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Michael Welker

The Future Tasks of Political Theology: On Religion and Politics Beyond Habermas and Ratzinger

Herbert Vorgrimler collected numerous political-theological texts and statements of Karl Rahner, publishing them posthumously in 1986 as *Politische Dimensionen des Christentums: Ausgewählte Texte zu Fragen der Zeit* [Political Dimensions of Christianity: Selected Texts on Contemporary Questions].¹ He documents how Karl Rahner self-critically corrected his theological withdrawal into metaphysics and transcendental philosophy, as well as generalistic perspectives about “the human being,” in order to make more space within his own thought for reflections on a political theology that is socioethically responsible.

Friendly but insistent admonitions by Rahner’s students, especially Johann Baptist Metz, affected this development along with Rahner’s own sense of “the situation,” the spirit of the age, and his keen sense for humanistic values such as tolerance, fairness and justice. Due to his self-correction and the expansion of his thought, Rahner’s voice continues to speak in a plethora of contextual, liberation, and feminist theologies, as well as other theologies that critique society, whether primarily reflecting theologically on memory, practical issues of justice, or eschatology. Through which forms and praxis would a Political Theology of the future be able to make good use of this wealth of insights and experience?

In searching for an answer to this question, we have sought in this book to engage in an important if limited discourse designated by the overarching theme “From Rahner to Ratzinger.” Our goal has been not merely to provide an overview of a series of fascinating inner-Catholic dialogues. Rather, we have been seeking an ecumenical, international, and academic Political Theology of the future that is open to and active in civil society. What should such a Political Theology look like?

The following essay takes as its starting point a critical encounter between Jürgen Habermas and Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, a contrast of positions as provocative as it is instructive for the development of a Political Theology of the future.

The conversation between Habermas and Ratzinger took place January

¹ Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., *Karl Rahner, Politische Dimensionen des Christentums: Ausgewählte Texte zu Fragen der Zeit* (Kösel: München, 1986).

19, 2004 in Munich in the Catholic Academy of Bavaria and its subject was "The Pre-Political Moral Foundations of a Liberal State."² The organizers of the event talked about how "one could hardly imagine two more fascinating dialogue partners to reflect on the basic questions of human existence" (13 and 11). They saw in Ratzinger the "personification of the Catholic faith," and in Habermas "the personification of liberal, individual and secular thought" (12), and in both persons the "prototypes of a decisive dialogue in our day which will shape the future of our own world" (14).

I. Habermas on the "Democratic Process"

Despite these high expectations, the outcome and insights gained from this encounter—published in the form of two lectures—were rather modest. As he had done already in his famous acceptance speech for the peace prize of the German Booksellers in October 2001 in Frankfurt, Habermas offered an updated version of an "Aufhebung of religion" à la Kant and Hegel. Following an approach strongly reminiscent of Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*,³ Habermas argues in this speech that secular society risks cutting itself off from "important resources for creating meaning" if it does not "retain a feeling for the expressive power of religious language."⁴ In keeping with Kant's and Hegel's *Aufhebung* of religious content in both senses—*Aufhebung* as "sublation" but also as "maintenance"—Habermas advised the citizens of the liberal state to consider the religious source of the state's moral foundations so as to recover what he calls "the expressive level of one's own history of origins." He is particularly interested in "sin," "resurrection" and the "imago dei" as concepts whose power to provide moral and political orientation should not be lost.

Like Ratzinger, Habermas warns against a naturalistic-scientistic ideology which seeks to explain and describe everything scientifically, reducing personal and social human existence to nothing more than

²The dialogue was published by Academy director Florian Schuller in German as *Dialektik der Säkularisierung: Über Vernunft und Religion* (Herder: Freiburg, 2005). The English translation was published as *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007). Page numbers (in parentheses) refer to the original German edition. Quotes were translated by the translator of this article. Some of the reflections that follow in this article can also be found within the context of a more detailed analysis and critique in "Habermas und Ratzinger zur Zukunft der Religion," *Evangelische Theologie* 68 (2008), 310-324 and in English as "Habermas and Ratzinger on the Future of Religion," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63/4 (2010), 456-473.

³Immanuel Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, vol. 8, *Werke*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1956).

⁴www.glasnost.de/docs01/011014habermas.html. The following citations come from this speech and were translated by the translator of this article.

natural processes. He calls for such an ideologically "bad philosophy" to be enlightened through philosophical and scientific approaches as well as religious ones. Secularization must be prevented from being "derailed." According to Habermas, this should not lead to the conviction, however, that the liberal secularized state is indeed "dependent on traditions specific to one particular worldview, locality or religion or, at any rate, on collectively-binding ethical traditions" (16).⁵

This recognition this does not presume the existence of a state authority that is to be domesticated by religious or other means. Rather, in the current social reality of the "democratic process" we must pay attention to the "inclusive and discursive process of opinion formation and decision-making" by citizens. This process requires only "weak presuppositions about the normative content of the communicative nature of socio-cultural forms of life" (19). According to Habermas, these weak presuppositions are fulfilled when the following is true about the results of communication about the basic guidelines for life styles: it is expected and demanded that they be rationally acceptable—even to the point that they could constitute constitutional principles. On this basis the legal regulation of state authority, continuously underwritten by loyalty, can occur. A stable power arrangement is thereby in place that does not require any higher "maintaining power" of a religious or other nature.

Habermas sees in modern secular societies a two-class system made up of "citizens of the state who understand themselves as authors of the law," on the one hand, and "citizens of society who are addressees of the law" (22), on the other. The democratic process Habermas has in mind is apparently designed to help the "citizens of society concerned with their own well-being" see themselves more and more as "citizens of the state" and correspondingly behave in a way that is well informed about law and politics and that seeks influence in this sphere. These citizens, conscious of their power as authors of the law, are to strengthen continually the "uniting bond of the democratic process." By competing for the best interpretation of controversial constitutional principles, they are to keep this process alive.

Habermas affirms what he calls a self-critical "politics of memory" and a "constitutional patriotism" which value and constantly reappraise constitutional principles discursively in the contemporary context. Just as Immanuel Kant saw the coming of the kingdom of God on earth in faithful obedience to the categorical imperative, so Jürgen Habermas sees the emergence of an ever-stronger solidarity of "citizens of the state" through a "democratic process" supported by a self-critical politics of memory, constitutional patriotism, the subjection of state power to legal procedures, and rational standards to enforce this con-

⁵Cf. the critical discussion in Judith Butler et al, *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

trol. These "citizens of the state," as self-confident authors of the law, influence these "principles of justice" so that they increasingly reflect the "dense network of ethical orientations in a culture" (25). Yet Habermas remains aware of how profoundly illusory this vision may be and reflects on this danger in a section entitled: "When the social bond breaks . . ." (26).

Above all it is the power of the market and especially the "politically uncontrollable dynamics of the global economy and society" (26) which cause Habermas to fear a "derailment of modernization" and erosion of bourgeois solidarity. In my opinion Habermas described the dangers to the "democratic process," especially from electronic mass media, much more forcefully and more realistically back in 1990 in the lengthy preface to the new edition of his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*⁶ and again in 1992 in *Between Facts and Norms*⁷. He summed up the situation somewhat skeptically in *Between Facts and Norms*:

"The sociology of mass communications certainly conveys a skeptical image of the public sphere of Western democracies dominated by mass media (as reduced to a mere power struggle) ... While many groupings in civil society are indeed sensitive to problems, when they express their concerns, their signals and impulses are generally too weak to catalyze short-term learning processes or redirect political decision-making processes."⁸

In my opinion, in this earlier work Habermas adopts a more down-to-earth and realistic view of the situation, conceding that the associations in civil society (including the "democratic process") are not "the most conspicuous elements of a public sphere dominated by the mass media and major agencies, observed and analyzed by marketing and public opinion research groups, and steeped in public relations, propaganda, and advertising by political parties and organizations."⁹

In his conversation with Ratzinger, Habermas recommends that all citizens of "postsecular society" as well as state constitutional authorities "deal carefully with the cultural wellsprings which feed into the

⁶*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). German original: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990).

⁷*Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996). German original: *Faktizität und Geltung: Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992);

⁸Ibid., 451. Cf. my critique of the already shaky defense against a "colonization of one's political environment" in M. Welker, *Kirche im Pluralismus*, 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 2000), Chapt. 1.

⁹Ibid., 444.

consciousness of norms and the solidarity of all citizens" (32f). Philosophically-articulated and -cultivated forms of religiosity and secular thinking should learn from one another, serving to protect and strengthen social solidarity. This solidarity should be nourished through the democratic process to resist the power of the market and seemingly value-neutral governments. "For the time being," Habermas argues, we should expect "the continued existence of religious communities." They should be so integrated into the processes of civil society that they are instrumental to them. Those citizens of the state who are philosophically, morally, legally and religiously informed should therefore "participate in the effort to translate relevant contributions from a religious mode of expression into a language accessible to the public." (36)

The concept of the communicative processes of civil society which Habermas shares in this historic conversation offers two significant and thought-provoking insights for Political Theology. Habermas insists on a permanent public discourse whose goal is an ongoing process of societal stabilization and change, although he is guided by the standards of the constitution of a state that presents itself as a constitutional and social welfare state. Furthermore, Habermas sees that mere ideas about social change and mere moral appeals are insufficient. Visions of emancipation and liberation as well as moral commitments must be converted into legislation and legal action.

While these impulses should be taken to heart, I believe this concept reflects philosophical wishful thinking. It is hardly a suitable model for a serious Political Theology. For while Habermas exhibits a good sense of which central theological subjects have untapped potential to provide political-moral orientation, he fails to appreciate adequately the religious power in ecclesial and academic institutions and the communicative processes of civil society. The power of church and academy, educational systems and families, media and art to shape religion must all be taken into account. Simply trusting in self-selective elites who have gained public prominence as model citizens of the state and authors of the law leads to an ideal conception of civil society that obscures real power relations.

II. Ratzinger and Trust in Natural Law

While Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger grasps the nature of the problem in a significantly more defensive way than Habermas, his approach also reflects a global breadth that is missing in Habermas's perspective as a philosopher concentrated on Germany and Western democracies. Ratzinger wishes to pose the question of what he calls the "ethical controls on power" (40). From the outset he perceives "legally accountable

forms of restraining and organizing power" (40) as an intercultural problem. For this reason, the important quest for the ethical foundations which "guide the coexistence (of cultures) in the right direction" cannot be entrusted solely to discourse groups within society.

In addition to this global perspective, Ratzinger expresses ethical skepticism. "In the process of cultural encounter and mutual penetration," the traditional, fundamental "ethical certainties have largely disintegrated" and the question of "what is the good, and why one must do it, even to one's own detriment" remains "largely" unanswered (40). The abandonment of tradition, a lack of moral orientation and an unwillingness to make sacrifices all pose grave problems. Like Habermas, he concentrates on the link between moral and legal processes of development. He formulates it succinctly: "Not the law of the strong but the strength of the law must rule." Politics is therefore accorded the task of placing "power under the criterion of the law," making "jointly-shared freedom" possible (42).

At this juncture Ratzinger's and Habermas's approaches come closer together even as they maintain a careful distance. According to Ratzinger, the law must be the "vehicle of justice" and "expression of the common interest shared by all." This militates in favor of democracy "as the most appropriate form of political order" (42 and 43). At the same time, "the tools of democratic decision-making" solve the problems associated with democracy—at least "for now" (42f). The fact that majorities and democratically-elected delegations can be corrupted begs the question whether there are injustices that can never be made right and whether there are inalienable laws no majority is able to abrogate (cf. 43).

Ratzinger sees in modern declarations of rights an attempt to secure the foundations of the law. As an indication of the very diverse levels of acceptance these human rights have been accorded in various cultures in the world, he writes:

the contemporary mindset is certainly satisfied with the inherent obviousness of these values. But even such self-limitation in asking the question has a certain philosophical character. There are inherent values which result from the nature of being human and therefore are inalienable for all those who possess this nature (43f).

Ratzinger's answers to the burning question of where to find "independent values that follow from the nature of being human" sound vague and uncertain. Within the Catholic Church "natural law" has remained "the model for argumentation which the church uses in discussions with secular society and other faith communities to appeal to common reason and in the search for a foundation of agreement on the ethical principles of the law in a secular, pluralistic society" (50). He observes with some regret, however, that "this tool has lost its ef-

fectiveness unfortunately" (50). He calls for the retrieval of those values and norms "inherent to human existence"¹⁰ which cannot be considered mere inventions. He calls on philosophy and a Christian theology of creation to join in the search for sustainable foundations for natural law inherent to human existence, and he challenges the other major religious traditions of the world to take part in this project. He envisions a "polyphonous correlation" in which the various major religions would achieve constructive and peaceful relationships with secular rationality and in this way engage in mutual dialogue. In this event the fundamentals of natural law would be recognizable in a new way so that the "essential values and norms which are known or sensed by all people could attain a new luminosity" (58).

It is striking that Ratzinger's universal concept is even more heavily reliant on philosophical wishful thinking than that of Habermas. Aside from the metaphysical presupposition of a theologically-viable natural law—which is problematic and calls for critical discussion—this concept is also theologically empty. If one does not count his grim assumptions about widespread relativism and moral decline as a social-analytical contribution, then one must realistically ascertain that a serious diagnosis is also largely absent. He barely articulates the substantial cultural, societal, and political differences associated with the major religions. Speculative wishful thinking about natural law suggests a power to connect and integrate which does not remotely correspond to the real circumstances. While global perspectives are intended, they are not realistically developed in even a rudimentary way.

III. What must a Political Theology of the future accomplish?

Aside from specific contextual analyses for crisis and conflict situations, a Political Theology of the future must develop the ability to perceive matters theologically and pneumatologically, and it must combine this perception with a desire to engage in social analysis. In developing an empirical interest in pneumatological theology and social analysis, the brilliant dissertation of the young Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Sanctorum Communio* can provide a model for the first stage of analysis. It develops a high level of social-theoretical awareness.¹¹

Bonhoeffer sees that our perception and discourse about "the human,"

¹⁰ For more on this, see the critical examination by Klaus Tanner in this volume.

¹¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: Eine dogmatische Untersuchung zur Soziologie der Kirche*, DBW Vol. I (Kaiser: München 1986). English edition: *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, vol. 1, Works (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, MN, 2009). Cf. Michael Welker, *Theological Profile: Schleiermacher—Barth—Bonhoeffer—Moltmann* (Frankfurt: Edition Chrismon, 2009).

the person and the individual, as well as our discourse about community, society, and the public are rife with presuppositions. The perception of the individual human being and social conditions interact with visions of "humanity" and all the visible and hidden value systems with which we associate them. Yet it is not only our perceptions of the human being and humanity that are mutually shaping one another, but also the ways we think about I-You relationships and the ethos of personal encounters. How we understand both normal and ideal social relationships interacts with our concepts of the individual human being and humanity as a whole. Beyond this we must distinguish between fixed institutionalized relationships and fluid social ones. In this case, various interconnections come into play in our concepts of normality and development related to when we speak of the individual, humanity, or intimate relationships. Ultimately, our images and concepts of God are normatively interconnected within this complex social network in manifold ways.

Bonhoeffer considers several basic social constellations,¹² in which each of the following elements is considered in terms of their multifaceted interdependencies:

- the self-relation of the human being,
- the interpersonal I-You relationship,
- relationships to complex fixed and fluid forms of sociality,
- and the relationship to God.

The understanding of the person, the concept of God, the elementary one-on-one personal relationship and complex social relations—fixed and fluid—all exist in manifold non-arbitrary correlations to one another. Instead of an abstract relationship between God's relationship to me, we need to grasp the correlations between God's relationship to my fellow human beings and the relationship between me, my fellow human beings and to the broader social environment. Moreover we need to grasp finally the human reference to God. Yet even these correlations do not tell the whole story.

Bonhoeffer first distinguishes between four major non-theological constellations which organize this complex pattern of correlations conceptually. He distinguishes between four constellations from history and intellectual history (Aristotle, the Stoics, Epicurus, and European philosophers of modernity, especially Descartes and Kant) in which the interdependencies between the concept of God, the concept of the person, the "I-You" relationship, and the concept of community can be understood differently: This prompts him to consider various schemata

¹² Cf. *Sanctorum Communio*, 19.

of complex social relationships including their religious components,¹³ guided by studies of the history of philosophy. Only after this does he develop specifically theological figures of human sociality under the headings "the humankind of Adam" and "the humankind of Christ."¹⁴

1) A Political Theology of the future must practice and help practice such social-theoretical awareness as the first step of political-theoretical reasoning. It must be relentlessly clear that purely dialogistic models (I and the Other) are useless in general for grasping complex social relations. In the same way it is inadequate to apply family models to conceive of political or even global relations.¹⁵ There is only limited potential to intellectual approaches obsessed with "the individual and society," "subject and society" and abstract relationships such as "God and the human being" and "God and the world," to name just the most primitive examples. Guided by a broader social-theoretical awareness, a Political Theology of the future must attempt to develop socioanalytical honesty.

One's close circle of friends and interest groups, the local church parish, the academic community, and the public spheres of the regional and international media represent only small cross-sections of the societies in which we live. A Political Theology which seeks to understand social and political processes of development theologically and wishes to initiate and assist in guiding these processes must be able to comprehend and interpret individual societal contexts including the particular institutional—as well as social and moral—power dynamics which surround them. It must make clear that efforts for "neutral observation" are also guided by naïve interests or even apparent or latent ideologies. And it must attempt to uncover and differentiate between these power interests and incorporate them within a theological interpretative framework.

2) When engaging in socioanalytical studies, we cannot simply apply the organizational forms of the pluralistic societies in which Europeans and North Americans live today to all other societies on earth in past and present.¹⁶ Pluralistic societies require a multi-systemic approach which first calls for a self-critical positioning of Political Theology in the church, in the academy, and in civil society.¹⁷ Almost thirty years ago David Tracy provided the impetus for such subtle observations.¹⁸

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 20ff.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 69; Cf. 36, 69ff, 74ff.

¹⁵ See the essay by Klaus Tanner on Benedict XVI in this volume.

¹⁶ Jürgen Moltmann has made this argument repeatedly and emphatically. See also his essay in this volume.

¹⁷ See the instructive text by Chantal Mouffée, *Über das Politische: Wider die kosmopolitische Illusion*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007).

¹⁸ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture*

Unfortunately, he did not capture the full spectrum of societal systems with “the church,” “the academy” and “civil society” and he failed to engage in a serious further development of this analytical approach. The analysis of the pluralistic situation became too diffuse in *Plurality and Ambiguity*. The complex interplay and conflicts between systemic organizations and social institutions and the associations of a civil society have not been adequately appreciated in most approaches to a pluralistic Political Theology.¹⁹

Most approaches to Political Theology are oriented towards local parishes and civil societies, if they develop any true awareness of contexts at all. They generally hope to inspire further analysis in the areas of the media, academy, church politics, and politics in general. The interdependencies of politics and law, politics and the economy, and politics and the power of the media are grasped only vaguely at best. For this reason many contributions to Political Theology remain stuck in the medium of describing problems and making moral appeals and laments.

But a lack of social-theoretical awareness and a want of socioanalytical potential are closely related to problems finding topical theological orientation.

3) A Political Theology of the future must develop a social-theoretical awareness and socioanalytical diagnostics in the context of its theological-pneumatological observations. A genuinely pneumatological orientation requires that every discourse about “the human being” and “humanity” be continually differentiated. The Holy Spirit aims at a differentiated unity of humanity in which differences that are unjust and detrimental to life are overcome, while creative differences are retained and cultivated. God’s Spirit is poured out on men and women, young and old, the privileged and the disadvantaged, yes, even the oppressed, as expressed in the biblical promises.²⁰ Sexist, ageist and social conflicts—and the potential for conflict—thus come into view. Ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences are not simply eliminated through the activity of the Spirit, but rather they are integrated into complex communicative interactions

In this way, the power of the Spirit not only stabilizes the differentiated contexts of shared human life. The biblical traditions also provide numerous images in which both stability and dynamics are connected in the power of the Spirit. Speaking about the “Body of Christ” with its various gifts and charismas definitely has the potential to guide social

of *Pluralism* (Crossroad: New York, 1981), esp. 3ff.

¹⁹ For more, see Michael Welker, *Kirche im Pluralismus* 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2000).

²⁰ See Joel 3 and Acts 2; see M. Welker, *Gottes Geist: Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, 4th ed. (Neukirchener, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2010). Available in English as *God the Spirit* (Augsburg Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2004).

communicative processes. It stands in tension with stratified, mono-hierarchical, patriarchal structures in many societies and churches and thus also develops highly topical political dynamics. Yet a pneumatological orientation does not simply offer idealized images of harmony and successful interdependence. There remain manifold tensions between the “Spirit of justice, of truth and of love” and real circumstances in which people are marginalized, repressed, and disenfranchised in glaringly awful and brutal ways but also in more latent forms.²¹ The Spirit compels us then to prophetic and diaconal resistance in societal, social, and cultural conflict situations.

A Political Theology must name such specific conflict situations and grasp them with social-theoretical awareness and socioanalytical honesty. It will run up against numerous processes that are negative and detrimental to life which stabilize dishonesty and injustice, including opposition and violence.²² This pneumatological orientation brings into focus nothing less than the intense confrontation between the kingdom of God and the Spirit of God, on the one hand, and the human being who has been seized by the power of sin, on the other.²³ Again and again Political Theology must perceive the powerlessness and the limits of moral and legal power.

As a doctoral student of Metz and Rahner and inspired by Ernst Bloch, Francis Fiorenza pursued the question of why fascism was more successful than communism in Germany in the 1920s.²⁴ One answer was that fascism was closer to bourgeois society with its moral values and ideologies. Political Theology, according to Fiorenza, should analyze and appreciate the value system and power structures of modern bourgeois society in all its ambivalences. Such concrete examinations of politics with its symbols and power are indispensable for a Political Theology. They cannot cease even when positive political resonance, successful legislation, legal action or even perfect religious and moral organization have been achieved.

A Political Theology of the future will not be able to avoid a permanent conflict which critiques society, culture, religions and ideologies—even in the face of seemingly optimized and successful

²¹ See especially the essay by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in this volume.

²² For a contemporary consideration of this problem, cf. Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), and also the essay by Francis Schüssler Fiorenza in this volume.

²³ Cf. Sigrd Brandt, ed., *Sünde: Ein unverständlich gewordenes Thema* (Neukirchener, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997).

²⁴ For more, see Francis Fiorenza, “Politische Theologie und liberale Gerechtigkeits-Konzeptionen,” in Edward Schillebeeckx, ed., *Mystik und Politik: Theologie im Ringen um Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Festschrift für Johann Baptist Metz (Grünewald: Mainz, 1988), 105ff.

political and religious achievements. According to insights from both New and Old Testaments, even the good Law is still subject to the power of sin. The powerlessness of the law due to the forces indicated biblically with the code word "sin" is opposed to the creative power of the divine Spirit. The Spirit releases prophetic, diaconal, liturgical and spiritual powers that transform, renew and elevate not just individual people and interpersonal relationships, but also social, societal, ecclesial, and political forms of life.

A Political Theology of the future will be a pneumatologically-oriented theology which makes honest use of social analysis and develops a critical awareness through social theory. It will make use of these orienting frameworks and impulses in concrete contextual experiences of oppression and suffering as well as in the flourishing of life, and in concrete prophetic and practical partisanship.