

" [A] process theology is not relevant to belief in God, insofar as one understands such belief to be in any case other and more than merely accepting the truth of some kind of theistic belief. It is one thing to accept certain truths *about* God, and in that sense to believe in him; but it is something else again to trust in God *himself* or to live in loyalty to him, and in that sense to believe in him. Because this is so, a process theology is no more able than any other theology to bring about belief in God in this further sense of trusting in and being faithful to God himself" ("Evil and Belief in God: The Distinctive Relevance of a 'Process Theology'": 31).

"Just when one orients oneself to theology's primary source in scripture and to its apostolic norm, it becomes clear beyond any question that Christian faith in God, in its primary sense, is an existential matter of believing *in* God, as distinct from an intellectual matter of believing certain things *about* God.

"It is true that this primary sense of 'faith' is not its only sense—not even in scripture or in the witness of the apostles—and that the distinction . . . between belief in God and belief about God ought never to be construed as implying their separation. Contrary to David Hume, not everything that can be distinguished can be separated, and this is nowhere more obvious, or important, than in this matter of the two senses of 'faith.' To trust in God's love as it is decisively re-presented to us through Jesus Christ, or to be loyal to God's love by loving God and, in God, all whom God loves, is clearly to presuppose that the mysterious whole encompassing our existence really is the God who, quite apart from our own trust and loyalty, loves both us and all our fellow creatures. Consequently, unless these beliefs about God were true—unless strictly ultimate reality really were the God of all-embracing love—there clearly would be no point whatever either in our trusting in God's love or in our being faithful to God. Even so, the inseparability of belief in God from belief about God should in no way obscure the fact that the first is the primary sense of 'faith' in the witness of the apostles, as well as in scripture generally. The justifying faith in God attested by Paul and rediscovered by the Reformers is, first of all, trust in the promise of God's love declared to us through Jesus Christ and loyalty to the cause of God's love that all things be brought to their proper fulfillment, to God's glory (*Faith and Freedom*, rev. ed.: 45 f. [rev]).

"[W]hatever the outcome of arguments for and against belief in God, such belief itself also has its limits in that *belief* in God is one thing; *faith* in God, something else. Certainly, from the standpoint shared by Judaism and Christianity, faith in God is primarily a matter of trusting in God and being loyal to God, as distinct from asserting—even sincerely asserting—God's reality. Faith in God, in a word, is existential; while belief in God as such is merely intellectual. This is why liberation theologians can say quite rightly, however one-sidedly, that according to scripture, to know God is to do justice.

"Of course, to know God through faith necessarily implies the truth of theistic belief, and if such belief were finally to prove false or insupportable, faith in God would be exposed as an inauthentic, because unrealistic response to the way things ultimately are. But this connection between faith and belief cannot be reversed; for one may very well believe in God, and do so ever so honestly or sincerely, even while neither authentically trusting in God as the sole ultimate ground of one's life nor authentically serving God as the sole ultimate cause one is called to serve by doing justice.

"This is no doubt a disturbing reflection to those of us who are seriously concerned with belief in God and who are therefore only too likely to succumb to the existential idolatry of making the rightness of our beliefs an essential part of our basic faith in the ultimate ~~66~~ meaning of life. But I submit that it can also be a profoundly liberating reflection. In becoming aware that the meaning of our life, finally, is not dependent on our having the right beliefs, but only on our continuing to trust and to be faithful, whatever we may be led to believe, we may be sufficiently free from ourselves and for others to really examine our beliefs—to ask, perhaps for the first time, just what they really mean and whether we have sufficient reason to continue to hold them" (*Doing Theology Today*: 107 f.).