

“*Sola experientia facit theologum*” in the Theological Methodology of G. Ebeling

(An abstract)

Christine Lee

Assistant Professor

Graduate School of Religion

Chung Yuan Christian University

Taiwan

G. Ebeling is an important representative of the new Hermeneutic. He founded his theological methodology in the interpretation of M. Luther's writings, the view of “Theology is Sprachschule” of E. Fuchs and R. Bultmann's “existential interpretation” and he accented the roles of life experiences and understanding in the construction of theology, especially dogmatic and systematic theology.

In this paper I survey and discuss Ebeling's methodology. First, he accented the relationship between the matter of theology and the essence of Christian belief, but the universal true validity was also included in his concern. Second, Ebeling asserted that in theology the method of verification to truth and reality was not from positivism, but from the truth and reality of life. Ebeling argued, the fundamental situation of human being is “conscience” (*Gewissen*), to which he hears and responds, and answers. And human being is not alone to be, but always in relation with God, with self and with others as a person. The Word of God, and the interpretation and annunciation of God's

Word should correspond with this fundamental situation. The verification of truth should then be in the conscience.

Ebeling developed his fundamental theology and hermeneutic theology as approaches to deal with the problems above. With these approaches he integrated his research on historic theology, hermeneutic and systematic theology. Then he highlighted that the experience of a theologian was the essential element of his theology. Theology and annunciation should reach the goal of being Word-Event for the hearer.

In conclusion, I believe Ebeling's methodology can offer Sino-theologians, churchmen and seminarians some helpful insights.