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# Barth's "Alternative" Follower: Stanley Hauerwas and the Traditions of 20th-Century North American Theology and Ethics

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**Abstract:** This paper explores Stanley Hauerwas's unique perspective on the traditions of 20th-century North American theology and ethics, particularly his similarity to Karl Barth in viewing theology and ethics as inseparable. Although deeply influenced by Barth, Hauerwas defends this view in the American context in a manner distinct from Barth's theological approach. Additionally, Hauerwas critiques Barth's ecclesiology, which leads him to attempt to transcend some limitations of Barthian theology by developing a theological ethics "system" that emphasizes the practicality of the church.

**Keywords:** Stanley Hauerwas; Karl Barth; Protestant liberalism; theology; Christian ethics; practical theology

## 1. Introduction

Hauerwas describes himself as a Barthian, a declaration that is not made casually (Hauerwas 2010, p. 87). While some scholars disagree with this characterization, a notable example is the perspective developed by Nicholas Healy in his work, *Hauerwas: A (Very) Critical Introduction*. Healy initially expresses sympathy for Hauerwas's encouragement of a shift from solving social ethical issues through abstract principles to focusing on concrete existence, sense of place, and character development. However, his agreement stops there. Healy argues that Hauerwas's theology is ecclesiocentric, substituting discourse about the church for discourse about God. Although Hauerwas rejects the idea of creating a "systematic" theology, in practice, the church serves as the organizational center of Hauerwas's theological network. He terms this as "ecclesism"—a simplistic focus on the church, making it the center and structural place for all theological inquiries. In other words, theology is simplified to ecclesiology, shifting from being about God to being about the church, effectively re-enacting the Protestant liberalism that Barth opposed (Healy 2014, pp. 17, 38, 40, 48–51).<sup>1</sup> Healy points out that, compared to Barth, Hauerwas is closer to Schleiermacher in his approach. Like Schleiermacher, Hauerwas starts with a non-theological description of human collectives, then specifies how Christians differ from others. Both view the church as a community that forms the identity of its members—Schleiermacher through self-awareness and Hauerwas through embodied existence. Both exhibit a trend of turning towards the church, moving away from a primary focus on God (Healy 2014, pp. 42–44, 49–50, 72–73). However, other scholars hold different views, notably Hunsicker in his seminal work, *The Making of Stanley Hauerwas*. Hunsicker provides a detailed argument on Barth's profound influence on Hauerwas, as well as how Hauerwas has transcended Barth in the American context. He addresses what he calls the "Schleiermacher thesis" and "Ritschl thesis", indicating that Barthianism and postliberalism work together without contradiction in Hauerwas, thereby identifying Hauerwas as a Barthian postliberal. Hunsicker's compelling analysis demonstrates the significant influence of Barth on Hauerwas, particularly in their shared rejection of Protestant liberalism (Hunsicker 2019).<sup>2</sup> This paper argues that the influence of Barth on Hauerwas and the fundamental alignment of their spirits are quite evident. Chronologically speaking, although Hauerwas's early works already cited Barth, Barth really assumes a major role in Hauerwas's corpus beginning with



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several key publications at Duke University, such as *Christian Existence Today*, *Against the Nations*, and *With the Grain of the Universe*, the latter emerging from his Gifford Lectures. In *Christian Existence Today*, Hauerwas integrates Barth's rejection of Protestant liberalism with his own descriptions of the Christian community and its enactments, mirroring Barth's *Theological Existence Today* (Hauerwas 1995). In *Against the Nations*, Hauerwas interprets Barth's rejection of Nazism as an example of how theological beliefs translate into moral action. Hauerwas sees Barth's critique of Protestant liberalism as pivotal, enabling him to identify the theological failings of Nazism, where his own teacher, Adolf von Harnack, and other liberal theologians faltered (Hauerwas 1988). In *With the Grain of the Universe*, Hauerwas prefers Barth over Reinhold Niebuhr, yet he also articulates a significant critique of Barth. Hauerwas argues that Barth did not sufficiently focus on the transition from Christian moral agency to the practices of a witnessing church (Hauerwas 2001). Many of Hauerwas's works, including these, display his fundamental alignment with Barth, specifically in their mutual rejection of Protestant liberalism. However, this paper argues that Hauerwas's rejection of Protestant liberalism and its characteristic separation of theology and ethics takes a distinctly different form than Barth's. Hauerwas narrates the story of how American Christian ethics became "American" rather than "Christian", articulating his critique of Protestant liberalism and the separation of theology and ethics. In other words, this represents an American version of Barth's critique of Protestant liberalism, though the spirit is consistent. As Halden Doerge correctly says, "Hauerwas understands his own work to exist along the trajectory of Barth's own work in some significant sense, carrying it in a way that exceeds Barth's own limitations" (McMaken and Congdon 2014, p. 116). Furthermore, this paper will present Hauerwas's more stringent critiques of Barth towards its conclusion, highlighting their nuanced yet significant differences.

## 2. The Narrative of the Separation between Theology and Ethics in North America

Hauerwas's initial narrative describes how Christian ethics in twentieth-century America became more "American" rather than "Christian", a transformation that mirrors the fundamental narrative of Protestant liberalism (Zhao 2016, pp. 15–31).<sup>3</sup> This story begins with Rauschenbusch's *Christianizing the Social Order* and ends with Gustafson's *Can Ethics Be Christian?* (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 64–65).<sup>4</sup> If Protestant liberalism is the story of how humanity replaces God as the subject of theology, then its American manifestation is America replacing the church as the moral-shaping community, Hauerwas's American version of Barth's rejection of Protestant liberalism in the German context. In this process, Barth and Barth-influenced thinkers like Jenson and Yoder greatly inspired Hauerwas.

Rauschenbusch, a leading figure of the Social Gospel movement, sought to bring the sinful America back to God's kingdom (Hauerwas 2000, p. 71). To his contemporaries, Christianity was about saving souls, not societies—the latter being political. But Hauerwas points out that Rauschenbusch opposed this apolitical description of Christianity (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 72, 75, 77; Rauschenbusch 1912, p. 93).

Therefore, Hauerwas notes, including Rauschenbusch, a large group of Protestant pastors felt they had discovered an ancient truth—the essential feature of Christianity is the insistence on the organic unity between religion and morality and theology and ethics (Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 56). For the Social Gospel, Christian ethics was not primarily a development of a reflective discourse pattern, but its purpose was to mobilize the church's energy and power for social renewal (Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 56). There was no clear boundary between his theology and ethics, just as he saw no clear separation between Christianity (the church) and politics (society). However, ironically, the democratic society Rauschenbusch aspired to made his descriptions of Christianity and the church difficult to understand. Especially in his view, there was an important connection between the Christian faith in the kingdom of God and social vision. The subsequent ethics that constantly tried to remedy Rauschenbusch's failure to see that no ethical position follows Christianity confirmed this (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 95, 107).

Reinhold Niebuhr entered the scene with a transformation from an advocate of the Social Gospel to its most powerful critic. His ethics required a realistic acceptance of the inherent sinfulness of human nature, developing an “Christian realism” ethical stance. His realistic ethical stance led him to criticize the Christianized social order. In his view, the good pursued by Christian ethics in the social order was always relative, even a lesser evil, but by no means the complete realization of God’s kingdom. Therefore, his disagreement with Rauschenbusch centered on how these fundamental theological beliefs were translated into the social order (Hunsicker 2019, pp. 32–33). In Hauerwas’s view, although Reinhold Niebuhr criticized liberalism, he never rejected liberalism as a fundamental theological strategy like Barth did (Hauerwas 2001, p. 139; Hunsicker 2019, pp. 34–35). He continued some of the basic habits of Protestant liberalism, such as the separation of theology from ethics and the translation of theological discourse into “common language”.

Compared to his brother, Richard Niebuhr was more focused on the theological dilemmas prompted by the Social Gospel movement. Hauerwas points out, influenced by Richard Niebuhr, Christian ethicists sought philosophical bases for theological claims, highlighting the compatibility of theology and ethics. However, this approach inadvertently turned Christian ethics into a nonhistorical meta-ethics, an outcome Richard Niebuhr did not intend, as he valued theological foundations in ethics. Richard’s Niebuhr’s project sought to explain humanity’s relative existence theologically, with an understanding of finitude in relation to God. Yet, Hauerwas notes that Richard Niebuhr’s theology, constrained by liberalism, limited its view of God, hindering its ability to address human existence’s relativity (Hauerwas and MacIntyre 1983, p. 26; Berkman and Cartwright 2001, pp. 62–63). Richard’s students, to some extent, inherited his task of theologizing Christian ethics, one of the most successful being Ramsey.

Hauerwas points out that in Ramsey’s era, there was no hope of changing the American political system but only to maintain it against the growing tide of relativism and consequentialist moral theories (Hauerwas and MacIntyre 1983, p. 26; Ramsey 1950, p. 100).<sup>5</sup> Ramsey did not find an adequate framework to regulate ethical debates in the works of the Niebuhr brothers and general Protestant thought, so he turned to the Catholic tradition of casuistry. However, influenced by the Niebuhrs, Ramsey could not accept the Catholic assumption of the relative autonomy of natural law and ethics. In his view, Ramsey’s work clearly showed the inherent tension in the development of Christian ethics: on the one hand, a concern for providing theological narratives for moral life, but on the other, downplaying its theological significance for the purpose of public discussion. Ramsey, in a sense, continued the Social Gospel movement (Berkman and Cartwright 2001, pp. 64–66). In his medical ethics, he most clearly articulated the following idea: the covenant love between God and humans serves as the fundamental guiding principle for medical practices such as organ transplants, euthanasia, and informed consent (Ramsey 2002, pp. xiii, xiv, xvii).<sup>6</sup> However, Hauerwas points out that there is no reason to explain why the commitment to duty ethics requires the maintenance of the special theological view of covenant love; this is merely a philosophical issue. Thus, theologians of Ramsey’s era increasingly turned to philosophical sources to help clarify the logic of ethical commitments, making it increasingly difficult to understand the contribution of Christianity to ethics (Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 66).

Therefore, throughout the 1970s, the distinctive nature of theological ethics continued to be expressed not through any unique faith but rather through a series of issues discussed by theologians. Drawing ongoing inspiration from the Social Gospel, theologians remained focused on topics such as social and economic justice, marriage and family, and the status of nation-states—topics that philosophers have historically tended to overlook. But Hauerwas points out that with the publication of Rawls’s works and the rise of journals like *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, theologians even lost this uniqueness (Rawls 1971). The remaining options seemed to be to retreat to confessional stances, analyze methodological issues, or alternatives, which were primarily conducted by Gustafson (Hauerwas and MacIntyre 1983, p. 29; Berkman and Cartwright 2001, pp. 66–67).

Gustafson focused on the internal history and current choices of theological ethics to seek to maintain the vitality of discourse. He turned his attention to the significance of morals, namely character and virtues, as the proper background for assessing the significance of theological discourse on moral actions. His work *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective* expressed his attempt to unify theology and ethics (Gustafson 1981, 1984). Hauerwas points out that Gustafson's work revolves around one question: can ethics be Christian? His view is that since God's purpose is for the welfare of any creature, in most cases, the reasons that justify any moral action will also justify a Christian's moral action, with the only exception being some Christians committed to nonviolent resistance to evil, where the reasons for such responses necessarily rely on some religious reasons beyond what we call morality (Hauerwas and MacIntyre 1983, p. 29; Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 67; Gustafson 1975, p. 163).

Hauerwas's overview of the development of 20th-century American Christian ethics led him to realize that the major theological theme of "how to keep Christian ethics Christian" is the result of the church's historical and sociological position relative to American society. As American society became increasingly secular, Christian ethicists saw that if they wanted to continue playing a political role, they had to transform Christian beliefs into a non-theological vernacular. Apart from being a manifestation of social strategy, there were theological difficulties. The restoration of the ethical significance of theological discourse is part of an internal Protestant theological movement that largely seeks to avoid the assertions of more traditional Christian particularism. Additionally, the success of such a discipline of Christian ethics would only reinforce an assumption: more vigorous theological beliefs have little to no impact on the status quo or what it should be like (Berkman and Cartwright 2001, pp. 68–69).<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Narrative of Rejecting Protestant Liberalism in North America

In Hauerwas's view, what underpins and supports the separation of theology and ethics is Protestant liberalism. Protestant liberalism not only erroneously separates theology from ethics but also makes theology appear more 'fundamental' through a theoretical and applied approach. In the context of North American theology and ethics, Hauerwas's critique of Protestant liberalism has two key allies: Robert Jenson and John Yoder.

Hauerwas points out that Jenson did not do "ethics" because, in his opinion, if Christians obtained God wrong, then their lives would also be wrong. He refused to make theology something like a theoretical "ethics". Thus, for him, correctly discussing God already meant doing "ethics". Jenson's approach to theology propelled Hauerwas's plan to reclaim the theological center of Christian ethics, which, of course, was not Protestant liberalism (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 117–20). Their consistency in the plan came from what they learned from Barth: God matters (Mangina 2004, p. 134).<sup>8</sup>

Hauerwas's way of studying ethics was proper theology, and Jenson's theology was his ethics. Therefore, Hauerwas notes that to narrate Jenson's ethics, one must start from his discourse on God (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 121–22). What Jenson and Hauerwas mean here is just that when Christians have a correct understanding of God, they will realize their creatureliness and rightly handle their relationship with God, thus changing their behavior accordingly. In this sense, there is no distinction between theology and ethics.

Thus, in Hauerwas's view, where Jenson seems to do ethics is just an aspect of his ecclesiology. His ethics being situated in the context of the church does not mean that the Christian way of life must be uniquely theirs but reflects Jenson's belief that ethical reflection depends on a group discovering and choosing its future politically. Jenson's critique of America was severe, as he saw America as not really political. It began with the great hope of political expansion called democracy, leading to a specific modern society, which evolved into the existence of a "new tribe" (Jenson 1999, pp. 79–80; Hauerwas 2000, p. 122).

Hauerwas notes that to understand Jenson's ethics, one needs to recognize that the above quote is not Jenson's understanding of the current state of American politics but

his theological politics (Rasmusson 1994).<sup>9</sup> Jenson believed America's attitude towards abortion clearly showed it was just a "tribe", a society that legally kills unborn children based solely on the pregnant person's decision, abandoning the moral consistency necessary for the judgment of a political form. But the good news is that Christians have an alternative choice—the church. The church is God's politics, committing itself to what Jenson calls "moral consistency" through the practice of commandments. Therefore, the church as a political form has boundaries; when its members' lifestyles do not align with the church's mission requirements from the Holy Spirit, the church must separate from them; otherwise, the church itself is unfaithful, and excommunication becomes the ultimate act of peace. One might say commandments prescribe the conditions for the survival of politics outside the church, while inside, they acquire positive significance as virtues (Jenson 1999, pp. 203–5; Hauerwas 2000, pp. 123–24). Therefore, Hauerwas concludes the following: Jenson's theology and his ethics are inseparable, just as Christians' opposition to abortion is inseparable from their worship of the triune God. Jenson and Hauerwas both see that what Christians learn to say and do is inseparable from their correct naming of God in the church as this politics.

Yoder was another key figure who significantly influenced Hauerwas's critique of American Protestant liberalism. As Wells stated, Yoder was the fundamental watershed in Hauerwas's relationship with Niebuhrian thought. Yoder was not deceived by the mainstream story of 20th-century American Christian ethics; he consistently wrote Christian ethics from the Mennonite tradition, aimed at a church audience that had no particular vested interest in supporting the American liberal democratic society. Hauerwas, alongside Yoder, pursued the authenticity and visibility of the church, not dominated by demands for its eternal relevance, as shown in the "relationship" between theology (or dogmatics) and ethics (Wells 1998, p. 10). Therefore, Yoder was a key figure for Hauerwas in making a decisive turn in the entire story of the development of 20th-century American Christian ethics. Barth played an important role in Yoder and Hauerwas's rejection of Protestant liberalism (Hauerwas 2010, p. 136).

Hauerwas points out that Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* will be seen as a new beginning in retrospect of 20th-century American theology, because before Yoder, the theme of American Christian ethics was always America. Yoder helped him see the (residual) power and (inevitable) end of the Protestant liberal tradition represented by Niebuhr (Hauerwas 2000, p. 129). Yoder opposed their dichotomy between faith and history, the way they dehistoricized Christian faith. Like Barth, Yoder did not read Luke's Gospel with the assumption that Jesus and political ethics were unrelated. This reading of Jesus' politics challenged Niebuhrian depoliticization and the individualistic understanding of redemption. Because the Niebuhrians presupposed the inevitability of coercion and violence in politics (in the name of peace), Yoder perceived in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus a politics of nonviolence. (Yoder 1994, p. 129; Hauerwas 2000, pp. 129–31).

Yoder's emphasis on the politics of Jesus is a reminder to Christians that they have been embedded in a societal practice that assumes Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have no impact. This forces people to choose between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, the individual and society, theology and ethics, and so on. However, Yoder rejects the existence of such choices; in his view, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have already revealed a kind of kingdom politics, to which he invites Christians to share. He has exemplified the way of life of the kingdom, and his victory over death shows the disciples that peace has triumphed over coercion and violence. Therefore, Yoder would see Jesus as the new possibility for human, social, and political relationships (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 132–33).<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. The Similarities and Differences in the Discourses of Hauerwas and Barth

##### 4.1. Eliminating the "And" of Theology and Ethics

Hauerwas prefers to identify as a theologian rather than an ethicist. In his view, ethics is what Christianity is left with after theological convictions have retreated from the public square, inseparable from the work of Kant (Hauerwas 2015, p. 59). He unabashedly

expresses the inseparability of theology and ethics, a division stemming from humanity's abstract conception of God and the divergence from how God reveals Himself, which is precisely the result of the loss of Christian politics—the church. He aims to show that theological convictions need to be embodied in church life; in his words, the “truthfulness of theological claims entails the work they do for the shaping of holy lives” (Hauerwas 2001, pp. 16–17). Hauerwas's belief in the inseparability of theology and ethics and Barth's insistence on the indivisibility of dogmatics and ethics are of the same lineage, their propositions rooted in a shared rejection of Protestant liberal theology.

For Barth, theology and ethics cannot be separated; when people ask about the “relationship” between doctrine and ethics, the problem has already arisen (Barth 1957, p. 518; Hauerwas 2016, p. 21). Hauerwas points out that this is the mistake contemporary Catholics and Protestants or liberals and conservatives make. The task of theologians is not to separate theology and ethics for some limited purposes but to deny their so-called ontological and independent nature (Hauerwas 2016, pp. 22–23). In other words, the “faith” and “actions” of Christians in the church are inseparable. Hauerwas points out that there was once no Christian ethics, and to demonstrate this point, he outlines the historical process of this separation.

Hauerwas points out that Christians shaped by this separation would think there is a “problem” between Paul's discussion of justification in Romans 5:1–11 and his “moral” teachings in chapters 12–14, the former being theology and the latter ethics. Christian ethics, therefore, had the task of providing some explanation for this “problem”. However, he believes Paul would not see a tension between the two because, for Paul, the church is the subject of God's command. Paul believes that God is creating a covenantal community. The church, in its collective life, is called to embody a different order, serving as a sign of God's redemptive purpose in the world. Christians now find it necessary to question the relationship between doctrine and ethics, indicating that Christians live within a set of church practices entirely different from those assumed by Paul. This reminds people that the question of the relationship between doctrine and ethics is not merely about the relationship between “ideas” but rather reflects the ever-changing practices of the church. Moral exhortations are not mainly about individual character but about the church's collective obedience to God. Hence, the problem lies not with Paul but with the current practice of the church (Hauerwas 2016, p. 26). Besides the Bible, the church fathers also did not make this distinction, even though they wrote about specific moral topics. For example, Hauerwas notes, Augustine argued that the fourfold division of pagan virtues can only be correctly understood as forms of love directed towards God (Hauerwas 2016, p. 26; Hunsicker 2019, p. 24). Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* is seen by Hauerwas as better representing the unity of theology and ethics in Christian life. Hauerwas views the structure of the *Summa Theologica* not as an argument for the independence of ethics but as placing the Christian journey towards God directly within the doctrine of God (Hunsicker 2019, p. 29).<sup>11</sup>

He believes the Reformation reshaped the relationship between theology and ethics, marking the beginning of their modern separation (Hauerwas 2016, p. 31). Luther's distinction between the law and the gospel, the two kingdoms, mirrored the distinction between theology and ethics. This meant that the gospel was about who God is and how he saves, a soteriological claim, while actions were about human obedience or disobedience to the law. Christian communities lived a dual life, obeying the gospel spiritually and the law physically (Hunsicker 2019, p. 26). Hauerwas sees Calvin's emphasis on justification by faith producing similar results (Hauerwas 2016, p. 31).

Secondly, Hauerwas believes the Reformation changed the relationship between the church and the world. Before the Reformation, Christians' understanding of life could be expressed in the language of natural law, but natural law was understood as part of divine law mediated by the church. After the Reformation, Christians lost this understanding of the church, no longer seeing it as an indispensable environment for ordering Christian life (Hauerwas 2016, p. 31). Moreover, the Reformation broke the unity of the Christian

kingdom. The named schism of the Reformation overly emphasized the discontinuity between theologians like Luther, Calvin, the practitioners, and Roman Catholic theologians (Wells and Hauerwas 2004, p. 48).<sup>12</sup> The competitive theological claims combined with politics formed violence, and if theology created division and violence, then ethics had to be separated from theology.

This pursuit was named the Enlightenment, with Kant as a typical representative. He distinguished between noumena and phenomena. This distinction also applies to knowledge about God (theology) and knowledge about humanity, which is essentially ethical and experiential (Wells and Hauerwas 2004, p. 4). Since humans could not have definite knowledge of God, Kant turned religious studies towards moral issues, showing how the historical figure Jesus represents the true embodiment of the moral law. In doing so, Kant rescued Christianity from philosophical criticism. This foundation of ethics is reason, not religious belief, his response to the chaos caused by the collapse of the Christian kingdom (Hunsicker 2019, p. 27).

After briefly combing through the history of the “relationship” between theology or dogmatics and ethics, Hauerwas’s insight is as follows: for most of Christian history, Christians did not think they could easily distinguish between what they believe (faith, theology, or dogmatics) and what they do (actions, ethics).

Hauerwas finally returns to Barth, pointing out that for Barth, ethics is theology, elucidating how the word of God in Jesus Christ not only provides its own foundation but also the basis for everything Christians know and do. Barth returned theology to its proper role as the servant of the church proclaiming Jesus Christ, as his *dogmatics* could not attain higher or better knowledge than that of the church proclaiming the God worshipped by Christians as the Trinity. What Barth tried to conduct in his *Church Dogmatics* was nothing more than replace human self-consciousness, conceived as independent of God’s revelation in Christ, with a legitimate concept of ethics. He denies that people can predetermine what should be conducted before God’s command. Barth begins his *dogmatics* with the doctrine of the Trinity because it is from this doctrine that one actually understands who the self-revealing God is, thereby allowing it to be expressed as an interpretation of revelation. For Barth, “ethics” is merely a component of the dogmatic task and cannot be regarded as an independent subject. In doing so, Barth returned theology to its original assumption: there is no “ethics” separate from theology or no ethics outside of theology, especially when theology is understood as the activity of the church (Barth 1960, p. 358; Hauerwas 2016, pp. 36–37).<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.2. Barth on “Ethics as Theology”

If Hauerwas elucidates the inseparability of theology and ethics from the historical perspective of their “relationship”, Barth, in contrast, argues more from within theology itself, particularly through its dialectical nature, that ethics must be theological. As Barth articulated, “Dogmatics itself must be ethics, and ethics can only be dogmatics” (Barth 2009, p. 795). This is primarily because theology expounds on how God’s word in Jesus Christ establishes everything people know and do, thereby necessitating the theologization of ethics. Moreover, theology is not merely an intellectual exercise but involves a way of life; thus, theology must be ethical. Barth demonstrates a form of Christian moral reasoning through his discussion of the Chalcedonian doctrine of anhypostasis and enhypostasis. When Christians understand who Christ is, they understand their own identity, which in turn informs their actions.

Anhypostasis denies the independent existence of Jesus’ humanity, rejecting the view that God assumed a person with a predetermined identity. Enhypostasis, on the other hand, posits that Jesus’ humanity exists within the divine person, indicating that the humanity of Jesus Christ is not a universal essence. Barth explains the following:

God and man are so related in Jesus Christ, that he exists as man so far and only so far as he exists as God, i.e., in the mode of existence of the eternal Word of God. What we thereby express is a doctrine unanimously sponsored by early theology in its entirety, that

of the anhypostasis and enhypostasis of the human nature of Christ. Anhypostasis asserts the negative. Since in virtue of the became, i.e., in virtue of the assumption, Christ's human nature has its existencethe—ancients said, its subsistence—in the existence of God, meaning in the mode of being (hypostasis, “person”) of the Word, it does not possess it in and for itself, in the abstract. Apart from the divine mode of being whose existence it acquires it has none of its own; i.e., apart from its concrete existence in God in the event of the union, it has no existence of its own, it is anhypostatic. Enhypostasis asserts the positive. In virtue of the became, i.e., in virtue of the assumption, the human nature acquires existence (subsistence) in the existence of God, meaning in the mode of being (hypostasis, “person”) of the Word (Barth 2009, p. 163).

Barth argues from the doctrine of anhypostasis that Jesus, conceived by the Virgin Mary, was always the Son of God. The incarnation disrupts history, breaking the continuation of sinful disobedience. From the standpoint of enhypostasis, Barth asserts that Jesus was fully human but existed as a human only in his existence as God. Jesus' humanity is entirely subordinate to his divinity, finding its end and purpose within it. How does this relate to ethics?

We cannot overlook Barth's fundamental premise: if people know who they are and what their ultimate purpose (telos) is, they can know how to act rightly. Barth presents the task of ethics within the context of Christology, noting that ethical issues, i.e., questions about right action, are issues of human existence. The question of whether and to what extent human actions are right is the question of whether and to what extent human existence is right. When theology or dogmatics raises ethical questions, it is actually raising questions about human existence (Barth 2009, p. 793). Jesus exemplifies what human existence or “life” is, as humans recognize their existence as creatures in the natural universe, obedient to God. Humans can only be fully blessed by the miracle of the incarnation as such creatures. Recognizing the identity of humanity as restored by Jesus prevents humans from viewing themselves as Kantian man-gods. Jesus' life of obedience to God's commands defines humanity as an existence of faithful obedience. Humans do not follow an internal law of conscience or reason but follow God's commands, as Jesus did.

In this way, Barth connects the anhypostatic–enhypostatic Christological doctrine with Christian life. The anhypostatic–enhypostatic doctrine defines human identity as God's creatures, a life granted by grace, with Christians existing (moving) within the space of grace. Using a phrase Hauerwas might prefer, Jesus Christ came to humanity as the kingdom of God, and to be redeemed is to enter the kingdom and behave as its citizens. How to act is demonstrated in Jesus' life and teachings, which is particularly evident in Hauerwas's discussion of the Sermon on the Mount (Hauerwas 2016, pp. 60–67).

Therefore, Barth can consider worship as the beginning of ethical behavior. He notes that prayer is an eschatological act realized in the here and now. Prayer is not about fulfilling the Christians' own will but about accomplishing God's will. In other words, Christian action must align with their true relationship with God. In liturgical acts such as prayer, Sabbath observance, and confession, Christians act according to how they were created. Through this, Christians find their ultimate purpose in Christ and realize their true self—responding to their Creator as creatures.

Thus, as Hauerwas might point out, the church does not have a social ethic; the church is a social ethic. Barth also emphasizes that social action is not the entirety of Christian life, and liturgical acts like prayer, Sabbath observance, and confession cannot be simplistically categorized as “theology”. In this way, we see that both Hauerwas and Barth conclude that theology and ethics are inseparable, but they arrive at this conclusion in very different ways.

## 5. Hauerwas's Critique of Barth

Hauerwas, in his Gifford Lectures, did not hesitate to express his admiration and praise for Barth. For Hauerwas, Barth's life and work were a witness, which Niebuhr could not imagine, that Barth really believed theology was about God (Hauerwas 2001, p. 146). However, Hauerwas also recognizes Barth's challenges and presents his own critique.



His criticism of Barth's ecclesiology, though brief, is substantive. Moreover, his critique largely draws on the work of Healy, Hütter, and Mangina, so it is necessary to trace back to Hauerwas's sources for his critique of Barth's ecclesiology (Healy 1994, 2004; Mangina 1999; Hütter 1999).<sup>14</sup>

### 5.1. "No Salvation Outside the Church"

In Hauerwas's view, the core of Mangina's critique is whether Barth is sufficiently catholic. He means Barth's critique and rejection of Protestant liberalism make it difficult for him to acknowledge, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the church becoming a part of God's care for the world. Barth would not deny that the church is constituted by the proclamation of the Gospel, but he could not acknowledge that the church is a component of that proclamation (Barth 1957, p. 160; Hauerwas 2001, pp. 144–45).<sup>15</sup>

Mangina believes Barth's understanding of the church's position in the economy of salvation as "intrinsic and analytic, rather than extrinsic and synthetic" subordinates the church to Christ's prophetic function. This is to say, while humans can do nothing in their justification and sanctification, they are still called to witness Jesus Christ, and the church is the fellowship of those who obey this call. Mangina then analyzes the two moments of Jesus' work of reconciliation: the Judge judged in our place (the narrative history of Jesus culminating in Golgotha) and the resurrected life. He points out that theologians like Moltmann and Sölle have criticized Barth's treatment of resurrection that for Barth, the resurrection strictly speaking adds nothing new to the event of the cross (Moltmann 1993, pp. 230–31; Soulen 1996, pp. 89–94; Sonderegger 1992; Mangina 1999, pp. 274–75). Despite Barth's corresponding discourse on the resurrection, his comprehensive interpretation of the cross may render the post-resurrection history superfluous. The cross, as the decisive end of history, seems to suggest that all important things have already happened so that neither the Holy Spirit nor the church have real roles to play (Mangina 1999, pp. 278–82).<sup>16</sup>

In Hauerwas's view, Barth certainly agrees that the church's task is to witness for Christ, but as he and Mangina both believe, it is unclear how much the church's configuration as a human practice influences the task of witnessing, Barth's understanding of the church vacillating between its essential claim (the body of Christ) and merely incidental and experiential claims (Hauerwas 2001, p. 192; Mangina 1999, p. 278). Hunsicker also points out that Barth confuses the similarities between Protestant liberalism and Catholicism, leading him to reject any sense of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in the church's liturgical practices, resulting in the church becoming an incidental event in the economy of salvation (Hunsicker 2019, pp. 64–65). Therefore, Hauerwas points out, in Barth's view, those aspects of the church are largely irrelevant and devoid of theological significance. However, such an understanding of the church fails to explain why and how the church is necessary for people to understand the world.

As Hauerwas questions, "the world would not necessarily be lost if there were no Church", so then what difference does the church make to how people understand the world and how they must live in it (Barth 1962, p. 826; Hauerwas 2001, p. 193)? Unlike Barth, Hauerwas, from early in his work, is deeply concerned with the practical power of Christian faith, such as the shaping of the church and Christians. He opposes the false universalism and abstract reductionism of modernity, focusing on the possibility of growth in Christian moral life, the importance of Jesus for ethics, and the centrality of the church for Christian faith and theological reflection. He aims to connect Christian language with practice, demonstrating that the moral life of the church is not unrelated to its very existence. Therefore, Hauerwas takes the temporal and historical dimensions of the church seriously. The Christian community is actually participating in the story of Jesus, setting the backdrop for divine action in the church. In fact, according to Mangina, the "Christian story" in Hauerwas's work is not just a formal concept but is based on a clear (though not fully developed) Christological foundation (Mangina 1999, p. 278; Hauerwas 2001, p. 285).<sup>17</sup>

### 5.2. The Practical Specificity of Church Witness

Hauerwas points out that the entire *Church Dogmatics* is Barth's ethics, as Barth rightly saw the truthfulness of Christians' word about God as a question of authentic witness. Due to the ministry of Christianity, God is known in the world, making the existence of Christians as witnesses not only possible but necessary. Even if Christians and the church are often unfaithful, it does not mean their existence is unnecessary; their unfaithfulness also witnesses that God will not give up on creation. Being a Christian, being a member of a finite and prophetic minority, is like being a peculiar person. Their prayers and praises are prophetic, and the ministry of witnessing can be unsettling. Moreover, Christians do not witness as individuals because they are always in the church, and individual witnessing is part of the church's larger witness. The church as a necessary visible witness exists where the Holy Word chooses and calls. Therefore, Hauerwas points out, for Barth, a church can be doctrinally completely orthodox, which is a good thing, but if it lacks faithful witness, it is no longer a church (Hauerwas 2001, pp. 195–99).

So far, Hauerwas and Barth have no fundamental disagreement, both agreeing on the necessity of the church witnessing for God. However, in Hauerwas's view, Barth's problem is that while he thinks the church's task is to witness God's self-revelation, Barth fails to show the church. He turns to Mangina's critique that "it is not clear that the church as a configuration of human practices makes much difference to this task" (Mangina 1999, p. 278; Hauerwas 2001, p. 192). Therefore, Hauerwas intends to show that Barth failed to demonstrate the role of the church in establishing the uniqueness of Christian proclamation about God (knowledge of God or Christian beliefs) and the moral life that results from this proclamation (Hauerwas 2001, pp. 145, 192; McCormack and Anderson 2011, p. 355). Hauerwas lists examples from Barth of the two extremes that Christian responses to the world must exclude: a too negative view of the world leading to monasticism or crusades and a too positive view, simply accepting the world's secularity, damaging the church itself. Barth advocates a "middle way" between these extremes, not simply combining the two extremes to "solve the problem" but maintaining the "freedom to take some steps along any one of the paths if necessary" (Hauerwas 2001, p. 201). Hauerwas points out that Barth intentionally describes the "middle way" as unstable, but instability can lead to either loyalty or disloyalty. Barth's attempt to walk a "middle way" between monasticism and a free embrace of the secular is just another side of his overly cautious description of the church's role in God's economy of salvation. Regarding this middle way, Hauerwas notes that Barth does not specify the material conditions supporting his "middle way" (Hauerwas 2001, p. 202). Hauerwas, using Marshall's arguments, points out that Christians' belief that the world is structured in a particular way depends on "the attractiveness and the habitability of the world they describe" (Marshall 2000, pp. 204–5; Hauerwas 2001, p. 214).

So, what is Hauerwas's explanation of the material conditions or "habitability" that Barth lacks, as Marshall describes? Hauerwas notes that Barth challenged the adaptive presuppositions of Christian theology set for the real world; his intellectual performance is astonishing but just that—an intellectual performance—because in Hauerwas's view, without the witness of Yoder, John Paul II, and Dorothy Day, Barth's achievements would lose their vitality. They represent the revival of church politics, helping people understand why witness is not just what Christians do but central to understanding how Christian witness is real. If their lives were not truly real, Hauerwas believes his argument would be merely idealistic (Hauerwas 2001, pp. 216–17).

In brief, Yoder's work, especially his core writing *The Politics of Jesus*, compels people to recognize that the issue of Christian faith's authenticity is inseparable from the church's witness, and this witness must be nonviolent. The doctrine of God and nonviolence are mutually constitutive, as God chooses nonviolence as his method of redemption, and the foundation for Christians' nonresistance is the character of God revealed by Christ. The link between Christian obedience and ultimate efficacy has been severed because God's victory comes from resurrection, not effective sovereignty or assured survival. Thus, the

relationship between Christian obedience (nonviolence) and the sword of victory in God's cause is not causal but the relationship of the cross and resurrection. Moreover, Christian commitment to nonviolence does not mean withdrawal from the world. As Yoder points out, without the church, there is no world; the church is epistemologically prior to the world. Under Constantinianism's influence, Christians tried to make Christianity necessary, but this led to the church being assimilated by the world and witness no longer being needed. Therefore, when Christians think they must translate the church's language into the dominant language around them for the sake of "proving" Christian faith or for the interest of "responsibility" to society, they are mistaken. Lastly, Hauerwas notes, Yoder's witness directs people's attention to his Anabaptist ancestors and the God who made their lives and deaths possible. Their nonviolent witness is the argument for Yoder's stance; further, their and Yoder's witness is the argument for Hauerwas's stance (Hauerwas 2001, pp. 218–25).<sup>18</sup>

Pope John Paul II renounced Constantinian ambitions. Hauerwas notes that Weigel even describes him as the first "post-Constantinian pope" (Weigel 1999, pp. 295–99; Hauerwas 2001, p. 226).<sup>19</sup> In the opening of his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (The Redeemer of Man), he states that the redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and history. He expresses hope for Christian unity and how such unity among all in Christ is realized through nonviolence. Hauerwas points out that for John Paul II, the church as an agent of truth is an alternative to violence. This is based on the pope's analysis of modernity's pathology, namely that fear characterizes modern life, a culture of death. People fear what they produce, afraid that human creations will turn against them, becoming unimaginable tools of self-destruction.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the pope sees Christian life as inevitably a life of witness, where a witness is always a potential martyr (Hauerwas 2001, pp. 226–29).<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Hauerwas points out that although he has not compared the lives and work of Yoder and John Paul II, they both represent the Christ-centered restoration of church life and witness, inevitably requiring the church to be a witness of peace, an alternative to death controlling world life. The commonality between Yoder and John Paul II goes beyond differences, embodied in their respective authentic lives and that of Dorothy Day.<sup>22</sup> Day's effort was simply to emulate Jesus' life, "practicing the works of mercy daily" (Maurin 1984). Thus, in Hauerwas's view, Day's life's existence shows that the church witnessed by Yoder and John Paul II is not some ideal but an undeniable reality (Hauerwas 2001, p. 230).

## 6. Conclusions

It is now time to address the critiques of Hauerwas presented by Healy and Biggar at the outset of this article. This paper argues that while they accurately recognize the church's pivotal role in Hauerwas's theological discussions, their labeling of his theology as "ecclesism" and as a deviation from Barth significantly exaggerates the issue. Hauerwas occupies a crucial position within the twentieth-century North American tradition of theology and ethics. His works vividly demonstrate Barth's theological influence, especially in the distinction between theological ethics and the fundamental rejection of Protestant liberalism. However, unlike Barth's strong "dialectical" characteristic, Hauerwas starts from the historical "relationship" between theology and ethics in the North American context, defending the inseparability of theology and ethics. From different contexts and in different ways, both theologians show substantial theological consensus. Yet, Hauerwas does not shy away from critiquing Barth. In Hauerwas's view, while Barth certainly agrees that the church's mission is to witness for Christ, it is unclear how much the church as a configuration of human practice influences this mission. Barth's understanding of the church swings between its essential claim (the body of Christ) and merely contingent and experiential assertions. On the other hand, Hauerwas believes that although Barth agrees the church's mission is to witness God's self-revelation, Barth fails to demonstrate the church, lacking a practical concreteness. By showcasing Hauerwas's similarities with and

critiques of Barth in the North American tradition of theology and ethics, this article aims to contribute to the future development of theological ethics.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Apart from Healy, Biggar also criticizes Hauerwas’s work for lacking a sufficient doctrine of God. In 1986, when Hauerwas traveled to the UK to attend the centennial commemoration of Barth’s birth, Biggar, during a conversation with Hauerwas, subtly suggested that Hauerwas was using the church to discuss matters that Barth would have discussed in theological terms related to God (Hauerwas 2016, p. 41).
- <sup>2</sup> Hunsicker references McCormack’s classification framework for Barthian academic research. McCormack points out that Barthians need to have a “real understanding” of Barth’s thought, which he believes requires one to follow Barth’s interpretation as a “critical realist dialectical theologian”. This includes three aspects of Barth’s theology: First, unlike early English interpreters’ understanding of Barth, McCormack insists that Barth’s theology maintained its dialectical nature from his early works to his mature works. Second, Barth’s theological assertion that God is real; that is, God exists beyond the limits of human thought. Third, Kant’s view in *The Critique of Pure Reason* is correct; that is, humans cannot know the true nature of God, because God exists beyond the limits of human knowledge. If there is a “real understanding”, it belongs to the category of “direct influence” as called by McCormack; otherwise, it is “indirect influence”. According to this classification, Hauerwas falls into the category of “indirect influence”, because Hauerwas is a student of Frei and Gustafson, inheriting the neo-orthodox interpretation of Barth, which is the early English world’s interpretation of Barth that McCormack opposes. However, Hunsicker points out that Hauerwas’s early works indeed rely on the neo-orthodox interpretation of Barth, but his understanding of Barth’s theology grows and adapts as the field itself develops. Although Hauerwas may not fit the pattern of a “critical realist dialectical theologian”, McCormack’s category of “indirect influence” clearly cannot fully describe Hauerwas (McCormack 2008, pp. 158–64; Hunsicker 2019, pp. 3–6).
- <sup>3</sup> Zhao Wenjuan briefly reviews the Protestant ethical thought in North America in her book *A Critical Comparison of Stanley Hauerwas’ and T.C. Chao’s Character Ethics*, covering representative figures such as Kant, Troeltsch, Rauschenbusch, the Niebuhr brothers, Ramsey, and Gustafson (Zhao 2016, pp. 15–31).
- <sup>4</sup> Hauerwas originally planned to write a book on the development of American Christian ethics, to present Christian ethics as a convincing way of developing a constructive theological agenda. He aimed to demonstrate through this narrative that ethics can and should be theological. Despite his critical attitude towards the liberal political and theological assumptions that gave rise to Christian ethics, and the various limitations in the development of Christian ethics from Rauschenbusch to Yoder, he regarded it as a set of identifiable skills, worthy of being called a discipline. Moreover, this discipline is inevitably theological, even if the inevitable theology is liberal. However, as Hauerwas reflected on the development of Christian ethics, he came to believe that Christian ethics, as a distinct discipline, was not worthy of transformation. Instead, it presented a problem: the theme of American Christian ethics has always been America, not Christianity (Hauerwas 2000, pp. 64–65).
- <sup>5</sup> Ramsey agrees with some of the basic points of Fletcher’s situational ethics but notes two untested assumptions that warrant attention: first, that Christian love itself does not match the breadth and personal depth implied by rules and second, that love’s “homeland” is only in the reality of the neighbor, in that moment of concern. Unlike the notion that ethics are a product of social evolution or a general assertion of human values, Ramsey contends that Christian ethics (as per the authors of the Bible) are founded in God’s nature and activity. The appreciation of rules is based on the appreciation of the actions themselves, leading Ramsey to reject any teleological or goal-oriented ethics. In his view, God calls people to obey in love, so Christian responses to God’s commands are not determined by isolated situations but are based on traditions of action and belief. Ramsey’s understanding of Christian love is deontological; the motive behind acts of love is not evaluated by the achievements obtained. Christian love is manifested in love for one’s neighbor, not in a general sense towards all humanity, nor in a special sense towards individuals. Thus, Ramsey sees situational ethics as a form of “selfish sociability”, which misunderstands the meaning of selfless love as demonstrated in the New Testament (Ramsey 1950, p. 100).
- <sup>6</sup> In 1969, under the direction of James Gustafson, then head of the Department of Religion at Yale Divinity School, a week-long series of lectures was organized. The lectures brought together researchers from diverse fields including theology, philosophy,

medicine, law, and the clergy, to discuss and debate key ethical issues arising in the context of medical care and research. These lectures, part of the renowned Lyman Beecher Lectures, were delivered by Ramsey. The outcome of this lecture series was the publication of "The Patient as Person". Ramsey introduced a unique Christian perspective into the discussion of medical ethics, centering around the biblical concept of covenant, which for him should also be a criterion of loyalty, faithfully adhered to. Although the theme of the covenant recedes after the first part of "The Patient as Person", it remains a thread throughout the structure of the book. Accompanying this is a value recognition of the sanctity of life and the loyalty obligation to commitment relationships (doctor–patient). In the book, Ramsey also explores issues such as pediatric research, end-of-life care, deceased organ transplantation, human subject research risks, and the allocation of scarce medical resources. These issues, since his research was published, have not only persisted but have continued to expand (Ramsey 2002, pp. xiii, xiv, xvii).

- 7 Hauerwas expressed a similar critique in his article "Christian Ethics in America (and the JRE)" (Hauerwas 1997, pp. 57–76).
- 8 Jenson was deeply influenced by Barth and indeed published several major interpretations of Barth's theology. He creatively utilized key Barthian themes such as eschatology, trinitarianism, criticism of religion, and the order of creation and covenant. However, Mangina points out that one teaching Jenson did not accept is Barth's identification of reconciliation with the very being of Christ, which he considers a primary theological error (Mangina 2004, p. 134).
- 9 In his book *The Church as a Polis*, Rasmusson provides a detailed analysis of "political theology" and "theological politics" (Rasmusson 1994).
- 10 Reinhold Niebuhr criticized Barth's theology as a theology of the tomb, not adequately dealing with each cultural discipline (Niebuhr 1959, pp. 141–96). Similarly, O'Donovan criticized Hauerwas's Christian faith as some kind of return to the tomb (O'Donovan 1996, p. 116). Although they made such assessments for different reasons and may not be entirely objective, such an interesting contrast and similar assessments they draw can further explain why Hauerwas identifies himself as a Barthian. This is not to say that Reinhold Niebuhr's and O'Donovan's critiques of Barth and Hauerwas are entirely accurate, but at least in the degree of "misunderstanding", it also shows some similarities in their thoughts.
- 11 Because it seems that the second part deals with moral issues more specifically and directly, Hauerwas points out that Aquinas deeply drew on Aristotle's description of virtue, believing that even the so-called natural virtues must be shaped by love, if these virtues are to guide Christians towards God (Hauerwas 2016, pp. 20–31).
- 12 Hauerwas also points out that this "unity" often concealed the divisions and diversities that permeated the medieval period. Other global factors also propelled this process, such as the invention of printing (Wells and Hauerwas 2004, p. 48).
- 13 Hauerwas mentions McClendon's three-volume plan, which includes *Ethics*, *Doctrine*, and *Witness*. Hauerwas believes that McClendon does not think that starting with ethics is a delay of the theological task but rather begins with ethics to remind people that theology gains its comprehensibility through the practices of the church. He does not assume that Christian theology can be simplified into ethics but rather seeks to reclaim theology's role in shaping Christian life. Therefore, McClendon's ethics, much like Barth's, requires a discussion of baptism and forgiveness, the cross and resurrection, and also revolves around the lives of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, Bonhoeffer, and Dorothy Day. These lives are shaped by an understanding of Christian doctrine, which in turn shapes the understanding of Christian doctrine (McClendon 1986, 1994, 2000; Hauerwas 2016, pp. 38–39).
- 14 Mangina's view on Barth's understanding of the church is primarily shaped by Hütter and Healy (Mangina 1999, p. 278; Hütter 1999; Healy 1994). Healy describes three rules of Barth's ecclesiology: the creedal rule, the human agency rule, and the Christological primacy rule. These rules collectively influence his choice of "Christ" as the definition of the church. In the Bible, the term "body" primarily refers not to the church as a "social group" but indicates that the church is derived from Christ's own body. When Christ's body was nailed to the cross, the "body" as a human group was just a dead body. It is through the resurrection and the work of the Holy Spirit that the body lives (creedal rule). Only in this way can Christ's body be equated with the Christian community and the invisible reality be equated with the visible human group (human agency rule). In this sense, the metaphor or symbolic meaning of "the church is the body of Christ" can be used. Hiebert notes that Barth's use of this phrase is concerned with avoiding talking about the essence of the church; the church does not "possess" an essence that can be called the body of Christ. The church as a human entity is a concatenation of sinful human activities, but it becomes the body of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit and its relationship with Christ. Thus, the primary reality of the church is its relationship with Christ, and the phrase "the church is the body of Christ" is an expression of this relationship. In this way, Barth can express a very "high" ecclesiology while avoiding ecclesial triumphalism. This line of thought is related to a core element of Barth's agenda, promoting God's freedom and sovereignty, opposing the overly close connection between God and humanity found in Protestant liberalism (Healy 1994, pp. 255–57). Healy points out that the result of this understanding is a strong tendency towards an abstract and simplified ecclesiology. Barth believes that the church can avoid becoming "abstract" only by following the creedal and Christological primacy rules. An abstract ecclesiology, in his sense, focuses only on human institutions and provides a partial and insufficient explanation, as it describes and explains the identity of the church using simplified and non-theological terminology. Barth argues that only theological concepts should be used to describe the true church (Barth 1961, p. 725; Healy 1994, p. 263). While Barth avoids the error of a one-sided sociological description of the church's identity, he commits the error of a one-sided doctrinal description. His ecclesiology is insufficient to satisfy the human agency rule, using abstract categories to describe the reality of the church, making it difficult to describe the church's response to Jesus Christ as a human response (Healy 1994, pp. 263–264).

- 15 However, Hauerwas also points out the complexity of this issue. He notes that Barth explicitly states that “The church is the historical form of the work of the Holy Spirit and therefore the historical form of the faith” (Barth 1957, p. 160; Hauerwas 2001, pp. 144–45).
- 16 Mangina uses Barth’s handling of the apostolicity of the church as a test case. For Barth, the relationship between the church and Christ is not direct but indirect, mediated through the relationship between the apostles and the church. The church finds itself in the “school of the apostles” and through imitating their service to Jesus. Mangina points out the strength of this approach is its adherence to the Reformation principle of “Sola Scriptura”—the testimony of the Scriptures provides those moments of “otherness” relative to the community, enabling the church to fulfill its mission of humble service. However, on the downside, Barth says too little about the church. On one hand, there is Christ’s presence in the apostolic witness and on the other hand, the “Sola Scriptura” rule, which strips the term “Church” of its ordinary referential sense. The church is no longer a perceivable community existing over time, a subject of its own actions, but merely a predicate of divine action. The human community, institutional structures, sacraments, and moral actions referred to as “the Church” are only potentially so. Consequently, it is hard to see how the existence of the church could impact the life of believers in Christ (Mangina 1999, pp. 278–82).
- 17 If Hauerwas had developed his pneumatology and sacramentalism more fully, this Christological foundation would be more complete.
- 18 However, it must be noted that Yoder’s sexual abuse scandal severely undermined the authenticity and nonviolence of Christian living as argued in his works. In his 2017 response to the revelations of Yoder’s misconduct, Hauerwas condemned Yoder’s actions and noted his own lack of clarity in speaking because the abuse was so appalling. He acknowledged that he did not become aware of the extent of the problem until 1992, and he had been overly positive in his descriptions of the disciplinary process. Hauerwas tried to articulate how he believed his own theology differed from Yoder’s: Yoder thought that only a sense of communal belonging could shape a person’s desires, whereas Hauerwas believed that intentional training and discipleship were necessary to shape moral imagination. Belonging alone could not change a person. Beyond this reasoning, Hauerwas suggested that one should read Yoder not to pinpoint the problems but to seek what is missing in Yoder’s work. In defence of “our respectable culture”: Trying to make sense of John Howard Yoder’s sexual abuse, <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/in-defence-of-our-respectable-culture-trying-to-make-sense-of-jo/10095302>, accessed on 11 June 2024.
- 19 Hauerwas clarifies that he is not saying Weigel considers John Paul II to be “post-Constantinian” in the same way as Yoder is “non-Constantinian”. Instead, by understanding Yoder’s epistemological assumptions that form various forms of Constantianism, John Paul II is closer to Yoder and Barth, rather than the theology formed by the intellectual habits of the Constantinian style (Weigel 1999, pp. 295–99; Hauerwas 2001, p. 226).
- 20 For example, consider the development of advanced technologies such as nuclear weapons and genetic editing and the contracts, laws, and ethical restrictions people have established to regulate the use of these technologies.
- 21 Veritatis Splendor, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_06081993\\_veritatis-splendor.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html), accessed on 14 March 2024.
- 22 Dorothy Day was a devout Catholic, a pacifist, and dedicated to charity work. Together with Peter Maurin, she co-founded “The Catholic Worker”, initiating the “Houses of Hospitality” movement, which established communities for the poor. This is known as the “Catholic Worker Movement”. <https://catholicworker.org/house-of-hospitality/>, accessed on 14 March 2024.

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