

developed by F. Rosenzweig and M. Buber (see also F. Ebner, E. Rosenstock-Huessy, E. Lévinas, and H.-C. Askani).

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#### 4. Language and Theology

4.1. Theology is a matter of words. It presents words about the Word, or even about God, yet it uses language not only as an instrument but also as a medium, and thus we can speak of language as the way of  $\rightarrow$  theology. For this reason theology — if it is self-reflective — necessarily involves a theory of language that must encompass both *langue* and *parole*, Scripture and religious language, "the Word of God" and ordinary language.

A significant difference exists, however, between receiving guidance from Scripture and receiving it from speech (in using religious language or, especially, hearing the  $\rightarrow$  kerygma, or the "living word of the gospel") — that is, between being oriented to the signs in Scripture (and their reference and  $\rightarrow$  meaning) and focusing on the spoken language as in  $\rightarrow$  rhetoric (and its effects, forms, and performance). Linguistics relates to the former in text theories (see U. Eco and W. G. Jeanrond) and also in  $\rightarrow$  structuralism and classic analytic theory. To the latter, linguistics relates via speech-act theory,  $\rightarrow$  pragmatism, and hermeneutics or rhetoric.

Because  $\rightarrow$  religion begins with religious speech, and grows and lives by it as well, issues arise of "competence" and "performance." We can thus see that an orientation in theology merely to propositions misses the dimensions of perspectivity, the media used, pragmatics, and facticity (e.g., the factor of the individual or the actual historical horizon of one's perspective), which are clarified by herme-

neutics, media theory, pragmatology, and → phenomenology. For this reason both the classic approaches of language, such as rhetoric and hermeneutics, and the late or postmodern approaches, such as (new) pragmatism, poststructuralism, and postanalytic symbol theory, are helpful for theology.

Linguistics in theology has different fields of attention: Scripture, religious language, and the various symbolic forms. The basic element for theology is not the concept or the term (as it is in classic analytic theory) but the → metaphor (which stands for tropes generally), for religious language, as well as the language of theology (e.g., in its treatment of “incarnation,” “the word of the cross,” even “Jesus Christ” and “resurrection”), is basically metaphoric.

4.2. The history of these questions begins in Christian theology with → Jesus preaching the → kingdom of God in → parables and with Paul's main topic, the → cross. Both are key matters of → exegesis in a linguistic perspective. The idea of a theology of language arises from the tradition of the prophetic theology of God's Word (marked by “thus says the Lord”).

The Greek tradition is quite different, for it is directed not by a revealed → word of God but by the rational Logos (thus “theology” from *theos*, “God,” and *logos*, “word, thought, reason”).

Especially in regard to Scripture, linguistics is used in exegesis as an instrument of text analysis. The same application occurs in the analysis of theological texts in patristics, the mystics, the → Reformation, and all others.

Beginning with → Origen, the Jewish-Hellenistic exegesis of the Septuagint, the rabbinic schools of the → Masorah, and patristic biblical exegesis all had linguistic foundations. A premodern version of linguistics (and hermeneutics) was rhetoric, and thus we see the rhetorician → Augustine (354-430) dealing with the meaning of life and of everything by the basic distinction of → sign (*signum*) and thing (*res*). His thesis is that everything is sign at least for God, who is the final and ultimate *res* (see *De doc. Christ.*).

The mystics, especially Meister Eckhardt, J. Tauler, and Henry Suso, were innovative for theology in the Middle Ages. They used language in inventive ways, later prompting linguistic and semiotic research on their usage (see R. Margreiter and A. M. Haas).

M. → Luther's theology of language and the rhetorical theology of P. → Melancthon are of central interest for → Protestantism (esp. in the mystical and humanistic traditions). Since the Luther renaissance around 1900, they have been widely explored

by E. Bizer, G. Ebeling, O. Bayer, J. Ringleben, and others. Connected to this tradition is the “poetological theology” of H. Timm, K. Huizinga, and G. Bader.

Since Protestant theology has been oriented to Scripture, exegesis is theologically fundamental, as we see, for example, in R. Bultmann, E. Fuchs, G. v. Rad, and Hans Weder. Linguistics has broadened the diachronic historical-critical method to include synchronic aspects as well, notably in the work of K. Berger, E. Güttgemanns, H. Schweizer, and J. Barr.

Besides exegesis, → systematic theology and the → philosophy of religion have taken the linguistic turn, most clearly so as they follow → analytic philosophy and pragmatism (I. U. Dalferth, J. Track, H. Deuser, D. Z. Phillips, V. Brümmer, H. Vroom, H. G. Hubbeling, and M. Sarot). Current developments, however, are oriented also to semiotics, interpretation theory, theory of → culture, phenomenology, postanalytic philosophy, and poststructuralism. Linguistics will clearly remain key for exegesis and one aspect of the philosophy of religion, but its role has been widened by the other approaches to language currently adopted in theology.

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## Litany

"Litany" (Gk. *litaneia*, "entreaty"), a term for petitionary → prayer, denotes a whole literary genus in the → history of religion in which one or more petitions or invocations of persons or gods are presented by one or several people, and the other participants answer with a set refrain (e.g., Psalm 136). The Kyrie of the → Mass is the relic of a litany. The All Saints Litany is another form of the genus, which M. → Luther (1483-1546) used as the basis of his Latin Litany (1529).

In the Roman Catholic → liturgy litanies are sung on certain occasions. Anglican churches (→ Anglican Communion) have an extended litany similar to Luther's. T. → Cranmer's (1489-1556) litany of 1544 was the first service to be introduced in English. The → Orthodox Church also uses litanies, called *ektenes* (Gk. *ekteneia*, "earnestness [in prayer]").

→ Worship

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## Literacy

1. Agents
2. Methods
3. Literacy and the Ecumenical Movement

According to the UNESCO "Monitoring Report on Education for All" (October 2001), nearly 900 million adults worldwide are illiterate, and there are fears that the number may soon reach a billion people. Illiteracy affects men and women in both individual and social life, hinders the development of both the → person and → society, and represents a denial of the right to education (→ Rights, Human and Civil).

### 1. Agents

In the 19th century, workers' unions and political groups began to teach workers to read and write with a view to enabling them to exercise their political rights and thereby to change the conditions of their life and work. In the 20th century, nations and international organizations, especially those of the → United Nations, sponsored programs of mass literacy. Groups connected with churches, trade unions, and social movements have also become increasingly important in these efforts. Many countries of the → Third World have organized campaigns against illiteracy, albeit with varying results.

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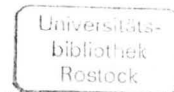
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