

generally noticed by analytic philosophers of history: historians cannot do justice to a past apart from the careful consideration of the conceptual system which is foundational to the community life being studied. The modern historian needs to come to grips with the African, Hindu, or medieval Christian conceptualizations beginning with those of time and significance. The modern historian concerned with "civil religion" in America needs to exhibit and explain the particular "mix" of traditional Christian ideas about human history with elements of nationalism, capitalism, and progressivism. The same is true of the dialectical conceptions of time and the special economic criterion of significance which one finds in "Christian" Marxism. It is from *within* the tradition of communities that one encounters the distinctively historical use of these terms. It is in the study of traditions that the historian discovers the special ways in which these two concepts are linked together.

The intellectual historian's attention to conceptual foundations of cultural groups is needed precisely because the temporal relations will not be as clear-cut as my three models might seem to imply. Indeed, it may be risky to speak of the "historical consciousness" of, say, the late middle ages. Only the careful work of the medievalist will reveal the special perception of time and the significance of the period with its mix of Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman traditions and the national and regional practices of different European groups. No claim is made here that all segments of a population articulate their sense of the temporal, and it may well be that several paradigms of interpretation come to light upon careful study. In any case the historian's task calls both for understanding what significance a group attributes to itself *and* offering a comprehensive analysis of the historical justification (if any) for that existing sense of temporal awareness.

If we are to have a theoretical model for encouraging ongoing historical research into communities and their traditions which reflects the *modern* situation it must take into account the radicalness of change in our times. C. T. McIntire calls attention to this in his "Introduction" to *God, History, and Historians*. In his discussion of the renewal of interest in a Christian view of history, he sees the awakening as a "response to the catastrophes of our secular age and the search for an alternative view of human nature and human history."²¹ Langdon Gilkey's *Reaping the Whirlwind*²² puts man's changing sense of historical awareness into a longer context: the break with the Platonic-Medieval notion of changeless forms, the recognition of the changing character of cultures and institutions, the trend toward the secularization of life, and the rise and fall of man's faith in social and technological progress. The net result has been a loss of a sense of meaning in the midst of one's relativity in place and time. Gilkey, like some of the writers in the McIntire volume, tries to reconstruct a viable Christian historical consciousness which takes into account the insights of Augustine and Calvin, the modern contributions of Niebuhr, Tillich and Moltmann, as well as the challenges of modern biblical scholarship and of the process and liberation theologies.

What follows here is a relatively simple outline of some of the important theses which a modern historian might consider in examining a particular