

Panel discussion in Chicago

If I myself were an American citizen and a Christian and a theologian, then I would try to elaborate a theology of freedom -- a theology of freedom from, let us say, from any inferiority complex over against good old Europe from whence you all came, or your fathers.



You do not need to have such an inferiority complex. That is what I have learned these weeks. You may also have freedom from a superiority complex, let us say, over against Asia and Africa. That's a complex without reason. Then I may add -- [your theology should also be marked by] freedom from fear of communism, Russia, inevitable nuclear warfare and generally speaking, from all the afore-mentioned principalities and powers. Freedom for which you would stand would be the freedom for -- I like to say a single word -- humanity. Being an American theologian, I would then look at the Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor. I have not seen that lady, except in pictures. Next week I shall see her in person. That lady needs certainly a little or, perhaps, a good bit of demythologization. Nevertheless, maybe she may also be seen and interpreted and understood as a symbol of a true theology, not of liberty, but of freedom. Well, it would be necessarily, a theology of freedom. Of that freedom to which the Son frees us [cf. Jn 8.36], and which as

His gift, is the one real human freedom. My last question for this evening is this: Will such a specific American theology one day arise? I hope so.

Aus: K. Barth, *Gespräche 1964-1968*, hrsg. von E. Busch (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. IV), Zürich 1995, S.489, vgl. S.279.