness;

(2) understandings of theology as concerned primarily with the credibility of Christian witness, but also—and precisely thereby—with its appropriateness;

(3) understandings of theology as concerned equally with the credibility of Christian witness and with its appropriateness;

(4) understandings of theology as concerned primarily with the appropriateness of Christian witness, but also—and precisely thereby—with its credibility; and

(5) understandings of theology as concerned solely with the appropriateness of Christian witness.

4. Types 1, 3, and 5 seem straightforward enough, the first and last representing the two extreme contrary positions, the second representing their common contradictory. But Types 2 and 4 are alike peculiar, albeit in opposite ways, in that, while they understand theology properly to acknowledge both criteria and to be concerned with satisfying both of them, they also understand it properly to concern itself with satisfying one of the criteria by primarily concerning itself with satisfying the other. Thus, for example, a theologian of Type 2 can say, as David Pailin does, that "Christian faith in God demands that its self-understanding be finally determined not by its inherited cumulative tradition but by what may warrantably be held to be true (whatever qualifications self-critical reason shows to be necessary to recognize the relativity of any claim to perceive the truth)" (*A Gentle Touch:*

64), while a theologian of Type 4 can say, as I seem to recall Karl Barth's saying, that "the only good apologetics is a good dogmatics." Characteristic of both of these even-numbered types, then, is that, while they recognize both of the criteria, they regard one of them as, in effect, reducible to the other, whether appropriateness to credibility, or credibility to appropriateness. By contrast, Types 1, 3, and 5 all presuppose the mutual irreducibility of the two criteria, Types 1 and 5, by each acknowledging only one of them, Type 3, by acknowledging both of them, but insisting on the irreducibility of either to the other.

5. This second typology ought not to be confused with the more familiar one generated by distinguishing between the contemporary situation, on the one hand, and the Christian tradition, on the other. Ordinarily, this more familiar typology distinguishes three main positions—from "left," through "center," to "right." But it, too, can be nuanced so as to yield five, rather than simply three, main positions, especially if one allows the extreme opposite positions—Types 1 and 5—to be represented respectively by a secularism concerned only with the contemporary situation and a fundamentalism concerned only with the Christian tradition. Type 3, then, can be represented by a genuinely (i.e., revised, or postliberal) revisionary theology, while Type 2 is represented by the kind of theology that seeks to do justice to the Christian tradition precisely by doing justice to the contemporary situation, and Type 4, by the kind of theology that does the opposite, seeking to do justice to the contemporary situation precisely by doing justice to the Christian tradition. Perhaps another, and possibly better, way of formulating this alternative typology would be to distinguish between ways of being relatively critical or uncritical of the contemporary situation and of the Christian tradition respectively. Thus Type 1 theologians are relatively critical of the Christian tradition, but relatively uncritical of the contemporary situation, while Type 5 theologians are exactly the opposite. And so on.

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