SEMINAR ON RAHNER'S ECCLESIOLOGY: JESUS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH— AN ANALYSIS OF THE HERMENEUTICAL ISSUES

Since Modernism, Roman Catholic ecclesiology has had to face the central issue of the relation between the historical Jesus and the foundation of the Church. In this seminar on Rahner's ecclesiology, I shall therefore focus on Karl Rahner's treatment of this issue especially since it receives central attention in his recent *Foundations of Christian Faith*, his introduction to the idea of Christianity and his foundational course that unifies fundamental and dogmatic theology.[1] In the question of the relation between the historical Jesus and the foundation of the Church, Karl Rahner seeks to be as faithful as possible to the traditional Catholic understanding while at the same time he revises and complements this understanding. He seeks to uphold the traditional conviction that Jesus founded a Church, but he admits that "founding" is a complex concept. He maintains the possibility of historically demonstrating this conviction, yet he sees the necessity of a supplementary approach and he presents an indirect anthropological argument that precedes the historical demonstration.

To gain a perspective from which Rahner's treatment of this issue can be viewed, I shall compare his analysis, presuppositions, and conclusions with those of Hans Küng. In *Foundations of Christian Faith*, Karl Rahner formulates the problem as such: "Given his imminent expectation, could Jesus think in terms of a 'period' of the church? Could he see and intend explicitly that his narrow circle of disciples, the twelve, would even continue with essentially the same function in what we see in the church later as bishops and as the college of bishops?"[2] Rahner's response to this question can be compared with Hans Küng's conclusion in *On Being a Christian:* "Hence Jesus is *not* what is generally understood as the founder of a religion or a Church. He did not think of the creation of a large religious structure to be founded and organized by himself."[3] Küng argues that the Church was "not founded by Jesus"[4] but came into existence only after Easter as the community of those professing belief in Christ.

In his analysis of Küng's ecclesiology Rahner objects that such statements contradict the basic faith convictions of all Christian churches. He finds fault with Küng for failing to reconcile his conclusion with this conviction.[5] Nevertheless, Karl Rahner's own response to the

[1] Trans. by W. V. Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). Since the first draft of this paper was presented in the seminar on Rahner's ecclesiology, I am especially thankful for the helpful comments of the seminar leader, Michael Fahey, as well as for those of D. Donovan, W. V. Dych, J. Galvin, and L. O'Donovan.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 329.

[3] Trans. by E. Quinn (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1976), p. 286.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 478. Cf. also 283-86.

[5] K. Rahner, "Zur Ekklesiologie," in *Diskussion über Hans Küngs 'Christsein'*, H. Urs. von Balthaser *et al.* (Mainz: Mattias-Grünewald, 1976), 105-11, here p. 105 (my own

question is much more differentiated than his criticism of Küng's conclusions might indicate. On the one hand, Rahner concedes that *Lumen gentium* of Vatican II is somewhat simplifying (*vereinfachend*) in its description of the relation between the Twelve and the college of bishops and between Cephas and the later papacy. Moreover, the language of "origin" (*Herkunft*) and "foundation" (*Stiftung*) expresses a complex state of affairs that cannot be reduced to a few words of juridical foundation.[6] On the other hand, Karl Rahner does not want a priori to posit that the historical Jesus was less creative for the formation of the Church than the post-resurrectional community.[7]

I should like therefore to offer some reflections and a constructive proposal regarding the hermeneutical issues involved in the question of the foundation of the Church. In analyzing Rahner's position, I should like to compare how he and Küng differ and raise the following three questions: *First:* How does Rahner treat the historical material about the relation between the historical Jesus and the foundation of the Church? How does Küng differ and what are the results of contemporary scholarly exegesis? *Second:* How does Rahner use an indirect anthropological argument in relation to the historical demonstration? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Does it contribute to the resolution of the difficulties of a historical demonstration? *Third:* Can recent hermeneutical theory offer further assistance that would complement Rahner's transcendental method and overcome its weaknesses? In these questions, I should like to make a constructive proposal that would support Rahner's basic thesis while at the same time taking into account the limitations of Rahner's historical demonstration and indirect anthropological argument.

I. HISTORICAL DEMONSTRATION?

Rahner's historical arguments for a foundation of the Church by the historical Jesus can be analyzed in two respects: first, how Rahner formulates and understands the historical problem, and second how he resolves it. I would like to suggest that Rahner's formulation makes the historical demonstration much more difficult than it should be whereas his de facto exegesis of the Petrine texts and other passages minimizes the difficulties involved in a historical demonstration.

(a) *Formulation of the Problem:* Rahner poses the question as to whether Jesus' imminent expectation can be reconciled with an explicit intention to found a Church. This formulation has two poles. On the one hand, Rahner asks whether Jesus "himself intended and founded," or "could he think in terms of a 'period of the church'?"[8] Or was the

translation). Rahner notes that Küng does not always represent the same positions that he has taken in his earlier treatments of the subject matter. See also W. Kern, "Das Christsein und die Christologie. Zu Büchern von H. Küng und W. Kasper," *Stimmen der Zeit* 193 (1975), 528.

[6] Rahner, "Zur Ekklesiologie," p. 106.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Foundations*, pp. 326 and 329.

foundation of the Church "within the horizon of Jesus' proclamation,"[9] or did Jesus "evidently will a church as his own church."[10]

On the other hand, Jesus' eschatological preaching is characterized by an imminent expectation of a transcendent end. Precisely the imminence of this futuristic expectation constitutes the other pole of the problem. How can such an expectation be squared with a subjective intent to establish a Church? The difficulty raised by Jesus' imminent expectation constitutes in Rahner's opinion a problem which "in Catholic ecclesiology (especially in its struggle with Modernism) either has not been seen or has been repressed."[11] Rahner wants to face as honestly as possible the question raised by Johannes Weiss's interpretation of Jesus' eschatological preaching.[12]

On this very point, there is a basic agreement between Hans Küng and Karl Rahner. Hans Küng also interprets the imminent expectation as the major obstacle to the traditional belief that Jesus established a Church. He writes that Jesus lived with an "intense *expectation of the end*" and was "under the spell of the 'apocalyptic' movement."[13] It is because "the historical Jesus counted on the consummation of the world and its history in his lifetime"[14] that he could not have subjectively intended to found a Church. Moreover, "he certainly did *not* want to prepare for the coming of God's kingdom by founding *a special community distinct from Israel* with its own creed, its own cult, its own constitution, its own ministries."[15]

Moreover, both Karl Rahner and Hans Küng concur in admitting the possibility of Jesus having "erred" in regard to this imminent expectation, while at the same time emphasizing that "error" would not be an appropriate category or evaluative label.[16] Yet there are significant differences between them. Although both underscore the imminent expectation, Karl Rahner emphasizes in his Christology the presential element of Jesus' eschatological understanding much more than Hans

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 327.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 335.

[11] "Zur Ekklesiologie," p. 106.

[12] *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. and ed. by R. H. Hiers and D. L. Holland (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). The original German edition appeared in 1892. Weiss, the son-in-law of Albrecht Ritschl, by demolishing the moral and ethical interpretation of "kingdom" that had been prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, has dominated the Ritschlian school. Loisy's famous remark, "Jésus annonçait le royaume, et c'est l'Église qui est venue" is often used to argue that Jesus' eschatological awareness excludes any idea of a Church. E.g. H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, trans. by J. Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 33. In fact, Loisy argues much like Rahner that the Church was necessary if the preaching of Jesus was to survive. Cf. A. Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, trans. by C. Home and ed. by B. Scott (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

[13] *On Being a Christian*, p. 181.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

[15] *Ibid.* Cf. also *The Church*, trans. by R. and R. Ockenden (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 72: "In the *pre-Easter period*, during his lifetime, *Jesus did not found a Church*." Despite this basic agreement between *On Being a Christian* and *The Church*, a shift in the issue of the foundation of the Church takes place that will be pointed out later.

[16] *On Being a Christian*, pp. 217-18.

Küng does.[17] But Rahner does not bring this presential dimension into consideration for the Church question because he wants to face he problem as squarely as possible.

Moreover, recent New Testament scholarship is much more aware of the complexities of the issues than it was at the time of Weiss and Loisy and is consequently much more cautious even in attempting to describe the eschatological consciousness of the historical Jesus. One author consistently takes a form and redaction critical approach to the subject and therefore concludes "it no longer appears possible to 'distill' the eschatology of the historical Jesus from its New Testament interpretation."[18] The conflicting evidence and the divergency of interpretations impedes any such historical reconstruction. Another author attributes the ambiguity to Jesus himself. "Yet with all these allowances, one finds it difficult to believe that Jesus' own position was clear. The New Testament Epistles give independent evidence of the confusion that reigned in first-century thought about the Parousia; and, *salvo meliori judicio*, such confusion could scarcely have arisen if Jesus both knew about the indefinite delay of the Parousia and expressed himself clearly on the subject."[19]

Moreover, the historical exegesis is not as one-sidedly in favor of an imminent expectation. Hans Küng quite simply postulates that the earliest tradition expresses an imminent expectation, whereas the later traditions are redactional modifications.[20] Such an interpretation not only overlooks presential material even within Q, but overlooks how strongly presential eschatology was present within the pre-Pauline traditions.[21] Although he points to the inadequacies of Dodd's realized eschatology, he fails to come to terms with Ernst Käsemann's position which attributes apocalyptic eschatology not to the historical Jesus, but to the post-Easter community.[22]

In view of the difficulty in ascertaining just what the eschatological outlook of the historical Jesus was and in view of the evidence for a presential eschatology even within the earliest traditions, one should not as readily postulate an imminent expectation for the historical Jesus as Hans Küng has done. In this regard, Rahner's analysis of the eschatology of the historical Jesus in his Christological section should have been brought over into his section on ecclesiology and should have been applied to the question of the foundation of the Church.[23] If Jesus'

[17] *Foundations*, pp. 249-54.

[18] E. S. Fiorenza, "Eschatology of the New Testament," *The Interpretator's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 271-77, here p. 277.

[19] R. E. Brown, *Jesus God and Man* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 70-79, here p. 77.

[21] Fiorenza, "Eschatology," pp. 271-77.

[22] E. Käsemann, "The Beginning of Christian Theology," and "On the Topic of Christian Apocalyptic," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 6 (1969), 17-46 and 99-133.

[23] Hans Küng follows basically the position worked out by W. G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment. The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, trans. by D. M. Barton (London: SCM, 1957). For a divergent interpretation and reconstruction of Jesus' eschatology, cf. N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). It

eschatological consciousness is not solely characterized by a temporal imminent expectation and if the diverse possible interpretations of eschatology are acknowledged, then some sort of a continuity between the historical Jesus and the post-resurrectional Church cannot be excluded, but can more readily be argued as it will later be suggested.[24]

(b) *Historical Argumentation:* Although Rahner's historical demonstration follows his indirect transcendental argument, I shall first focus upon the historical arguments adduced to prove that the historical Jesus "founded" a Church. Here the difference between Rahner and Küng comes sharply to the fore.

Rahner claims that the historical material can be divided into two distinct categories. First, there are those words and deeds of the historical Jesus that "have the character of intending to found a church."[25] Second, he refers to authentic sayings that indicate that Jesus directly intended to found a Church. Although the book *Foundations of Christian Faith* appeared in Germany in 1976, Rahner explicitly takes as his guide articles by Rudolf Schnackenburg and Anton Vögtle that were published in or prior to 1961 even though he acknowledges that persons relying on them do so "at their own risk."[26]

Under the first category, namely, those words or deeds that "have the character of intending to found a Church," Rahner analyzes the following: the gathering of the disciples, especially the Twelve, as a symbolic representation of eschatological Israel and as entrusted with a mission to preach and to heal; the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper as ordered toward a new order of salvation that will endure (as the words to Simon indicate) and will have eschatological fulfillment; and finally, the sayings of the risen Jesus that contain an ecclesiological mandate because they express Jesus' promise of powers to the disciples for the sake of continuing his work in the world.[27] Under the second category, Rahner interprets Mt 16:17-19 to indicate the direct intention of the historical Jesus to found a Church. He argues for the authenticity of the text because of the Semitic rhythm, the parallels from Qumran, and the Cephas tradition with the constant reference to a change of names.[28]

should be noted that current interpretations in the end result tend to de-emphasize the apocalyptic elements. This is true, not only of Käsemann's attribution of apocalypticism to the early Christian community rather than to the historical Jesus or of Dodd's realized eschatology, but also of those attempts that give an existential interpretation of the eschatology or interpret the references to the kingdom as symbolic or as a tensive rather than stenosymbol (Perrin) or underscore an "inaugurated eschatology."

[24] See the conclusion of this article.

[25] *Foundations*, pp. 332f.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 332. Cf. R. Schnackenburg, "Kirche," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1961), VI, pp. 167-72 and his book, *The Church in the New Testament*, trans. by W. J. O'Hara (New York: Seabury Press, 1965). With minor modifications, Schnackenburg's position follows that worked out earlier by Anton Vögtle, cf. G. Heinz, *Das Problem der Kirchenentstehung in der deutschen protestantischen Theologie des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1974), pp. 264-76.

[27] *Foundations*, pp. 332-34.

[28] For a survey of the various views of this text, cf. J. Betz, Die Gründung der Kirche durch den historischen Jesus," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 138 (1958), 152-83, esp.

If Rahner's data is critically compared with Hans Küng's analysis in *On Being a Christian*, then the following differences come to the fore. *First*, although Küng is aware that scholars have questioned whether the historical Jesus has selected the Twelve,[29] he argues rather strongly for the historicity of the selection of the Twelve by the earthly Jesus. But he interprets the Twelve precisely as signs of the eschatological kingdom. He therefore concludes that Jesus did not found a Church during his lifetime. The Twelve as a symbolic representation of Israel does not demonstrate that Jesus founded a Church, but rather that he did not intend to do so.[30]

Moreover, in contrast to Karl Rahner, Hans Küng does not refer to the establishment of the Eucharist or to Jesus' post-resurrectional mandates. In his discussion of the Eucharist, he concludes that the "Risen Lord's command to baptize contains nothing historically verifiable," and that "baptism began in the primitive community afterEaster."[31] He also concedes that it is possible that Jesus did not "institute" a supper or celebrate a Last Supper, but he himself concludes that at least for the latter it is most probable that Jesus celebrated a parting meal with his disciples. The evidence "scarcely allows any scope for doubt about the *facticity* of a last meal of Jesus with his disciples. The real problem—made much more difficult as a result of the liturgical forms imposed on the accounts—lies in the determination of the *significance* of this last meal."[32]

In order to specify this significance, Küng abstracts from later historical or dogmatic increments and suggests that for the historical Jesus the common meals had primarily eschatological significance.

153-56. See also O. Kuss, "Jesus und die Kirche im Neuen Testament," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 135 (1955), 28-55 and 150-83. For a critical account with reference to nineteenth century positions, cf. R. Bultmann, "Die Frage nach der Echtheit von Mt 16:17-19," *Theologische Blätter* 20 (1941), 265-79, now in his collected essays, *Exegetica*, ed. by E. Dinkler (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck [J. C. B.] Mohr, 1967), pp. 255-77. Rahner refers to the work of Anton Vögtle, cf. footnotes 36 and 37 for bibliographical references.

[29]The following two authors deny the historicity of Jesus' selection of the Twelve: G. Klein, *Die Zwölf Apostel. Ursprung und Gehalt einer Idee* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1961) and W. Schmithals, *Das Kirchliche Apostelamt Eine historische Untersuchung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1971). Klein writes: "Dass die Zwölf als Institution nicht in das Leben Jesus Gehören, lässt sich mit an Sicherheit grenzender Wahrscheinlichkeit nachweisen," p. 37. For nuanced discussions of the "Twelve" in recent Catholic literature, cf. K. Kertelge, "Die Funktion der 'Zwolf' im Markusevangelium. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Auslegung, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem neutestamentlichen Amtsverständnis," *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 78 (1969), 193-206 and the work of his student, G. Schmahl, *Die Zwölf im Markusevangelium. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Trier: Paulinus Verlag, 1974). See also: W. Trilling, "Zur Entstehung des Zwölferkreises. Eine geschichtskritische überlegung," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs. Festschrift für Heinz Schürmann*, ed. by R. Schnackenburg, *et al.* (Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 1977) and E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Twelve," in *Women Priests. A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed. by L. and A. Swidler (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

[30]*On Being a Christian*, pp. 283-85.

[31]*Ibid.*, here p. 322. The Trinitarian formula in Mt goes back to the tradition or practice of the community. Mk 1:15 belongs to the appendix of Mark's Gospel.

[32]*On Being a Christian*, p. 323.

Since Jesus included within this table fellowship those socially discriminated against, the common meals were intended to advance signs of the grace and forgiveness of the future kingdom. In short, the historical Jesus did not intend to institute these common meals or even the departing supper as the foundation of a new liturgy of a new Church. Instead they point to Jesus' expectation of an imminent end. As with the Twelve, the evidence here, according to Küng's historical reconstruction, does not even point in the direction of the establishment of a Church, but in the opposite direction. It points to his belief in the imminence of the coming Kingdom.[33]

Equal disagreement exists over Rahner's *second* argument. Karl Rahner appeals to Mt 16:17-19 to establish that Jesus "evidently willed a church as his own church," and gave it a basic constitution."[34] According to his interpretation the text shows that Jesus constitutes Simon as the rock, gives him the keys, and gives the power to bind and to loose. In contrast, however, Hans Küng rejects the authenticity of the logion. He interprets the text as reflecting a post-resurrectional situation in which it is presupposed that an institutional Church with powers of jurisdiction and teaching already exists.[35] Küng, therefore, concludes that one cannot argue from this text to demonstrate that the historical Jesus willed to establish the basic constitution of the Church.

In view of these divergent historical reconstructions of the relation between the historical Jesus and the Church, it must be asked how these exegetical differences should be evaluated in the light of the current status of scholarly research. It is therefore helpful to attend to the specific exegetical research upon which Karl Rahner and Hans Küng have based their reconstructions of the historical foundation of the Church.

Karl Rahner follows the exegetical interpretations that Vögtle and Schnackenburg have proposed, whereby Vögtle's writings provide the primary basis.[36] Presupposing a dialogic understanding of salvation history in which God's plan depends upon human responses, Vögtle maintained that Jesus' message and mission was directed at first exclu-

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 323-25. For recent literature on the historical Jesus cf. H. Patsch, *Abendmahl und historischer Jesus* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1972) who, however, takes a much more traditional viewpoint. See the more recent work by R. Pesch, *Wie Jesus das Abendmahl hielt. Der Grund der Eucharistie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977).

[34] *Foundations*, p. 335.

[35] *On Being a Christian*, pp. 285ff.

[36] For the early position of Vögtle followed by Rahner, cf. "Jesus und die Kirche," *Begegnung der Christen. Studien evangelischer und katholischer Theologen*, ed. by M. Roesle and O. Cullman (The Otto Karrer Festschrift: Stuttgart-Frankfurt: Evangelsiche Verlagswerk and Verlag Josef Knecht, 1959), pp. 54-81; "Messiasbekenntnis und Petrusverheissung: Zur Komposition Mt 16,13-23 par.," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1 (1957), pp. 252-72 and 2 (1958), 85-103; "Ekklesiologische Auftragsworte des Auferstandenen," in *Sacra Pagina* II, ed. by J. Coppens *et al.* (Paris-Gembloux: Bibliotheca E ThL 12/13, 1959), pp. 280-94. R. Schnackenburg follows the same basic position as Vögtle except he hesitates to follow the two-stage division of Jesus' preaching. Cf. "Kirche," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed., vol. VI (Freiburg: Herder, 1961), cols. 167-72, esp. 167-69; *The Church in the New Testament*, trans. by W. J. O'Hara (New York: Seabury, 1965); *God's Rule and Kingdom*, trans. by J. Murray (New York: Herder & Herder, 1963).

sively to all Israel. After the hostility of the religious leaders and the rejection by the people, God changed the salvific plan. Vögtle suggests that Jesus at first understood his mission as directed exclusively to Israel, but that at a certain point within his ministry, he became aware of his future death and its salvific significance. Only after this point of time in his ministry did Jesus think of the establishment of the Church. He initiated his disciples into the meaning of his death and he commanded that they repeat the celebration of the Last Supper. In regard to Mt 16:17-19 Vögtle acknowledges Matthean redactional elements and its misplacement at Caesarea Philippi. Nevertheless, he suggests a locus within the preaching of the "historical Jesus" in so far as he proposes the hypothesis that the words of Mt 16:18 were uttered by Jesus either at the Last Supper when he initiated his narrow circle of disciples into the salvific meaning of his impending death or at a post-resurrectional appearance when he retrospectively instructed them about its meaning.

Vögtle's basic exegetical interpretation underlies Karl Rahner's hishorical demonstration that emphasizes Jesus' retention of a community of disciples even after he became aware of his future rejection and suffering. Likewise Rahner refers to the words to Simon (Luke 22:31f) at the Last Supper, appeals to the words and mandates of the risen Jesus, and argues for Mt 16:18 as a basis for the foundation of the Church by Jesus.

In the meanwhile, however, Vögtle has himself criticized and considerably revised his own historical reconstruction of the relation between the historical Jesus and the Church.[37] He has become much more reserved and cautious about the possibility that during his ministry Jesus became aware of his death, interpreted it as an atoning death and conceived of the future establishment of the Church. Likewise, he no longer argues that the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus can be reconstructed from the post-resurrectional accounts. Finally, he has even modified his interpretation of Mt 16:17-19. Coming to terms with the research of Thyen and Hahn, Vögtle now no longer interprets Mt 16:18 as a verse uttered by the historical Jesus either at the Last Supper or in a historical appearance to the disciples after the resurrection. It stems, however, from a Petrine protophany narrative which probably contained only the interpretation of the name of Peter.

These conclusions have found considerable acceptance within recent Catholic exegetical studies. P. Hoffmann has argued that Mt 16:19 has originated in the prophetic apocalyptic circles of the early Christian

[37] For the later position of Vögtle, cf. "Zum Problem der Herkunft von Mt. 16, 17-19," in *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker*, ed. by P. Hoffmann *et al.* (*Festschrift für J. Schmid*; Freiburg: Herder, 1973), pp. 373-93; "Die hermeneutische Relevanz des geschichtlichen Charakters der Christusofferung," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 43 (1967), 470-87; his chapters on Jesus and the early community in *Ökumenische Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I. *Alte Kirche und Ostkirche*, ed. by R. Kottje and B. Moeller (Mainz-München: Matthias Grünewald and Kaiser, 1970), pp. 3-36. Vögtle refers to the work of F. Hahn, "Der Petrusverhessung Mt 16, 18f.," *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim* 21 (1970), 8-13; and H. Thyen, *Studien zur Sündenvergebung im Neuen Testament und seinen alttestamentlichen und judischen Vorraussetzungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1970), pp. 225f.

movement and Mt 16:18 was probably formulated by a second or third generation of Aramaic speaking early Christians. The verse is an aetiological interpretation of the change of names. Within contemporary exegesis the following Catholic scholars, R. Pesch, W. Trilling, K. Kertelge and J. Blank, all agree that the logion does not stem from the historical Jesus.[38] The study jointly produced by Catholic and Lutheran exegetes, *Peter in the New Testament*, acknowledges the redactional character of Mt 16:18. It hypothetically suggests that it possibly contains traditional elements steming from a post-resurrectional appearance or situation that were either developed or preserved in an Aramaic-speaking community.[39] Whereas Vögtle had referred to the tradition as a Petrine "protophany narrative," they cautiously write "developed" or "preserved."

Against this background, it can be seen that in comparison to Karl Rahner, Hans Küng has sought in *On Being a Christian* to take into account the conclusions of these exegetical studies in his analysis of the relation between the historical Jesus and the Church. His doing so had led him to modify considerably the view of this relation that he had earlier presented in *The Church*. In that book he sought to synthesize the views of W. G. Kümmel and A. Vögtle. He accepts Kümmel's assertions[40] that Jesus neither founded a Church nor predicted the emergence of a Church, but had expected a short "interim time" between his death and the Parousia. This interim time provides the relation between Jesus and the Church because Jesus expected that during that time the disciples would repeat the common meals and would be further united in their common allegiance to him and in their expectation of the Parousia. In view of Jesus' expectation of this interim period, Küng will assert that Jesus laid the foundations for the emergence of a post-resurrectional Church, even though he did not during the pre-Easter time found a Church.

[38] P. Hoffmann, "Der Petrus-Primat im Matthäusevangelium," *Neues Testament und Kirche. R. Schnackenburg zum 60. Geburtstag* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), pp. 94-114; R. Pesch, "The Position and Significance of Peter in the Church of the New Testament," *Councilium* 64 [*Papal Ministry in the Church*] (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971), pp. 32-33; W. Trilling, "Zum Petrusamt im Neuen Testament. Traditionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen anhand vonMatthäus, 1 Petrus, und Johannes," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 151 (1971), 110-33; K. Kertelge, *Gemeinde und Amt im Neuen Testament* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1972); J. Blank, "Der historische Jesus und die Kirche," *Jesus von Nazareth (Freiburg: Herder, 1972), pp. 122-50; and "The Person and Office of Peter in the New Testament," Concilium* 83 [*Truth and Certainty*] (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), pp. 42-55.

[39] R. E. Brown, *et al.*, *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis-New York: Augsburg-Paulist, 1973), p. 92, "pointing to the possibility of its stemming from a post-resurrectional appearance of Jesus and its being preserved and perhaps developed in an Aramaic-speaking community." But there is an enormous difference between "preserved" and "developed" for the authenticity question.

[40] W. G. Kümmel, *Kirchenbegriff und Geschictsbewusstsein in der Urgemeinde und bei Jesus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2nd ed., 1968); *Promise and Fulfillment, op. cit.*, cf. footnote 23; and "Jesus und die Anfänge der Kirche," *Studia Theologica* 7 (1953), 1-27, now in *Heilsgeschichehen und Geschichte. Gesammlte Aufsätze 1933-1964* (Marburg: N. C. Elwert, 1965), pp. 289-309. In the last article, Kümmel responds to the criticisms of his earlier position by A. Oepke and N. A. Dahl.

On a decisive point, Hans Küng follows Vögtle and goes beyond Kümmel (an error in the English translation conveys the very opposite meaning). With Vögtle Küng then argued that in becoming aware of the hostility of Israel's leaders, Jesus began to reckon with his death. He began to view his death as an atoning death and so instructed his narrow circle of disciples. This idea of an atoning death would then lead to and "explain the idea of the founding of a Church." Consequently, Küng would argue that Jesus laid the foundations of the Church and its origins would lie not "solely in the intention and the message of Jesus in the pre-Easter period, but in the whole history of Jesus's life and ministry."[41]

On Being a Christian, however, takes cognizance of the more recent Catholic exegesis on the issue. Hence Küng no longer suggests that Jesus laid the foundations of the Church or that its origins are rooted in his intention, life, death, and resurrection or that he reckoned with a short interim period. If the shift within Catholic exegesis within the last twenty years is taken into account, then it can be concluded that the historical arguments which Karl Rahner advances in *Foundations of Christian Faith* and which Hans Küng had advanced in *The Church* are no longer completely valid. Critical historical exegesis does not sufficiently establish that the historical Jesus intentionally and explicitly willed to found a Church. It cannot be demonstrated by a historical reconstruction of the words and deeds of the pre-Easter Jesus.

This conclusion is reached even by authors who do not concur with all the results of the critical exegesis. Aelred Cody best sums up the situation when he concludes "one cannot prove, with critical methods, that he [Jesus] did found the Church, or that he did intend to found the Church" so that "the question whether or not Jesus before his death and exaltation, founded the Church as we know it... cannot be given an affirmative answer."[42] If these historical results are accepted, does it mean that one must concur with Küng's response and reject Rahner's answer? Before answering this question, Rahner's indirect method will be first analyzed.

II. RAHNER'S INDIRECT METHOD

Before Karl Rahner attempts the historical demonstration, he presents an indirect anthropological argument. This argument constitutes the heart of Rahner's transcendental method which he applies here to the question of the foundation of the Church. Its significance is attested by its locus as almost a precondition for the acceptance of the intelligibil-

[41] H. Küng, *The Church*. The quotes are from pp. 76 and 77. The English translation reads "Vögtle himself... goes beyond Kümmel in assuming, without sufficiently weighty grounds that Jesus." The German reads: "nicht ohne schwerwiegende Gründe." Cf. *Die Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1967), p. 96.

[42] A. Cody, "The Foundation of the Church: Biblical Criticism for Ecumenical Discussion," *Theological Studies* 34 (1973), 3-18, here pp. 9 and 15. For a survey of Protestant views on the origin of the Church, cf. G. Heinz, *Das Problem der Kirchenentstehung in der deutschen protestantischen Theologie des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1974).

ity and veracity of the historical demonstration. Consequently, it should be asked just what purpose does this indirect argument serve? What function does it fulfill? How does it enable or does it at all enable Rahner to establish his thesis relating the foundation of the Church and the historical Jesus?

It is important to note just what Rahner understands under transcendental theology. It basically represents the receptivity within Catholic thought of transcendental philosophy by those theologians influenced by Joseph Maréchal.[43] Karl Rahner defines his transcendental theology as such: "Systematic theology can be called transcendental when it (a) uses the instruments of transcendental philosophy and (b) takes as its themes, more explicitly than before and not just in general (as in traditional fundamental theology), the a priori conditions in the believer for the knowledge of important truths of faith, using genuinely theological methods of investigation."[44] The transcendental method queries about the conditions of possibility within the human subject in regard to objects of faith and revelation. Just as transcendental philosophy investigates the possibility of knowledge of an object by an analysis of the human subject's ability to know, so too does transcendental theology investigate the conditions for the possibility of a knowledge of revelation. It is this method that Rahner has elaborated in his discussion of the God-World relation, the nature of grace, the Trinity, and Christology.[45] Rahner breaks down his indirect approach into three specific arguments.[46] *First*, Christian believers profess Jesus as the absolute savior and as God's historically tangible and irreversible offer. The continued and abiding faith in Jesus is a necessary condition of the possibility and nature of such a salvific offer. God's offer is such that the Christian abiding faith in Jesus is a constitutive intrinsic part of that offer. *Second*, such abiding faith cannot be simply private and individualistic, but it must be public and communal if God's offer is to be continued. The Church has its origin in the historical Jesus because faith in Jesus has its origin in Jesus and that faith is necessarily public and communal. *Third*, this faith must have a history and so the communal dimension of this faith must have a history if there is to be a history of salvation with continuity and identity.

[43] *Le point de départ de la métaphysique* (Brüssel: Museum Lessianum, 5 vols. 1944-1949, 3rd ed.). For a general survey, cf. O. Muck, *The Transcendental Method* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968) and H. Holz, *Transzendental philosophie und Metaphysik* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1969). On Rahner's method, cf. F. Fiorenza, "Introduction: Karl Rahner and the Kantian Problematic," in Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans. by W. Dych (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), pp. xix-xlv; K. Fischer, *Der Mensch als Geheimnis. Die Anthropologie Karl Rahners* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974); and A. Carr, *The Theological Method of Karl Rahner* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977).

[44] K. Rahner, "Transcendental Theology," *Sacramentum Mundi*, VI (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 287-89; here p. 287.

[45] K. Rahner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," *Theological Investigations*, XI, trans. by D. Bourke (New York: Seabury, 1974), pp. 68-114; and "Theology and Anthropology," in *Theological Investigations*, IX, trans. by G. Harrison (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), pp. 28-45.

[46] *Foundations*, pp. 329-31.

These arguments represent a powerful quasi-transcendental deduction of the necessity of Church as a presupposition of the Christian faith in Jesus as absolute savior. It is impossible to believe that Jesus is God's absolute offer of grace, one that is to have historical permanence, unless this offer is to be historically and tangibly present. Moreover, the public, communal, continual character of faith must be kept in mind when discussing the foundation of the Church. In so far as Karl Rahner brings these arguments to the fore, he presents in his own words a "minimalistic argument."[47] Nevertheless, in comparison with Hans Küng's treatment, Rahner's argument refers to significant anthropological factors that make a Church necessary if the Christian faith in Jesus as savior is to continue.

Yet this indirect argument also has several weaknesses. It not only shares in the limitations of the transcendental method, but it also betrays the questionableness of applying the transcendental method to a historical question such as the foundation of the Church. These limitations are the following. *First*, Rahner's principles can be applied to almost any religion or faith that has formed a community. Any community of faith would need to be abiding, public, communal, and historically continuous. Although such a presupposition is necessary for the continued belief of a community, it does not resolve the historical question. In a sense, Rahner does not usually intend the transcendental method to resolve historical questions. At the most, they serve to investigate the possibility of the knowledge of a certain object or the credibility of an object of faith.

Second, Rahner deduces his thesis from the faith of Christians. It is the form and content of the Christian faith in Jesus that presupposes the continuity between the historical Jesus and the Church. But does such a starting-point enable one to postulate a bridge between the historical critical reconstruction of the words and deeds of Jesus—to the extent this is possible—and the faith of the Church? Precisely, the way Rahner formulated the question in terms of Jesus' imminent expectation would appear to rule out this argument, since this argument presupposes a very realized eschatology.

I would therefore question whether a transcendental method that investigates the a priori transcendental conditions of religious subjectivity can provide a horizon sufficiently comprehensive to deal with the historical data not only a priori, but also a posteriori. I would like to suggest that it does not. Instead I suggest that it should be complemented and augmented by recent insights of hermeneutical theory

III. THE HERMENEUTICAL ISSUES

The transcendental approach has its roots in the Enlightenment and Romanticism where the modern turn toward the foundation of religion in human subjectivity has come to the fore in theology.[48] Although I have

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 332.

[48] C. Senft, *Wahrhaftigkeit und Wahrheit. Die Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts zwischen Orthodoxie und Aufklärung* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1956). See also G. Baum, *Man Becoming* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971) on the Blondelian shift.

pointed to the limitations of Rahner's indirect method despite its advantages, it should be noted that fundamental presuppositions emerge in how both Rahner and Küng formulate the question about the foundation of the Church. Not just transcendental theology, but the traditional approach formulates the question as such: Could Jesus have explicitly intended to found a church? Both Hans Küng and Karl Rahner so formulate the question.

This formulation contains a twofold presupposition. It relates first of all the origin of the Church to an *explicit intention* and it secondly refers to a *founding*. It then asks whether Jesus' words and deeds can be interpreted as explicitly founding a Church. In my opinion, such a formulation of the question places theology before a dead end that can be avoided if recent hermeneutical insights are taken into account. I shall undertake, therefore, *first* to criticize the formulation of the question and *secondly* to suggest a way to resolve the question.

(a) *Critique of Transcendental Hermeneutics*. In the anthropocentric and transcendental tradition of hermeneutics (e.g. Schleiermacher and Dilthey) the meaning of a text, a speech, and an action lies in the intent of the author, speaker, or agent.[49] To understand a literary text or a work of art, this tradition suggests that it is necessary to grasp the individual author's psychological intention or the individual artist's creative purpose. The experience of empathy with an author or artist makes understanding possible. The interpretation of a text or an action is seen as a psychological process of empathy and divination of the author's intention or agent's purpose.

If this method of interpretation is applied to the establishment of the Church, then, to interpret certain words and acts of Jesus, it would not only be necessary to reconstruct from the Gospel texts the words and deeds of the historical Jesus, but it would also be necessary to reconstruct his explicit intention and volition. The meaning of the gathering of disciples would then lie in what precisely Jesus intended by gathering disciples. The meaning of common meals would lie in what Jesus intended in celebrating such meals. Precisely such questions are asked! Did Jesus intend to found a Church in gathering disciples and in celebrating common meals if he had an imminent expectation?

Yet this hermeneutical approach has been recently criticized. Both Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur have argued that meaning is noematic and ideal.[50] Meaning lies in the text, the act, the work of art,

[49]Cf. the excellent analysis of Dilthey's hermeneutics by R. A. Makkreel, *Dilthey. Philosopher of the Human Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, ed. by H. Kimmerle, trans. by J. Duke & J. Forstmann (Missoula: The Scholars Press, 1977). For a severe criticism of this hermeneutical tradition, cf. H. W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative. A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974). Frei also applies his own formal literary and narrative analysis to Christology and the Gospel texts, *The Identity of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

[50]Cf. H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by G. Barden and J. Cumming (New York: Seabury, 1975) and P. Ricoeur's articles, "The Task of Hermeneutics," and "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," *Philosophy Today* 17 (1973), 97-142.

rather than in the author's intention. If this hermeneutic is applied to the question of the establishment of the Church, then it would not be necessary or even appropriate to explicate the meaning of certain words or deeds in terms of the historical Jesus' explicit intention or volition. Not only do we know about Jesus only through the Gospels, not only do these Gospel texts have a meaning independent of the historical Jesus, but the reconstruction of the historical Jesus would not demand that the meaning of his words or deeds lies in his inner intention. They would have a meaning above and beyond his intent just as a work of art has a meaning above and beyond the artist's intent.

In addition to the hermeneutical identification of meaning with an author's intention or agent's purpose, there emerged in Romanticism a view of institutions that strongly influenced nineteenth century religious thought.[51] Although Romanticism acknowledged the force of social and legal institutions, it tended to interpret them and to define their origins as if institutions were mainly the spiritual creations of the genius of great personalities. The spirit of an institution and its laws were attributed to a personality standing behind that institution and founding that institution. Just as one referred to the founding founders of a nation so too could one speak of the founding figures of a religion. This view even prevailed in classical philology and classical theories of religion. Friedrich Creuzer's first volume of *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* betrays this influence in so far as the origin of mythology is traced back to the genial production of intelligent priests.[52] A century of research on Moses bears the same imprint in so far as the Mosaic law and religion were interpreted primarily as the products of his great personality.[53]

Nevertheless, the weaknesses of such a position are obvious. Such a view of institutions, be they religious or not, overlooks the force of institutions themselves, the logic of their growth, and the social factors and environmental influences determining their character. Institutions develop an anonymous spirit that cannot be traced back to some founder. Historical research has indicated the long and varied developments of various institutions. Within the history of religions, a perspective developed that was critical of the emphasis upon religious founders. In regard to the intentionality of the religious founder, one can just as well apply the conclusion of Joachim Wach, "As in well known, none of the great founders intended to 'found a religion.' "[54]

If these reflections are applied to the question of the Church, then language about Jesus founding a Church must be used with caution. Such caution would effect both the affirmation or negation of the asser-

[51] Cf. L. Dullaart, *Kirche und Ekklesiologie. Die Institutionslehre Arnold Gehlens als Frage an den Kirchenbegriff in der gegenwärtigen systematischen Theologie* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1975), esp. pp. 52-96. Not only an emphasis on individuality, but also a common spirit was present within Romanticism.

[52] (Leipzig & Darmstadt: Heyer and Leske, 1819.)

[53] K. Koch, "Der Tod des Religionsstifters," *Kerygma und Dogma* 8 (1962), 100-23. Cf. the response of F. Baumgärtel, "Der Tod des Religionsstifters," *Kerygma und Dogma* 9 (1963), 223-33.

[54] *The Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 342.

tion that Jesus founded a Church. When Hans Küng writes that "Jesus is not what is generally understood as a founder of a religion or a Church,"[55] he seems to overlook this very important consideration as to just what founding means. In what sense does he mean "was is generally understood as a founder"? Could one apply such a concept of founder to Buddha, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Moses, etc.? If not in terms of the quotation from Joachim Wach, then what sense does it have to deny that Jesus was a founder, as what is generally understood as a founder, when this very concept of founder cannot be applied to all the other great world religions. In short, the concept of "founder" must be understood in all its complexities and nuances.

The summary of my reservations against the complete identification of meaning with an agent's intention and against a simplified concept of founder would be to suggest that the question of whether the historical Jesus founded a Church deserves an answer that does not reduce the foundation of the Church totally and simply to his explicit intention and does not narrow the notion of foundation that avoids the problems of the origin and development of institutions.

(b) *Hermeneutical Presuppositions of a Constructive Proposal.* With these criticisms in mind, I should like to suggest several reflections based on recent hermeneutical and linguistic theory that I believe present a more adequate framework for viewing the question of the foundation of the Church.

(1) *Autonomy of meaning.* Hans Georg Gadamer appeals to the concept of play in his critique of the modern subjectivisation of aesthetics and meaning.[56] In analyzing play and games, Gadamer points out that the subjective reflection of the individual players does not provide an adequate ontological explanation of the meaning of play. A game has a mode of being that transcends the individual's private subjectivity. There is in a game a to-and-fro and an interaction that comes to the fore and publically presents itself. Every game has its own spirit that emerges in the structure, activity, and actual playing out of a game. Likewise an art work should be so understood. It is not simply a copy of external reality nor is it merely an explication of an author's intention. Instead, a work of art has an ontological reality independent of both. For this reason, others in different periods of time can discover meaning in the work of art that the author did not intend to put there. There is a "more" that transcends the author's intention.

Paul Ricoeur has argued that social action shares a similar fixation and autonomization.[57] In a social event or external act, there is an independent fixation of meaning, a disassociation from an author's mental intention, an exhibition of non-ostensive references, and the possibility of a universal range of addresses. Just as a distance exists

[55] *On Being a Christian*, p. 286.

[56] *Truth and Method*, pp. 91-150.

[57] "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action considered as a Text," *Social Research* 38 (1971), 529-55.

between the speaker's intention and the verbal meaning of a text, so too can there be a distinction between the meaning (*noema*) and the intention (*noesis*) of an act.[58]

Often human acts are done with a specific intention, yet since these acts are done within a social context they take on a meaning that transcends that of the individual agents. This common experience is due, among other things, to a difference in horizon. The horizon of the agent may not be the horizon of those seeing the act or affected by it. Therefore the action has a meaning that goes beyond what the agent understood and intended.

(2) *Consequential meaning*. The transcendence of meaning beyond an agent's intention can also be illustrated by pointing out how the consequences of an act often determine the meaning of the act beyond that of the agent's intention. The distinction between chronicle and narrative indicates how the consequences or even subsequent events determine not only the significance of an act, but also its meaning. Therefore history is more than a chronicle, but is a narrative. It is necessary to see an act in relation to future actions in order to understand it as a historical act.

For example, only if a particular outbreak of hostility is seen, not as a particular act, but as the beginning of a set of actions is it correctly understood. It is precisely because a particular act of hostility is understood, for example, as a part or as the beginning of the Thirty Years War, is its meaning understood. A computer that would simply chronicle events with the utmost accuracy would not be writing history because it would not be able to look ahead and see the meaning of the event as part of a narrative continuum.[59]

(3) *Speech Acts and Constitutive Rules*. In linguistic philosophy the problem of the relation between intention and meaning as well as the problem of the pragmatic meaning of linguistic expressions has been furthered by means of the speech-act theory. Building on the work of the later Wittgenstein, John L. Austin has noted that besides "constative" statements that affirm something as true or false, "performative" statements are used that are not true or false, but are at the most successful or not.[60] In his posthumous publications,[61] he has revised this division with the insight that all speaking is an action so that the previous distinction between statements becomes an analytic distinction within

[58] For a critique of the distinction between author's intention and meaning, cf. E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, 1967).

[59] A. C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 112-42. For critical analysis and further developments of Danto's position, see J. Habermas, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* (*Philosophische Rundschau*, Beiheft 5; Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), pp. 161-67 and H. M. Baumgartner, *Kontinuität und Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), pp. 269-94.

[60] J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, ed. by J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (London: Oxford University Press, 1970). See also his "Performative-Constative," in *Philosophy and Ordinary Language*, ed. by C. E. Caton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), pp. 22-33.

[61] *How To Do Things with Words*, ed. by J. O. Urmson (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

one and the same statements. He thereby distinguishes between a locutionary act that characterizes the saying of something, an illocutionary act such as informing, ordering, undertaking, etc. that is a utterance with a certain conventional force and a perlocutionary act that brings about something or achieves something, e.g. convincing, deterring, etc. Since the illocutionary act remains somewhat unclear, it has been subject to critical modifications by Strawson, Searle and Habermas.[62]

Nevertheless, this theory of speech-acts has been developed in several ways. John R. Searle has expanded it by proposing that speaking a language involves performing acts according to rules.[63] Speaking is a rule-governed form of behavior. He distinguishes regulative and constitutive rules. A rule is regulative in so far as it antedates behavior, exists independently of behavior and yet regulates as an imperative the behavior, just as rules of etiquette regulate interpersonal interaction, an interaction existing in Searle's opinion independently of these rules. Constitutive rules do not just regulate but are analytic rules and create the possibility of an action. For example, chess rules constitute the game of chess. To go against them is not simply to go against etiquette but is not to play chess.

Searle develops this distinction to argue that speaking a language and performing illocutionary acts involves conventions and constitutive rules. This factor of language corresponds to the nature of human behavior. As Searle notes, "Sometimes in order to explain adequately a piece of human behavior we have to suppose that it was done in accordance with a rule, even though the agent himself may not be able to state the rule and may not even be conscious of the fact that he is acting in accordance with the rule."[64] What is significant here is not only the rule-governed character of much of human behavior but also that an agent's ability to do something depends upon a mastery of rules and conventions "even though in an important sense he may not know that he knows the rule or that he does what he does in part because of the rule."[65]

It is on this basis that there is a distinction between "to have a meaning" and "to mean something." Meaning is more than intention. It is also a matter of convention and rules so that speaking involves both "intentional" and "conventional" aspects. Therefore, understanding and knowing the meaning of an utterance involves knowing the conditions and rules of the utterance. The better the sentence is understood, the better the intention is understood.

[62] P. Strawson, "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts," *Philosophical Review* 73 (1964), 439-60; J. R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), esp. pp. 22-71; his "Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts," *Philosophical Review* 77 (1968); and J. Habermas, "Was heisst Universalpragmatik," in *Sprachpragmatik und Philosophie*, ed. by K. O. Apel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 174-272.

[63] "What is a Speech Act?" in *Philosophy in America*, ed. by M. Black (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), pp. 221-39 and his book *Speech Acts*.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 42. In regard to meaning, Searle modified and revises the position of H. P. Grice, "Meaning," *Philosophical Review* (1957), 377-88.

This theory of speech acts that correlated language and human behavior has been extended by Paul Ricoeur.[66] Commenting on the work of Austin and Searle, he notes that the paradigm of speech-acts can be applied to actions so that a typology of action is possible. Moreover, a typology also implies a criteriology because a type implies constitutive rules. This enables one to construct "ideal models" that are similar to Max Weber's "ideal types."[67]

Moreover, actions like speech acts can be identified not only according to their propositional content, but also according to their illocutionary force. Both constitute the "sense-content" of actions. As Ricoeur suggests, an "action-event" has similar dialectic. Like speech acts, human actions have a temporal and logical status. As an event a human action appears and disappears. Here lies its temporal sense. But actions also have a logical status according to which they they have left their mark on time.[68]

In his application of his hermeneutical theory of texts to human actions, Ricoeur not only argues for this fixation of action, but also for its autonomization, its relevance or importance, and its openness to an unlimited range of possible readers. All these elements point to a possible extension of meaning beyond mental intention. It is helpful to recall Searle's interpretation of speech acts and the role of conventions and rules, for here lies a limitation of Ricoeur's extension. The openness of an action to an unlimited range of interpretation is not possible in so far as a typology of human action is possible and in so far as human action takes place according to constitutive rules. The understanding of human actions finds its limitation and focus in its understanding of these actions as actions that can be classified and seen according to patterns of activity.

This limitation is important for the interpretation of Jesus' life and activity. Historical interpretations and reconstructions should perceive that these actions, as any action, can have a meaning beyond that which might have been intended due to future horizons, consequences and interactive forces. Nevertheless, since human behavior takes place within a system of patterns and rules, it can also be classified. This possible typology of action limits the range of possibility of interpretation. Not all interpretations are valid.

I hope in what follows to bring these three elements of recent hermeneutical theory to bear on the issue of the relation between Jesus and the Church.[69]

[66] See "The Model of the Text," *loc. cit.*

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] See W. Mommsen, "Verstehen und Idealtypus. Zur Methodologie einer historischen Sozialwissenschaft," in his *Max Weber. Gesellschaft, Politik und Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974). Very important for a discussion of the issues is J. W. N. Watkins, "Ideal Types and Historical Explanation," in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. by H. Feigl and M. Brodbeck (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), pp. 723-44.

[69] For an application of some of these considerations to the problem of faith, cf. F. Fiorenza, "The Security and Insecurity of Faith," *Proceedings of the CTSA* 28 (1973), 181-97, esp. pp. 195f., on the relation between social context and meaning. For the

IV. CONCLUSION: THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

To summarize the results of the comparison between Karl Rahner and Hans Küng on the issue of the foundation of the Church and to apply the insights from recent hermeneutical and linguistic theory to that question, several theses will be formulated.

First Thesis. The relation between Jesus and the Church is inadequately conceived if it is primarily affirmed or denied that Jesus, in view of his expectation of an imminent end, explicitly intended and willed to found a Church.

This thesis suggests that not only the formulation of the question but also both its denial and affirmation are inadequate. It is generally conceded that it was anachronistic and ahistorical for the baroque school theology to attribute to the historical Jesus explicit juridic acts to establish the Church, its threefold hierarchical structure, its sevenfold sacramental system and other structures and beliefs that only developed in the course of centuries. But is it not equally anachronistic to deny as Hans Küng does that he did not think of creating and organizing a large religious structure? The denial is correct, but it would apply to any other religious founder. Even the founders of religious orders probably did not think of creating large organizations. To the extent that one formulates an anachronistic question and then denies it, to that extent one fails to contribute to an understanding of the complex historical issue of the relation between Jesus and the Church.

Besides pointing to the possibility of an anachronistic formulation of the question, the thesis suggests that the formulation of the issue in terms of the compatibility between an explicit intention of the historical Jesus and his eschatological horizon is also inadequate. Firstly, the redactional nature of the New Testament documents prohibits any too facile attempt to reconstruct from the New Testament the mental intention or consciousness of the historical Jesus. The primary meaning of the New Testament documents lies within themselves and not within an historical reconstruction that may not be even certain or possible.

Secondly, even if it is granted that the majority (but not all) of exegetes who attempt such an historical reconstruction conclude that the historical Jesus had such an imminent expectation, it must be seen that the earliest traditions reveal an eschatology that could be described as realized, inaugurated or presential. This evidence further shows the difficulty if not impossibility of a historical reconstruction. Moreover, it requires that the realized or presential elements, however understood, cannot be a priori excluded from any historical reconstruction of the preaching of the historical Jesus.

Thirdly, an expectation of an imminent end does not necessarily exclude the possibility of the formation of a community. The example of Qumran is telling. Its documents reveal apocalyptic expectations and an

criticisms of a purely hermeneutical approach, cf. F. Fiorenza, "Critical Social Theory and Christology," *Proceedings of the CTSA* 30 (1975), 63-110, esp. pp. 89-97. See also *Continuum* 8 (1970) for the special issue edited by F. Fiorenza, on Habermas and Gadamer.

imminent expectation.[70] Nevertheless, Qumran formed itself into a definitely organized community with specific structures and disciplinary rules. Therefore, it cannot be a priori excluded that a community was formed to prepare for and to await an imminent end.

Finally, the contrast between explicit intention and imminent expectation overlooks the continued existence of an imminent expectation in the period following the death of Jesus and the Easter experiences of the disciples. In this period, the Christian communities not only understood themselves as such but engaged in extensive missionary activity. This missionary activity did not arise only after an imminent expectation died out. In fact, the intensity of the imminent expectation may have contributed to the vigor of the missionary activity.[71] The imminent expectation endured until the second century and was not limited exclusively to splinter groups like the Montanists.

Second Thesis. Acts of the historical Jesus such as the gathering of disciples and the celebrating of common meals can have a meaning that transcends historical reconstructions of the explicit intention of Jesus.

The hermeneutical issue of the correct interpretation of the meaning of these acts is decisive for the issue of the foundation of the Church. Traditional theology has interpreted such acts as explicit and direct juridic acts of founding a Church or establishing the Eucharist by the historical Jesus. It attributed this meaning to the Gospel texts themselves and identified this meaning with the intention of the historical Jesus himself. Traditional theology had not yet arrived at the insights of form criticism and redaction criticism. In this regard Karl Rahner's discussion of the foundation of the Church has gone beyond the traditional affirmation despite his questionable historical reconstructions.

In contrast to this traditional theology, it is argued that the meaning of these acts lies primarily in the intention of Jesus. Hans Küng has argued that the gathering of disciples and the celebrating of the common meals shows that Jesus did not intend to found a Church rather than the opposite precisely because of his intention. He did them because he explicitly expected an imminent end and intended them as acts in preparation for that end or in expectation of it. The meaning of these acts is determined by Jesus' intention. Likewise Bultmann had argued much earlier that although Jesus' preaching and activity de facto entailed assemblying a community, the "decisive issue" is that this was not his "intention" ("*Absicht*").[72] Consequently the historical Jesus did not found a Church because he did not intend to do so.

Ecclesiology faces a dilemma here. Either the meaning of the words and deeds of Jesus is identified with the fixed position of some later period of theology or the meaning is identified with a reconstructed historical intention and eschatological horizon of Jesus. I question

[70] Cf. E. S. Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the New Testament," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976), 159-77.

[71] On this difficult question, see J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), esp. pp. 19-65.

[72] "Die Frage nach der Echtheit von Mt 16, 17-19," *op. cit.* (cf. footnote 28), pp. 270-71.

whether either identification is adequate. The following reflections should be brought to bear on the problem of the relation between the historical Jesus and the foundation of the Church.

First. The three basic hermeneutical insights outlined above have all attempted to show that an agent's explicit mental intention should not exclusively determine or specify the meaning of an action. Words and actions have an autonomy that enables them to be illumined by a later and different horizon, to be understood in the light of subsequent events and to be classified according to "ideal types" or "models of behavior" which allows an ascription of intentionality to the act so considered rather than from the agent's perspective.

As far as the interpretation of Jesus' words and activity is concerned, it is only through the New Testament texts that Jesus is known. Obviously the meaning of the Gospel text is not exhausted by its author's meaning or editor's purpose. Moreover, one can attempt a historical reconstruction of the historical Jesus. This usually entails a comparative analysis of earlier and later texts and it usually presupposes that the earlier texts provide the more accurate historical description. Nevertheless, his preaching or deeds do not exist independent of interpretation. In view of the nature of historical reconstruction, it would be therefore inappropriate to deduce too readily some mental intention or subjective purpose of the historical Jesus.

The assembling of a community of disciples and the celebrating of common meals provides an example. All documents record that Jesus had a community of disciples and celebrated common meals. Yet the earliest documents also place this in the context of various interpretations. These earliest interpretations do not attribute any specific intention to Jesus to establish a Church. Instead they are given an eschatological and symbolic interpretation.

Nevertheless is it not possible to view this activity as an ideal type? Jesus did assemble a community of disciples and he did celebrate common meals with them. He did not go off and become a hermit. His activity can be viewed as involving the formation of community even if the earliest documents do not attribute to him an intention to have a permanent and distinctive community. Moreover, even after the Easter and Pentecost experiences, the Christian communities still expected an imminent end, still did not think of permanently structured institutions and still did not fully understand their religious distinctiveness from Israel. Nevertheless, they are indisputably considered Christian communities or churches. The activities and meaning of these Christian communities transcends what they may have explicitly intended and understood.

Second. Caution should be exercised in interpreting the specific acts of Jesus in the forming of a community of disciples and in celebrating common meals as eschatological signs or symbols of the future fulfillment. In interpreting the earliest documents, we often bring our own pre-understandings and horizons. Do we, for example, understand signs quite extrinsically, like the ringing of bells to announce the arrival

of a ship in harbor, or intrinsically, as a handshake, which is not only a sign of friendship but also an act of friendship?[73] In regard to the healings, exorcisms, and common meals of Jesus, are they to be understood as extrinsic or intrinsic signs in their relation to the coming Kingdom? This divergent possibility explains not only differences in contemporary interpretations, but also the diversity among the various traditions that have been handed down. Moreover, this possibility might explain how the continuity between the pre-resurrectional formation of community and the post-resurrectional community can be conceived from the horizons of the New Testament writings and our own.

Third Thesis. The Church discovers itself to be implicitly founded in the ministry of Jesus in so far as it has a communicative reality, significance and meaning transcending the historical situation that is open to the diverse New Testament interpretations.

The intent and major concepts of this thesis need to be clarified before its theoretical distinctiveness and warrants can be discussed. The thesis intends to take a middle position between Karl Rahner and Hans Küng. Although Karl Rahner has argued that the concept of "foundation" expresses a complex historical phenomenon, he has appealed to explicit intentions, volitions and actions of the historical Jesus as specifically constitutive acts of founding a Church.[74] In contrast, Hans Küng rejects all such foundational acts. He has moved beyond *The Church*; in *On Being a Christian* he no longer asserts that the pre-Easter Jesus foresaw an interim period, became aware of his death as an act of atonement, and laid the foundations for the emergence of a post-resurrectional Church. Instead he underscores even more forcibly that the Church was not founded by the historical Jesus but is the post-Easter creation of the Holy Spirit.

Since recent exegetical research has vitiated the historical demonstrations of an explicit foundation by Jesus, the claim that the Church finds its implicit foundation in the ministry of Jesus needs to be warranted. Not only is the term "foundation," as already discussed, ambiguous, but also the term "implicit" is unclear. It can refer to logical implication where a minor premise is implied within a major premise. E.g., "all humans are mortal; John is human; John is mortal." It also refers to an organic model. An oak tree is implicit within an acorn since an acorn intrinsically develops into an oak tree. The organic development presupposes its end at the very beginning. External factors may influence the degree of development but not its end. Acorns do not become daisies.

Instead of suggesting either a logical or an organic movement from implicit to explicit, I am proposing that the relation between a work of art

[73] In this regard, it is interesting to compare the differences between Rahner and Küng in regard to the nature of signs and symbols in relation to their conceptions of eschatology and of the Church.

[74] It should be noted that Karl Rahner takes the position in *Foundations* that he has revised in other articles, especially in regard to the understanding of *jus divinum*, the possibility of changing structures and of reversible development. This article represents a position developed later as do some of the sections in his treatment of Christology. Since the book amounts to a publication of his lectures, it is somewhat uneven.

and its possible meaning, significance and consequences can provide a model for interpreting how the foundation of the Church is implicit in the life and activity of Jesus. As an example, let us assume the existence of a novel that is permeated with Christian symbols. These symbols have been made the basis of an interpretation of the novel as a Christian novel. Yet a critic can ask whether such an interpretation is correct. It can be asked whether the author explicitly intended to use such symbols or whether the author wanted to produce a "Christian" novel. But let us assume that the author's intention is unknown because no psychological or biographical data is available. The novel itself still exists. It is a primary source. The novel can be justifiably given a Christian interpretation because it does contain Christian symbols. It could de facto have had Hindu symbols, but it does not. Irrespective of demonstrating the author's intention, interpreters are warranted in giving the novel a Christian interpretation, but they are not warranted to give it a Hindu interpretation because the novel itself, independent of the author's intention, contains Christian symbols.

A similar example is how, in a personal biography, a later life-activity is implicit in an earlier stage. Let us assume a student wavers between becoming an archaeologist or a biochemist but finally goes to college to become a biochemist and takes courses in biology and chemistry. However, instead of becoming a biochemist, she became a doctor. Looking back she can view her selection of courses as the foundation and preparation for medical studies, even though this was not at the time her explicit and full intention. The selection has a meaning transcending explicit intention.

The issue of the implicit foundation of the Church in the ministry of Jesus is much more complex than these two examples. Jesus' words and deeds do not exist as a novel does but as a part of a life history that is known only through the New Testament writings. Likewise, the relation between his ministry and the Church's ministry can be more direct than in the second example. Nevertheless, both cases exemplify the hermeneutical principles discussed above: the autonomy, consequence and constitutive pattern of human actions. These hermeneutical principles allow human actions to have a meaning that is not limited exclusively to explicit intent. According to the earliest New Testament sources, Jesus' activity can be described in terms of preaching, exorcising, sharing of common meals and forming a community of disciples. This activity allows a classification of Jesus as a specific religious figure. It also allows Jesus to have a representation and communicative significance within the New Testament writings that may transcend the intention of the historical Jesus.[75] In this respect, the emergence of New Testament

[75] Obviously, the historical and hermeneutical statements about the intention of the historical Jesus presuppose a Christological position in regard to Jesus' consciousness and knowledge. This distinct problem cannot be analyzed in the necessary detail here. Rahner's own explanations in *Foundations* represent a position that has found a broad consensus. For the meaning of communication, cf. the work of Habermas, "Universalpragmatik" in which the cognitive, interactive, and expressive pragmatic dimensions of speaking are elaborated.

communities can be said to be implicit, not only within the disciples' experience of Jesus, but also within the meaning which the life and activity of Jesus is capable of signifying in so far as it can be so understood and interpreted. A continuity can be said to exist, therefore, not only in the anthropological self-understanding of the disciples,[76] but also within the possibility that Jesus' life has such a communicative significance for future horizons of the Christian communities.

This continuity can be further delineated by comparing it to a contrary view. Erik Peterson's thesis, which has become influential among many Catholic scholars, views the Church primarily as a post-resurrectional creation of the Holy Spirit because it underscores the discontinuity between the intention of the historical Jesus and the self-understanding of the early Christian communities.[77]

The three discontinuities are: First, Jesus expected the imminent end, whereas the Church envisions itself as a permanent institution in time. Second, Jesus understood his mission as directed solely to Israel and did not intend to establish a separate religious community within or besides Israel. The Church understands itself as a religious institution that is distinct and separate from Israel. In Peterson's thesis, if Israel had accepted Jesus, the kingdom would have come. The rejection of Jesus led to a new stage of salvation and the Church. Third, Jesus did not preach faith in himself but in the coming kingdom. These three discontinuities point to a Church as a post-Easter creation that was not intended and founded by the historical Jesus.

A closer examination of these arguments uncovers fundamental continuities despite the discontinuities and these continuities would in my opinion be a part of the implicit foundation. First, even after Easter, the Christian communities were permeated with apocalyptic and imminent expectations. (According to Käsemann these expectations arose precisely because of the post-resurrectional experiences.) Moreover, it can be questioned whether the fundamental relation between the community of disciples and the transcendent kingdom differs in the post-resurrection period from the pre-resurrection period. The community during both periods stands in the same dialectical tension to the kingdom. Secondly, after Easter, the early Christian communities still did not conceive of itself as distinct from Israel. This was a gradual process and even then some communities understood themselves as the new Israel. Thirdly, although only after the death and resurrection do the Christian communities confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior and only then do the various communities apply different titles to Jesus, a faith in Jesus does exist prior to Easter. The faith and self-understanding prior to

[76] Cf. H. Braun, "The Meaning of New Testament Christology," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 5 (1968), 89-128.

[77] "Die Kirche," in his *Theologische Traktate* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1959; first publication in 1929), pp. 409-27. Peterson's position has had a strong influence on the work of H. Schleier and J. Ratzinger. Our emphasis upon the continuity is not to deny the newness of the kerygma nor the importance of recent attempts to speak of the pneumatological conception of the Church. Cf. Walter Kasper and Gerhard Sauter, *Kirche—Ort des Geistes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976).

Easter has been more than amply discussed in the problem of the New Quest.[78] A broad consensus, however, does exist that seeks to uncover how the explicit post-Easter Christology is implicit within the pre-Easter ministry of Jesus.[79] To the degree that the implicit-explicit scheme is accepted for Christology, to that extent at least it can be applied to ecclesiology.

The question of continuity is decisive. It has been objected, as Rudolf Bultmann has argued against the New Quest,[80] that the historical continuity between the community of disciples prior to Easter and the community after Easter does not historically justify a material (*sachlich*) continuity or a continuity of meaning. Yet the resolution of this objection is not unrelated to the understanding of Christianity and the Christian Church. It might be helpful to keep in mind the reservations against the "Christocentrism" of dialectical theology that Karl Rahner has raised against the theological method of Barthianism when discussing the relation between Jesus and the Church. It is argued that the bearer of the message became the content of the message. Yet this new content is not the exclusive content of the message. Even though it is a new content and constitutes the newness of the kergyma, it is also a horizon by which other contents are proclaimed so that a broad continuity also exists. For example, the community does not just preach Jesus as the Christ, but also preaches God. The horizon of this proclamation of God is mediated by the Church's understanding of Jesus, but not replaced by it. Likewise Jesus preached the kingdom. It is argued that Christian communities preach Jesus as Christ, Lord, Logos, etc. Yet it should not be overlooked that Christian communities still preach the kingdom. The Christian confession of Jesus as Savior colors all aspects of Christian theology and praxis, but it does not become the sole content that replaces these other elements. From this perspective, the mission of Jesus and the mission of the Church have a continuity in so far as Jesus' preaching and activity is continued by the Church.

Nevertheless, Bultmann's objection contains a valid point in so far as he maintains that historical research cannot legitimate the Christian community by proving historically that the community can be traced back to the intention of the historical Jesus. Nor does it prove its illegitimacy. Here Toulmin's classic distinction between "data" and "warrants" plays a significant role. Data represents the facts that one appeals to for establishing a claim, whereas warrants represent the reasons given to show that the claim is legitimate in view of the available information. Consequently, the continuity under discussion is not one

[78] For a survey of the various positions, see J. M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959). For a perceptive analysis of the presuppositions and implications of the new quest, cf. V. A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), esp. pp. 164-203.

[79] Cf. R. E. Brown, *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist, 1975), pp. 20-37.

[80] "Antwort an Ernst Käsemann," in his *Glauben und Verstehen*, IV (Tübingen: Mohr, 1965), pp. 190-98 and his response to the new question in *Exegetica, op. cit.*, pp. 445-69.

that can be demonstrated at the level of data, but rather resides in how the data is interpreted, so that a continuity exists between our vision of Jesus and our vision of the Church. Therefore, I have proposed that a material continuity exists which does not reside in a historically demonstrable explicit intention but rather in the possibility that the ministry of Jesus and the pre-Easter community is open to an interpretation that can highlight the fundamental continuity amidst the discontinuities.

CONCLUSION

The question whether Jesus has founded the Church has received contrasting responses from Karl Rahner and Hans Küng. In analyzing these responses, I have argued that Karl Rahner's historical demonstration and transcendental argument are insufficient to support his affirmative response. And I have argued against Küng's negative response by appealing to recent hermeneutical theory to suggest a reformulation of the question and a different conception of the level of response.

I have suggested that a continuity can be conceived between Jesus and the Church if the hermeneutical principles underscoring how human statements and actions have an autonomy, consequence and constitutive pattern are accepted in order to arrive at a vision of Jesus and the Church that expresses this continuity. These reflections have thereby sought to give a more adequate theoretical justification for the position taken by my teacher, Karl Rahner, by expanding his transcendental approach with a more object-oriented hermeneutical theory.[81] Underlying this support is my concurrence with Karl Rahner's fundamental conviction that the historical Jesus "should not be accorded less creativity for the origin of the Church than the post-Easter community."[82] Historically the Church has its roots in Jesus. It results from the impact of his ministry and life upon his immediate disciples, upon the early Christian communities in the post-Easter experiences, and upon us. Theologically, the meaning of the Christian community may have transcended the specific intentions of the historical Jesus and his first disciples just as its reality and meaning transcends our own intentions and conceptions. Nevertheless, our interpretations should point to the continuity between both visions.

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[81] Cf. H. M. Baumgartner, "Thesen zur Grundlegung einer Transzendental Historik," in H. M. Baumgartner and J. Rüsen, eds., *Seminar: Geschichte und Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 274-302.

[82] *Diskussion, op. cit.*, p. 106.