

The new theology of de Lubac

Connection with modern philosophy: through his affinity with the obscure Blondel.

- lack of intellectual vigor, inferiority complex before modern skeptical and subjectivist man
- Wish to reconcile their pseudo-philosophy with the faith,
- truth = correspondence of mind with life.

Purpose: understand the concepts of neo-modernism.

Means: get a good grasp of one of the central figure of Henri de Lubac, the main architect of the “*new theology*”—translate neo-modernism.

Importance: After Rahner and Congar, few theologians influenced the Council as much as Henri de Lubac. Seen as one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century and was made a Cardinal by his protégé JP II.

I. THE DE LUBAC CIRCLE

1. The Fourvière School

- a. De Lubac conducted Scripture study with *Ressourcement*: return to patristic sources. this high-powered team included the future cardinals Daniélou and von Balthasar (a brilliant translator of de Lubac’s writings into German) and fathers Fessard and Bouillard (later implicated in the Roman condemnations).
- b. This school created a vast network of self-taught Modernist thinkers, who shared the same contempt of scholasticism : too cold, intellectualist.
- c. Like the French Dominican provinces, which Pius XII threatened to close, the post-war French Jesuits show clear signs of Modernism. And so, they protected de Lubac who could continue his studies even after his condemnation.
- d. He wrote on everything. He boldly tackled the problems of the time (Communism, Nazism, atheism), always with an eye to winning over the unbeliever. A brilliant mind and an accomplished writer, with extensive culture, but w/ a faulty philo background.

2. Friends of de Lubac

- a. He influenced Rahner, the personalist Mounier, Teilhard de Chardin (whom he defended with his pen), the Dominicans Chenu and Congar.
- b. Had high ranking protectors in French Cardinals of Lyons, with future popes (Cardinal Wojtyla & Mons. Montini).
- c. Friends among Protestants: Karl Barth and the Taizé movement, Roger Schutz and Max Thurian.
- d. In Summary: He shared the modernist and liberal ideas along with the movers and shakers of VII. Their idea of *Ressourcement*, was a rallying cry behind the new zeitgeist, the aggiornamento, the leitmotiv of the Council.

3. Enemies of the NewTheol:

- a. He is his own enemy: young de Lubac plunged himself into forbidden books, Laberthonnière (who rejected outside authority) and Blondel (who rejected the supernatural and the realist apologetics). A brilliant mind turned upside down by a faulty philo.
- b. Fr. Boyer and Garrigou Lagrange accused him of falsifying the notion of truth; Card. Siri called his extensive studies as “evasive” bec deny first principles of philosophy.
- c. Pius XII complained to the Card. Of Lyons of his duplicity: “The problem with him is that you never know if what he says or writes corresponds to what he thinks.”

II. NEW THEOLOGY: REVISITING DOGMA

1. Rediscover the Fathers

- a. Return to sources
 - i. Rediscover the mystical and allegorical sense of the Sacred Scripture. Esp. with Origen = golden child of *Christian Sources*, (37 vol.) vs St. Jerome, the father of exegesis (4 vol.). Origen for all his merits had very erroneous opinions: salvation of all men and angels in the end.
 - ii. It masks contempt of clear Magist. Definitions, condemnation of heresies, Thomistic principles & distinctions, e.g. he complains of the “rationalist dialectic of substance and accident”
 - iii. It is a very serious deformation to seek to impose philosophical theses by authority, as a sort of new Credo.

2. Apologetics & Faith

- a. Scorn of “classical” apologetics which:
 - i. “scientifically establishes the fact of Revelation”;
 - ii. proves rationally God’s existence & motives of credibility of Revelation.
 - iii. “it conceives dogma as a revealed block w/o relation to man, as an object regulated by an arbitrary Divine decree.”
- b. Scorn of extrinsicism: dogma imposed by a superior authority
 - i. The Church must not be shut away in a juridical or official straightjacket
 - ii. “Nothing is less in conformity with the truth than the extrinsicist doctrines which only maintain in the Church a unity of constraint only through visible transmission and visible authority. They transform the obedience of the Faith into a faith of pure obedience.”

3. Revelation

- a. = “The mystery of Christ”
 - i. Revelation is the Living Christ Himself rather than His message. This explains why the deposit of the Faith is never complete.
 - ii. “Yesterday, we were not at a ‘pre-theological’ stage, neither will we tomorrow possess a complete theology of the Church just to be repeated indefinitely.”

- b. Tradition:
 - i. He is enemy of the two sources of revelation and stress over Sacred Scr.
 - ii. *tradition= living message= historicism*
 - 1. Trad. not inert conservation, not passing on unchangeable truths
 - 2. Trad: reference and creativity, “concrete and living entity which updates itself accdg to the needs of each age.”
- c. Sacred Scripture.
 - i. *Spiritual Exegesis*, offspring of existentialism/subjectivism, is superimposed to the literal sense. It grows indefinitely thanks to various readings of different readers.
 - ii. plenitude and totality is Sign of Truth. It resides in the greater potential for inclusion.

4. The Church & Salvation

- a. Church
 - i. The Church is “mystery” and “sacrament” of Jesus Christ, two points which will reappear in *Lumen Gentium*.
 - 1. The Church is 1^o mystery, and 2^o institution and society.
 - 2. The Church is sacrament, sign and cause of the unity of men. As sign, She is not not the kingdom of God on earth, not an ark/ship but a lighthouse: she is sign, pointing way to heaven.
 - ii. Beautiful but vague statement, used by Pope Paul VI: “the Church makes the eucharist and the eucharist makes the church”.
- b. Salvation
 - a. *Rejection of the supernatural.*
 - i. de Lubac’s book *Supernatural 1946* follows: the supernatural is “absolutely impossible and absolutely necessary for man.”
 - ii. God could not have created pure nature without ordaining it to the supernatural. Man as man has a strict right to beatific vision.
 - iii. Anthropology develops “naturally” into theology. He is the author of the strange statement of VII (*Gaudium et Spes*): “By revealing the Father... [Christ] completes the revelation of man to himself... Through Christ the person is an adult, Man emerges definitively from the Universe.
 - b. *Universal salvation*
 - i. The Grace of Christ acts outside of the visible Church. The famous axiom “Outside the Church, no salvation”, for the Church Fathers, was directed at those who fomented schism, rebellion or betrayal.”
 - ii. Salvation is a collective undertaking: “There must be a place where humanity, generation after generation, is gathered. It requires an eternal Being who totalizes it.” This inveterate optimism is reflected in the Conciliar decree *Gaudium et Spes*.
 - iii. The infidels will obtain salvation as an extension of the Communion of Saints. They can be saved as an integral part of that humanity which is to be saved.

III. CONDEMNATION OF THE NEW THEOLOGY

1. Shocking theses in the 40's and 50's

- a. Submission to authority “transform the obedience of the Faith into a faith of pure obedience”
- b. Sn: “absolutely impossible and absolutely necessary for man.”
- c. Revelation is the Living Christ Himself rather than His message
- d. The Church is “mystery” and “sacrament” of Jesus Christ
- e. Universal salvation of new man.

2. Garrigou's article 1946 “The new theology, where is it taking us?”

- a. “These writers have not abandoned the doctrine of St. Thomas; they have never really understood it. How could such a manner of teaching form anything but skeptics? Where is the new theology taking us? Where but down the path of skepticism, fantasy and heresy?”

3. Pius XII's condemnation (Humani Generis 1950)

- a. Urgently needed. “If timely action had not been taken, stone would not have been left upon stone. I hear around me reformers who want to dismantle the Holy Sanctuary, destroy the universal flame of the Church, to discard all her adornments, and smite her with remorse for her historic past.”
- b. He stresses the supreme authority of the Teaching Church, sole guardian of the deposit of the faith. dogmatic formulae need not adapt to modern taste.
- c. “Some... destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say, cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision.
- d. “Some even say that the doctrine of transubstantiation, based on an antiquated philosophic notion of substance, should be so modified that the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist be reduced to a kind of symbolism,
- e. “Some say they are not bound by the doctrine...based on the Sources of Revelation, which teaches that the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing.
- f. Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church to gain eternal salvation.
- g. Others belittle the reasonable character of the credibility of Christian faith.
- h. The basic message is simple: the magisterium is the guardian and the interpreter of Divine Revelation. Christianity cannot be reduced to a personal experience.

4. Outcome

- a. We may lament the fact that the names of the heretics were not given. De Lubac brushed it off although he recognized that “lightening had hit Fourvière”.
- b. In 1958 De Lubac and his friends were still held in dishonor when Pacelli died.
- c. In 1962, Arch. Lefebvre talking to Card Ottaviani asked why these men suspect of modernism were allowed at the Council. He replied: “The boss wants it”.
- d. *Humani Generis* appeared in 1950. VII Council ended in 1965. The new theology solemnly censured by Pius XII, had become the official Church theology.
- e. Never before in CC history had a dogmatic encyclical been so quickly and so completely disavowed by the very men which it had condemned.