MATTHEW LON WEAVER:
BIOGRAPHY AND PAPER PROPOSAL

Brief Biography:


Paper Proposal: "Paul Tillich on Place, Boundary, and Pedagogy"

I attended a university in which the spiritual centers were at the edge of the main campus, seemingly apart in space and significance. At present, I am a chaplain and ethicist at a private preparatory school in which my classroom is at the heart of the campus. I am embedded in the midst of spaces devoted to the sciences and directly across from the information technology center. All of my students come to class with laptops, and the use of sources and tools accessible only by means of the Internet are a daily part of our classroom experience.

All of this provokes me to propose a paper focusing on how Tillich might have considered this arrangement. His self-awareness as a person and thinker on the boundary, his deep interest in the gifts and curses of technology, and his perpetual practice of cross-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration provide rich resources for pursuing reflections on the arrangements I have described. Perhaps the most accessible starting point for this discussion is his article, “The Decline and the Validity of the Idea of Progress”. There, he concedes the undeniable and continuous expansion of human knowledge. Simultaneously, he asserts that the moral question at each point of human decision always poses the possibility of success and failure. Thus, while we can continually increase the data we gain from observing and examining existence, each gain poses questions of yes and no, right or wrong in both the implications and the use of the newly gained knowledge.

I will assert that Paul Tillich’s standard for negotiating the relationship of spirituality to pedagogy is the insistence that pedagogy evoke the creative power of being of all participants.