

Review

A Theologian of Dogmatic Theology: Karl Berth

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Abstract

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This paper examined Barthian Church Dogmatic theology which encompasses the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the word of God, the doctrine of trinity, the doctrine of creation, doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of last things. The paper analyzed the influence of Karl Barth's dogmatic theology on Christian religion. By the use of analytical methods the paper analyzed robust existing research findings to draw findings to the gaps of knowledge identified therein. The result of this paper showed the relationship that exists between Barth theology and the mainstream Christianity. The results of this paper revealed the impacts of a transcendent and sovereign attribute of God against the immanent qualities of God, and humanism nature of liberal theology. Moreover, the outcomes of this paper showed the historical failure of some theologians to liberate the church from existential socio-political and religious catastrophes. Subsequently, these outcomes will be useful as a resource and reference material in the teaching of University both at graduate, post graduate and undergraduate levels especially in courses such as; New Testament in the modern scholarships, contemporary theologians, contemporary theology and contemporary religious thought. Moreover, the findings will also be useful in the field of research.

Keywords: Dogmatic Theology, Doctrine of creation, Doctrine of God, Doctrine of the word of God, Doctrine of Salvation, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Doctrine of Last things, Trinitarian Theology

INTRODUCTION

Karl Barth was born to a theologian and professor of the reformed Seminary, Fritz Barth in 1886 at Basel, Switzerland, who grew to become both a Theologian and activist. Barth Studied Theology under the influence of liberal protestant theologians in Europe, one of whom include Adolf Harnack. However, he found that liberal theology did not translate into meaningful good of the society and consequently he became disappointed with liberal theology at a time when his theological mentors including Harnack and other Germany professors publicly supported the First World War. Beside, Barth wanted to restore God's position in its rightful place deeply rooted in the centre of theology by making sure that theology no longer considered and searched for assurances and authorisation from culture and science rather from the word of God (Barth 1964 159-163). On the issue of National Socialism, Barth (1939) exclaimed that the

concept of National Socialism in Germany was not the commencement of the kingdom of God, but that it was the establishment of the demonic equivalent, which crumpled and murdered the colossal and saints that belonged to religion. That indeed the confessing Church in Germany had become secular and that the National Socialist state had moved away from the ideal state as revealed in the book of Romans 13 to the diabolic government as is recorded in the book of Revelation 13.

Furthermore, Barth's theology demonstrates that God's being is historicised to the extent that God actually became human in Jesus Christ and that the event of incarnation is Jesus' self –actualisation in history. In addition, Barth's understanding of the doctrine of creation demonstrates that human history originally was inaugurated by the creation of this world, and that it acquired its reality from the divine act of election.

According to *Barth* humankind is actual on the basis that, it is contained within reality of God-human Jesus Christ determined in this act in which God determines Himself from all eternity to be for and with humanity in His Son. It is against this background that this paper endeavoured to analyse the impact of Barthian theology on the Christian theology by the use of analogical methods. Then what is Barthian Dogmatic theology?

Barthian Dogmatic Theology

Dogmatic theology describes a types of theology that redirects and gives manifestation to the church's teachings. It is a theology that lacks recent hermeneutics (Oxford English Dictionary). It can also be referred as to 'doctrinal teachings of the early Church. Barth (1958) maintains that ethical questions cannot be answered accurately without appealing to the context of dogmatic theology. This has the implication that it is the professional sphere of dogmatic theology to ask about the redemption of humanity through covenant theology. Barth reasoned that fallen man is estranged from true man and therefore he needs to know the true God in order for him to know the true man) *Ibid*). Barth (1964) shifted from liberal theology to dialectical theology, and so he became one of the most immense theologians of dogmatic theology. Moreover, in his commentaries on Romans entitled *the epistle to the Romans*, were influenced by obstruction of objective, distanced, historical approach to the understanding of biblical text which left them having nothing to say to evangelist and parishioners in their modern-daysetting (Barth 1933).

Barth (1991) discourses that a lively and a relevant theology of the word of God was his ultimate concern. In commenting on the dogmatic of Bath, (Freudenberg, 1997) describes it as a Trinitarian dogmatic theology, which integrates ethics. Furthermore, (*Ibid*) records that Barth's dogmatic theology belongs to a category which mirrors a tradition in doing theology, and styles of lecturing, teaching and writing, which have been contended by hermeneutics. Additionally, Barth (1977) maintains that functional dogmatic theology exhibit the five components of; The Doctrine of the word: The Doctrine of God: The Doctrine of Reconciliation: The Doctrine of Creation: and the Doctrine of Redemption. In his dogmatic theology, Barth (1975) Outlawed natural theology and the discipline of apologetic theology, and consequently formulated a reliable dogmatic with peculiar tasks, questions and methods free from influences from other sciences. Moreover, his dogmatic theology pays little attention to biblical justice and to acceptable assertions of the historical critical approach to biblical exegesis. Besides, his dogmatic rejected infant baptism as the case with other protestant churches. What then is the influence of Barthian dogmatic theology to the Christian theological doctrines?

Barthian Doctrine of God

Barth (1928) subscribes both to the transcendence and the unknowable attributes of God. Barth's God is absolutely above the desires of the world, a position which has divorced God from human experiences. This means that all modern ideas of immanence are rejected by transcendence nature of Bath's God, and that at no time does the high God come down to this external world contaminated with its corrupted nature and evil matter. Barth's God is above mankind, space and time and that He is above all concepts and opinions. To Barth, God is the 'wholly other', which means that, on one hand, God is in the highest where man cannot reach unless he reveals Himself to man and on the other hand man is completely alien until and unless God wills to show himself to him. In addition, Bath's God is unknown in the sense that man cannot know God and that Man's seeking of God and his struggling to know Him are all in vain. For example in his commentary to the Romans 1:19-20, Barth (1933) says "since what may be known about God is plain to them because God had made it plain to them. For Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities- his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made. The problem the paper noted here is that there seems to be contrary opinions illustrated in other biblical scriptures in the selected three examples that follow herein. First is the record found in the book of John 14:16-17 which says " -and I will ask the father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwell with you and will be in you". Second example is chronicled in Psalms 23:4 which also says, "Even though I walk in the valley of shadows of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. The third example is documented in the book of Mathew 1:23, which says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which means God with us". Moreover, Barth explains that the concept of the revelation of God is through Jesus Christ as is recorded in the book of John 14:9, which says "He who has seen me has seen the father".

Barthian Doctrines of the Holy Spirit.

Barth (1933) equalizes the Holy Spirit with God Himself and asserts that the Holy Spirit is God Himself. He sees the Holy Spirit in the life of the trinity as the uniting power of love between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit also makes union between God and humanity in Christ possible and binds believers together in Christ and that the Holy Spirit brings the word of God to men (1938). Barth underlined the significance of the pneumatology. In

Barth the Spirits' main work is to make it possible for humanity to recognize and receive Christ's universal reconciliation, however, some critics have confused the role of the Spirit with that of Christ and consequently subordinating the Spirit's work in Christ's reconciliation ministry. This paper concurs with Barth's role of the spirit when Barth emphasizes that the Holy Spirit's function is to make it possible for humanity to receive Christ's universal reconciliation because it is deeply rooted in biblical scripture (Ephesians 5:7-21); Ephesians 1:4-14. In his theology of the trinity, Barth resisted in using the word 'person' because he perceived it to bring another meaning of modern individualistic, psychological idealistic, and modalism views of personhood, and consequently replaced it with the phrase 'modes of being' in which he meant that God would exist in one personal subject who exists in three modes of revelation: the revealer as the Father, the revelation as the Son and the revealedness as the Spirit. Some critics have, however, found that because the role of the revealedness is to unite the revealer and the revelation, then the bond between the two is already implied in their eternal loving relationship as Father and the Son, subsequently in Barth's theology the Spirit is superfluous in the Godhead.

Barthian Trinitarian Theology

The traditional Christian doctrine of the trinity is the statement which states that 'one God exists in three divine persons' as the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. This view has been contested by Barth (1954) who rejected the notion of the three persons because it communicates that there are three personalities in God which constitutes to the heresy of three personalities (tritheism). Barth argued that the Trinitarian formula of one God in three persons be updated to the one God in three modes of being. He criticised the Trinitarian formula of one God in three persons because the word 'person' no longer conveys the same meaning of the early church fathers and the Christian church's creeds. Barth contended the Trinitarian theology of St Augustine (1991) of Hippo of the Latin Church fathers for influencing the Trinitarian phrase of the 'three persons', and so according to Barth, (1956) the church erred in adopting the Western Trinitarian phrase 'person'. However, the problem noted in Barth's position of the trinity is that the traditional vicissitudes in church history may result to schism in church history. Moreover, Barth (1956:1) posits that 'God is in himself Father from all eternity, He begets Himself as the Son from all eternity, and he posts Himself as the Holy Spirit, that is, as the love which unites Him in himself. Could this in part translate into modalism heresy of the early church?

Barthian Doctrine of the Word

Barth (1936) divides the doctrine of scripture into two sections. First, scripture as the witness to divine revelation and secondly, scripture as the word of God. In this section, Barth argues that revelation is always not identical with what he witnesses as with the case of the Christian Bible, where we meet human words, written in human speech, in human actions and in human environment. Barth postulates that revelation is always an event which is never static, but, always dynamic. He further claims that revelation is God's own acts and that God is always the subject who reveals Himself, and therefore, Bible writers cannot reveal God. Bible writers only qualify to point to the divine work of revelation as exemplified by John the Baptist who pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Barth (1936: 110:120) argues that the bible is not the word of God because the Bible is not in itself, but, God's past revelation, and that we often do injustice when we equate the Bible directly with revelation. Therefore Barth in this case did not believe that the word of God was identical with the Holy Bible, rather he argued that the Bible becomes the word of God when it is proclaimed by the living human voice of the church. Additionally, he believes that the word of God exists in three forms consisting of the past revelation of Jesus, the written human form and the preaching of the Bible in the church proclamations. As with the case of some of classical theologians of the New Testament such as Martin Luther, Barth also believes that Jesus Christ is the word of God.

(Barth 1936: 121-136) asserts that the Bible is merely a record of God's revelation, and that, it is the authentic power to revelation. To him, Jesus Christ for whom the word is made fresh becomes both the revelation of God and the word of God revealed by the Holy Spirit, and that scripture, apostles and the prophets are primary witnesses to Jesus Christ. Barth believes that the Bible is human and fallible, however, this opinion rejects the inherence of the Bible. It is a position that is resisted by the mainstream Christianity and which forms part of the problem of this paper because this view denies the inerrancy of the Bible, however he admits that Jesus is the God word. Barth argues that the Bible is fully human because: first, that in itself it is no more than an historical document for the history of Israel and later Jewish Christian community that evolved from Israel. Secondly, that in itself it is not divine at all in the sense that it is written by human mind and so their product is fully human and fallible. Thirdly, That the prophets and apostles were real, historical men as we are, and therefore, were subject to sinful actions, and were also capable of guilty of error in their written and spoken word. Fourthly, that the presence of biblical overlapping and contradictions to the infallibility of the bible. Fifthly, that the presence of writers' understanding of history, which is

often faulty also testifies the fallibility of the bible. Sixty, that the existence of biblical worldviews of man, which is not correct to a large extent portrays the fallible nature of Barthian view of the bible. Barth also explains that the Bible is not a primary source but secondly. Morris (2004: 189) concurs with Barthian doctrine of the word when he records that "Many of Barth's statement in dogmatism appear to say that, given that Jesus Christ, the word made flesh, is the one Revelation of God, the one "revealed word of God", then scripture, "the prophets and apostles" as primary witness to Jesus Christ, is God's word in so far as God lets it be His.

The Doctrine of salvation

Bath (1959) posits that God's entire purpose in creation is the salvation and the election which is part of the process of salvation by grace alone. To him the doctrine of salvation is the sum total of the gospel. He presents the concept of predestination in two ways, first, electing God (the election of Jesus by God), and secondary, in that Jesus Christ is electing man. That Jesus Christ become the subject of election who elects others. On the issue of soteriology, Barth (Ibid) first speaks of Jesus Christ as the 'very God' in the state of humiliation of God and the priestly office which concerns with Justification. Secondary, *Barth* speaks of Jesus Christ as the 'very man in the sense of the state of man and the kingly office, a sphere which relate to the sanctification of man. And third, *Barth* speak of Jesus Christ as God-man, a sphere which concerns with the final objective element in soteriology referred as to as 'calling'. Jesus' work encompasses justification and sanctification of man which *Barth* refers as to the divine 'verdict' and the divine 'direction' respectfully. That this action of God in his reconciliation of the world with Himself in Jesus is unitary in the sense in which it achieves both of these two processes of justification and sanctification of man at the same time, and this forms another problem of this paper because it appears as if *Barth* here is presenting a new interpretation which is slightly deviating from the conservative biblical view of sanctification.

This paper notes that although the atoning works of Jesus is complete once and for all, by the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the application of it is not at once complete because Christ's work provided the basis for soteriology, but, soteriology is not complete at once rather it is a continuing process until the consummation of time. The problem here is that both of the two processes of justification and sanctification in Barthian theology are one event and that there is no distinction between these two. The paper maintains that while justification took place at Calvary Mountain by an act of Jesus' death, sanctification must continue as a lifelong process until the end of the age at the eschatology to be realised at the second coming of Jesus

Christ. The justified sinner seeks by grace to attain greater conformity to the will of God having received the imputed righteousness of God. Moreover, the paper synchronized another salient problem of study where Barth (1959), emphasized the humiliation of God and the exaltation of man as an aspect of Christology which substitutes the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary. Therefore, the Biblical concept of Justification and faith cannot fit into Barthian Justification and sanctification as this paper disclosed. In addition, the urgency to call mankind to repentance and the concept of sin as guilt and transgression of the holy law of God are not given thoughtful discourse in Barthian soteriology as the bible does. Furthermore, Barth (Ibid) rejects Calvin's view of predestination. Barth (1933) observes that by the concept of sin, man put himself wrong in his relationship to God, whereby, he desecrated the good works of nature and made himself impossible to partake the covenant of God, and consequently compromised his existence. To Barth, Justification involves a divine verdict which pardons man's guilt and therefore, Barthian justification of removing the wrong of man and restoring of his right is referred as to the judgement of God.

The Doctrine of the Church

According to Barth (1956a:741-880) the Christian community is the true Church. Moreover, the Church exists to respond to God's complete work of creation by testifying God's revelation to the world (Ibid). The Church is the event of gathering together and forming a living congregation. The task of the true Church is to awaken mankind for conversion and to save sinners from sins, a possibility made possible because Jesus Christ saved the world from 'sin' in singular. The other purpose of the true existence of the Barthian church is to teach the true doctrine which directs and edifies the church in its existence inconformity with the apostles creed. For theologians of the New Testament Greek Bible, they differentiate the two Greek Terms 'sin ($\alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\iota\alpha$) and sins, ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\pi\tau\omicron\mu\alpha$) and so to make it understood in a general essence the phrase 'sin' in singular reveals a cosmic action which the church cannot provide freedom. Furthermore, the Church brings men and women to Jesus Christ who provided freedom from sin for the entire world. The next purpose of the church is to proclaim ethical guidelines to the congregation so that the members can now choose to abandon acts (fruits) of sin which the Greek Bible refers as to sins in plural. Barth again asserts that Jesus Christ is both Lord of the church and Lord of Scripture. This paper concurs with this two functions highlighted by Barth's view concerning the purpose of the church, especially where Barth says that the purpose of the church is to awaken man for salvation and that it is through the preaching of the church that God speaks and draws mankind unto himself. Barthian

Church provides a good model on how the church's missional function would be valid in a world that is faced with ever increasing challenges, modernistic principles and post-modern philosophies. Barth's theology subscribe to the statement that 'the church is not the kingdom of God because this statement makes the church to step down from its place of power and untouchability (Barth 198: 259-418; Deegan, 1964).

Barthian Doctrine of the Last Things

Barthian Doctrine of the last things is well elaborated in the book of Romans 13, however, instead of (Barth 1933) seeing a chronological nearness of the eschatology, he speaks of different kinds of nearness. He is influenced by the affirmation of the apostolic creed which says that He shall come to judge the death and the quick (living). To Barth, eschatology do not belong to a future of this world, it does not belong to humanity and does not belong to the distant time, rather Barth's eschatology means the end of history in the sense of the termination of the life story of individuals and the story of the world and the churches. To Barth, the death is what we are and the risen is what we are not. The resurrection of the death therefore is that in which we are not which is opposite with that which we are existentially. To Barth death is our meaningless life and resurrection is our life in the meaningful confrontation with God.

Barthian doctrine of Creation

Barth (1964) postulates that the doctrine of creation is the first article of faith that is documented in the apostles creed which state that, "I believe in God the father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; Who was Conceived by the Holy Spirit; Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; He ascended into heaven; and sited on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The Holy Christian Church. The Communion of saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen". Barth (Ibid) explains three major reason which qualifies this doctrine of creation as a content of the article of faith. First, the doctrine declares a definite existence of an authenticity reality distinctive from God. Second, the doctrine of creation declares that the whole universe emanates from God and third, that God is the creator of heaven and earth. It therefore follows that Barth's doctrine of creation belongs to the theology of Christian dogmatic, and therefore it is God focused. To Barth, knowledge of creation is contained in the article of faith where the teaching of the free and loving creator who created the

world out of nothing is anchored. In addition, the doctrine of creation is grounded in Christ through his redemptive work and reconciling, and who is the object of God's creation. Deegan (1964: 117-134) connects Christological determinants in Barth's doctrine of creation.

Barth (1975) explains the doctrine of creation from his Trinitarian theological perspectives, whereby he posts that creation is an act of the will and the love of God directed toward the covenant. That the doctrine of creation is the triumph of grace in creation, and that this triumph is the triumph of Jesus Christ. That all the triumphant works of Christ was complete before creation. Barth (1956:19-52) explains this trinity as God who created the heaven and earth who is revealed as God the Father of Jesus Christ, who as such in eternal generation posits Himself in the Son, and by the Holy spirit. Barth's doctrine of creation moves away from the dependence of science by presenting a doctrine of creation based on faith. Barth further claims that the genesis creation accounts have partial contradictions because either they were composed by different sources or for different purposes. He does not interpret them as myth nor as literal but as in them having the theological truth and actual events. That the creation contains not only the physical universe, but also encompasses heavens and the earth and the invisible and the visible, and that even things that God did not create also exists such as evil. Bath explains the doctrine of creation as the triumph of grace in creation and that this triumph is the triumph of Jesus of Nazareth over nothingness, which took place in and before creation. Commenting on Barth's declaration that evil did not exist *Barkouwer*, (1956), observes that Barth's position on the doctrine of creation neglects history and the salvation therein, and that Barth does not speak of the historical existence of evil, but places heavy emphasis on God's revelation in time, great mystery of the incarnation, God Himself entering our reality in the fact of becoming flesh and in his submitting to judgement, but failed to do justice to harmony witness of scriptures to the doctrine of sin.

Barthian Ethics

Barth (1981) postulates that ethics is a method of theological study, and that this method has to be appropriate in terms of language and unification of form and content aligned to the task of expounding the content. On the question of the natural law ethics, Barth (1946) reject the natural law ethical systems because he perceived them to be illustrations of fabricated natural theology, hazardous dependence of human reason and that these natural law systems merely rest on human philosophy as an alternative to revealed divine truth in the word of God. Furthermore, he rejected natural law because it can be used to manipulate and justify bad actions in society. Perhaps his ideas were influenced by

Kant (1933). A point of departure from mainstream Christian churches of both Catholics and some Protestants is that it is possible of sinful humanity to reach God by the use of human reason by making choices, while, Barth maintains on the contrary because according to his theology God is hidden from man on the basis of the fall which affected all creation and so human understanding is tainted by sin and there is nothing left for the original creation. Nevertheless, Barth (1964) devoid of the concept of the natural law, protested against Hitler's authoritarian regime in Germany. His rejection of the natural law also was opposed by his contemporary Pruner (1946), who asserted that what is often referred as to the natural laws of nature are God's orders of creation.

In his ethics, Barth (1981) argues that reality, which witnesses to God's self-revelation as an event within the Trinitarian being of God is determined in the threefold revelation of the word of God as the creator, redeemer, and reconciler. Whereas in theological ethics the command of God define the moral cosmos, in philosophical ethics, morality is defined by the abstract ideas of the good. Consequently, the doctrine of the trinity, which according to Barth (1975) becomes a dichotomous preparatory point and foundation of discussing all of Barth's theological position of the Trinitarian being of God ought to be reinterpreted. Therefore Barth rejected theologies of classical theism and immanence attributes of God, consequently contending that God's being is revealed in God's acts such as creation, redemption and reconciliation. In addition, the New Testament becomes an interpretation of those who witnessed God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Barth's Church and state Theology

In an attempt to develop a theology of state and Church, this paper examined Barth's analytical engagements in Germany. By 1933, Germany was ruled by authoritarian regime of Adolf Hitler. As examined by Krausnick (1963:17-21), Barth developed a Church and state theology to determine to what extent the church would contribute in supporting Germany, by combating national socialism and rebuilding Germany after the 1st and 2nd world wars. It is the conviction of this paper that Barth's view during this period could be relevant for both Church and civil society in contending contemporary tyrannical regimes. Barth (Ibid) acted as both theologian and activist in his struggle against National Socialism in Germany. For instance Barth (1981), advised that Hitler be removed from power by both military and theological means because of the maltreatment and discrimination against the Jews in Germany. Furthermore, Barth argued that the Church is established upon the word of God and whatever it does require it's justification from the very

word, and that if the Church ever departs from the very source of the word, it will lose the very justification of its existence. Langer (1974:25-35) holds that Hitler ascended to power by the influence of the Christians. Hitler's campaign strategy promised Christians that he could lead them to the Christian paths, and so Christianity was the basis of the formation of Hitler's government. However, Hitler had vowed in his life that he would liberate Germany from Jews and Communists.

In his lecture series and his commentaries on the book of Romans, Barth (1964) argued that the state must be driven by the lordship of Christ if the government has to avoid rambling into the spheres of the church. Commenting on church and state relations Barth (1938) and (Busch 1976) advances that Barth was disturbed that the church would be threatened by Hitler's ascension to power. According to Barth (1959) church and state are in a reciprocal relationship on the concepts of the law and grace dichotomy, where by Barth argues that where there is law, grace do exist and that law must be understood as a form of gospel whose content is grace. Consequently this reciprocal relationship would be achieved through the proselytization of law and the gospel, a reality consummated in the book of revelation 21 where the church's responsibility over the state changes from a persecuted church to triumphant and victorious warrior church. The Church's responsibility will in future change towards the state where the church will be transformed into a victorious kingdom which will be ruled by a triumphant king and consequently the church ought to rise above the state.

According (Barth 1981:441-446) the major responsibility of the state is to take care of the citizens and to promote a sense of community. Also Barth (1968:20-27) postulates that all kingdoms and kings (governments and rulers) exists to achieve Gods purposes in this world. It therefore follows that good governments are often ruled by good rulers who lead their subjects to achieve good governance, which in turn leads to sustainable developments. The book of Romans 13, Ephesians, 2:9, 6:10-15, Corinthians 5:20-27, and 1st Peter 3:22 records salient features of the shared relationship of the church and state, and the roles of both (Barth 1933). Therefore, the state's underlying purpose is to administer justice and to protect the law, while the core responsibility of the church is to proclaim the gospel of justification of God's creation for the sinner (Barth, 1968). Moreover. While governments may come and fall by the way side the church stands forever and ever. In addition, Christians are both strangers and pilgrims on this world and citizens of the heavenly kingdom (Ibid). It therefore follows that the core mandate of the church is to provide prophetic role, justice, peace, righteousness, to guard the state against acts of impunity and to lead the state towards good governance and sustainable development.

Critique of Barth's Theology

In this section the paper examined diagnostic dialogue of Richard Niebuhr and Tillich on the theology of *Barth*. Niebuhr (1989) rejected Barthian philosophy which rejected the ideas of the natural law theory. Moreover, Niebuhr rejected as unscriptural *Barth's* theology which maintained that the moral life of man would possess no valid principles of guidance if the law commandments had not introduced as such by revelation. Additionally, Niebuhr rejected Barth's radical statement that there is an essential and radical separation of the world from God and that the image of God in man was not lost during the fall.

Another theologian who rejected the theology of Barth is Tillich (1951) who contended Barthian pessimism about mankind's capability to know the natural law and the natural justice because of the evil inclinations which are potentially present in environments such as political morality. *Barth's* pessimistic philosophy of supernaturalism helped to abolish the religious socialist's efforts in pre-Hitler Germany, and to stop Nazism by creating a better society on the basis of Christian principles. To Tillich (ibid) the divine is continuously existing in the finite existence, though decidedly. Tillich (1958) shared some of Barth's antipathy in the direction of natural theology, nevertheless, he disputed that natural theology asks the right questions, though the answers and the methods by which natural theology achieves these answers are erroneous. Consequently, Tillich's theology make the encounter between God and man within the human culture, and that all aspects of culture including politics have a religious dimension, in addition to religion being perceived an ultimate concern. Moreover, Tillich (1959) assert that religion is the substances of culture and that culture becomes a form of religion that gives meaning to culture, where culture is the totality in which religion communicates to the society. Subsequently, Tillich still rejected Barthian theology which elaborated that God is God and altogether different from all things, from human religion, from human culture and that God cannot be found in both culture and religion. Therefore, Barth denies the possibility of an encounter between God and man within human culture, a position that is contested by Tillich who maintains that God manifests Himself within the religious substance of culture.

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