EDITORS
Len Hansen • Nico Koopman • Robert Vosloo

Living Theology

Essays presented to Dirk J. Smit on his sixtieth birthday

BM
BIBLE MEDIA

Living Theology
Essays presented to Dirk J. Smit on his sixtieth birthday
Len Hansen, Nico Koopman, Robert Vosloo
(Editors)

Designed and set in 11 pt on 14 pt ITC Clearface Std
by Danny Fourie and Natascha Olivier

Cover designed by Natascha Olivier

Cover photograph taken by Dave Swager
and used with courtesy of
Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA.

Printed and bound by
MegaDigital
6 Koets Street
Tygerberg Business Park
Parow
7500

First edition, first print 2011

ISBN (This hard copy): 978 0 86487 551 8
ISBN (E-book): 978 0 86487 550 1

Table of contents

Marsh, C. 1997. Did you say "Grace"? Eating in Community in Babette's Feast. In Marsh. C. and Ortiz, G. (eds.), *Explorations in Theology and Film. Movies and Meaning.* Oxford: Blackwell, 207-218.
Ohlig, K.-H. 1986. *Fundamentalchristologie. Im Spannungsfeld von Christentum und Kultur.* München: Kösel.
Reinhartz, A. 2007. *Jesus of Hollywood.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Reinhartz, A. 2009. Jesus and Christ-figures. In Lyden, J. (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film.* London/New York, NY: Routledge, 420-439.
Schuler, J. 1997. Kierkegaard at Babette's Feast. *Journal of Religion and Film* 1(2) (1-14) (digital version).
Solano, J. 2004. Blessed Broken Bodies: Exploring Redemption in "Central Station" and "Breaking the Waves". *Journal of Religion and Film* 8(1) (1-19) (digital version).
Schwarz, H. 2005. *Theology in a Global Context. The Last Two Hundred Years.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
Thiselton, A. C. 1992. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics. The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading.* London: HarperCollins.
Von Trier, L. 1997. Breaking the Waves: Hintergrund. *Microsoft Internet Explorer* (21/1/97), 1-7.
Wright, W. M. 1997. Babette's Feast: A Religious Film. *Journal of religion and Film* 1(2) (1-28) (digital version).

"Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom!"

***Michael Welker*[1]**

CHAPTER 6

Over the last five years, many of our international and interdisciplinary research projects have examined the topics of "freedom" and the "Spirit". These projects have run over many years, and their results will be published in book form in 2011/2012. Three of these projects were:

- Concepts and Practices of *Freedom* in Biblical Traditions and Contemporary Contexts.
- The *Spirit* in Creation and New Creation: The Science and Theology Dialogue in Orthodox and Western Realms.
- Flesh, Body, Mind, Soul, *Spirit:* Science and Theology on Anthropology.

In all three projects, the ingeniousness of Paul's thinking has led us toward new insights and opened up new pathways for discussion. Therefore, it would be particularly helpful to focus here on Paul's general understanding of the connection between the Spirit and freedom, and especially his observation in 2 Corinthians 3:17.[2] In the following remarks, I will begin by examining the results of and problems in the current discussion on freedom, taking as my lead a very informative essay by Wolfgang Huber, Verantwortete Freiheit

1 Professor Michael Welker is Chairperson of Systematic Theology in the Theological Faculty of the University of Heidelberg, member of the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters and Director of the Research Center for International and Interdisciplinary Theology (FIIT Heidelberg).

2 "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

als Lebensform (Responsible Freedom as a Form of Life) (2010). I will then consider, from a Pauline perspective, the power of the human spirit and the question of the Spirit of God. Finally, the third section will ask how we can recognise the Spirit of God and the freedom that the Spirit effects, and offer an answer to these questions based on Christology and on theology of the law.

RESULTS OF AND PROBLEMS IN CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSIONS ON FREEDOM

In his essay Verantwortete Freiheit als Lebensform, Wolfgang Huber (2010:319f.) noted that the last three decades have been marked primarily by the debate between liberalism and communitarianism. At the centre of the discussion we found the decisive question: Freedom or community? – and a (readily expected) search for all possible compromises and syntheses. "Not only 'freedom from', but also 'freedom to' and 'freedom for'" had become the standard slogans of the debate. Up for consideration were, on the one hand, self-determination, freedom of action and "self-causality", with the limitation of our spheres of freedom, on the other (2010:321ff.). Concerted efforts were made to distinguish between the true spirits of liberation in justice-oriented struggles, and deceptive, and indeed often dissembling and deceitful activities performed in its name. And, of course, theology continually expressed the insight that, at least with respect to issues of healing and salvation, freedom is always a gift granted by God (2010:328ff.).

Discussions about dignity attempted to illuminate the foundations and scope of human and creaturely freedom. In reflections on responsibility, law and love, attempts were made to shape and direct the use of freedom into life-promoting forms. In all these attempts, we stood up bravely against naturalistic and scientistic ideologies, which – given the supposedly indisputable insight that all human desires and actions are naturally determined – sought to abandon thought about freedom, or toss the quest for freedom onto the scrapheap of history (2010:337).

All these forms (so aptly identified and discussed by Huber) represent the standards of the contemporary discourse. For millennia – or more precisely: at least since the time of Aristotle and the Stoa – this discourse, and many others on freedom throughout Western history, were often latently characterised by an understanding of freedom and the spirit which focussed on the cognitively-steered self-referentiality of persons, societies and cultures. Spirit and freedom became tangible and effective in self-determinative thought. In the famous Book XII of his *Metaphysics,* Aristotle defines the spirit as the driving force that thinks

itself, insofar as it participates in what is thought, and becomes part of it (cf. Aristotle 1935:XII 1072b, esp. 19-32; Welker 1992b:283ff.). The spirit is the power that does not lose itself in relationships with the other, but rather receives and maintains itself in the thinking relationship. Our understanding of the world and our understanding of ourselves are mediated through the spirit. The quality of all thought and understanding comes from the heightening of self-understanding together with a simultaneous recognition and understanding of external reality. Aristotle connects this spiritual activity with self-actualisation, freedom, and one's own well-being. He even calls it "divine". For it is the perfect actualisation of all knowledge about all reality, together with absolute self-knowledge, that characterises divinity. The best and eternal life comes to it, and it does so in perfect freedom (Aristotle 1935:XII, 1072b, 19-32).

Particularly impressive in this view is that self-actualising thought must be divided by itself from itself; it must wrestle itself free from itself, being forced to release itself in order for it to be actualised and be made known to itself. The most creative philosophical thinkers have worked on this dialectic. Hegel saw here the opportunity to locate philosophically the trinitarian self-differentiation of God, and even the central importance of the cross of Christ.

This brilliant philosophical theory of the spirit and its correlated view of freedom have been incredibly influential in Western cultural history. They have provided us with an often extremely individualistic and intellectual understanding of freedom based in theoretical subjectivism. It is impossible to hold this great achievement in too high regard, and we should by no means denounce it – even though I want to deal now with its problems and limitations. Specifically, this brilliant philosophical theory of the spirit and its correlated view of freedom have blocked our path to a biblically-oriented doctrine of the Spirit of God and an understanding of freedom as mediated by that Spirit. They played a part in ensuring that the Holy Spirit remained for centuries "the stepchild of the Trinity" (as one book title expressed it), and that the development of modern, free, pluralistic societies, pluralistic academic systems and pluralistic ecumenics would generally overburden and overwhelm theological and philosophical levels of reflection (Welker 1999, 2008a).

Greek political thought further developed the theory of freedom by connecting the intellectual freedom of ideas with forms of oligarchic equality in the public sphere. The freedom to speak in public assemblies (*parrhesia*), the equal right to express oneself publicly (*isegoria*), equality before the law (*isonomia*) and equal entitlements with regard to exercising political leadership (*isokratia*), were all important elements in the empowerment of free men, both individually and communally, and in the direction of their paths through society (*eleutheria*)

(cf. Lampe 2012; Gertz 2012; Van Oorschot 2012, all forthcoming). Today, when we study Jürgen Habermas's description of the so-called democratic process (Habermas and Ratzinger 2005), we must ask ourselves whether philosophical thought on the concept of freedom has really made any significant advances over the last two thousand years.

According to Habermas, members of society (*Gesellschaftsbürger*) – who are the recipients and beneficiaries of civil rights and liberties, and who stand as the addressees of the law – should qualify and understand themselves as citizens of the state (*Staatsbürger*) and as the "authors of the law" (Habermas and Ratzinger 2005:18ff.). Habermas presents us with a vision of a "democratic process" in which more and more members of society become citizens of the state, citizens who consciously understand themselves as tasked with authoring the laws via civil societal discursive and institutionally legal means, to secure increasingly better and clearer principles of justice within the interwoven network of a society's cultural value orientations. Here we see the propagation of an elitism within civil society: one which establishes an essentially appellative-moral relationship to the power structures of pluralistic societies, with their systemic political, media-based, economic, legal, academic, educational and even religious forms of organisation.

In this situation, what can genuine theological thought about the Spirit and about the freedom that comes from the Spirit contribute? The following comments will concentrate first on the human spirit, and on a biblically-oriented relativisation of what is essentially a self-reflective, intellectual understanding of the spirit. Though I will not offer a detailed discussion of Paul's thinking here, my comments are significantly shaped by his anthropology and by his distinction between the human and divine spirits (cf. Welker 2010a).

THE POWER OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND THE PASSIONATE SEARCH FOR GOD'S SPIRIT

General talk of the "spirit" is highly ambiguous. The English word "spirit" (as with its German counterpart *Geist*) covers a broad range of meanings: it can be linked, for example, with an individual's character or personality ("Goethe was a leading spirit"), or can refer to ghostly apparitions ("He saw a ghostly spirit and we feared for his sanity"). Yet to this day the word "spirit" continues primarily to designate an authority, medium or power that unites and orients the thought, behaviour and activity of a particular group, institution, society, culture, or even epoch ("This school is filled with a good spirit"; or indeed the

adoption into English of the German word *Zeitgeist*: the "spirit of the age"). How can we navigate these understandings and introduce some clarity into this opaque discussion of the spirit?

To gain some insight into the human spirit, it may be helpful to begin with the undisputed mental (*geistig*) abilities that are often assumed to be very simple but are in reality fascinating mental and cognitive operations. Even the supposedly trivial ability "to internalise objects from the external world" (as classical philosophical theories would see it) have been attributed to the human mind or spirit. This so-called internalisation of external objects is an incredibly complex activity. While it encompasses self-referential rational thought, it also extends far beyond it. Not only a single object or a complex of objects, but even an entire environment together with its diverse signals and atmosphere can be hosted within human memory and imagination. Concrete circumstances and entire networks of natural events and experiences are "spiritualised" and transformed into a mental state. They exist now not only in the physical world but also as a mental representation (as classical theories would call it) within an individual's memory and imagination. These mental reproductions can then be altered or combined in a great variety of ways. But these operations can also be highly deficient, lacking in focus, fleeting, accompanied by irritations and tainted by self-deceptions. They remain then, as we say, "far removed from reality". These mental combinations and variations can lose touch with reality, often to their own detriment. Mental impressions can also become distressing, traumatising, or obsessive, hindering and obstructing the normal processes of life and experience, and even undermining mental health. In these cases the mental sphere draws negative associations. Mental impressions are unable to absorb and contain the entirety of malleable, solid, natural reality, and instead break away into unhealthy, even torturous apparitions.

In all, these limitations and borderline cases of the mental sphere should not lower our appreciation for the incredible wealth, cultural solidity, creative power and manifold blessings of mental capabilities and of the human spirit in general. Let us look first at the multidimensionality of these mental abilities. Human beings are able not only to host objects, complex networks of items and events in memory and imagination, but also to release these contents into latent memory, storing and protecting them, and then recalling them at later times. These contents can be varied and recombined with other memories in an almost infinite number of ways. In our own memories and imaginations, we rule over an incredible mental realm. These "spiritualised" realities contribute to our individual and communal entertainment as well as edification. They aid our powers of persuasion and imagination, and serve in our search for sound

knowledge and orientation. An entire ocean, indeed a whole world of seeming mental images and films, are hosted within our memories and imaginations. Not only optical representations, but also acoustic-linguistic impressions are stored and ordered in our minds in all their richness and, in various ways, they are linked, contrasted and placed into association with this world of mentally visible images, and even entire series of images. Scents, sounds and melodies, and even mentally-transposed tactile impressions all animate and enrich this "spiritual" world. And, connected with them are lasting impressions and powerful emotions.

A rich interplay of these objects and elements of the spirit, as well as a positive selection and limitation of these elements, is vitally important. Both determine the quality, power and extent of "the human spirit". As we process our experiences, and in our imaginative power, religious rituals, literature, fine arts and music, we demonstrate the power of the spirit. The construction of abstract symbol systems and our work with symbols in fields such as mathematics, formal logic, and analytical thought have helped us to discover in the natural and mental worlds principles, rules and correlations of order that not only allow us to sensibly order the richness of these mental impressions, but also to unleash astonishing powers that enable us to control the world. These cognitive potentials allow human beings to reconstruct highly complex past situations, even entire global states of affairs and to precisely imagine future events and their subsequent interconnections. They also allow us to communicate over vast distances and to transfer and share not only information, thoughts and narratives, but even complex impressions and infectious emotions. We can co-ordinate extraordinarily multi-facetted memories and expectations, and thereby bring about the orienting and organisational power of a communal, spiritual world.

In all these processes, the human spirit is corporally, bodily bound. It encounters us in individual human bodies. And, it pushes toward the formation of a remembered and imagined cultural world, as well as one that is materially shared. People feel, remember, imagine, think and communicate with complexly structured bodies that cannot simply be reduced to a genome or brain (cf. Welker 2004, 2006, 2012).[3] They form an abundance of demanding, mental-material, cultural achievements and use them to intensify and accelerate their processes of communication and production.

This simple sketch of our mental (*geistige*) capabilities is almost cause enough for us to sing praises of the powers of the human spirit. And yet we must

3 See also the illuminating documentation and creative further development of the interdisciplinary discourse about the (bodily) articulate human person by Matthias Jung, *Der bewusste Ausdruck: Anthropologie der Artikulation* (2009).

be acutely wary of any untempered glorification of the spirit. When we come to examine the phenomena of the spirit, we must take into account not only psychotic phenomena but also the many possibilities to use mental communication (both consciously and unconsciously) to the severe detriment of humanity, culture and nature. We are not dealing here only with the continual global distribution and communication of helpful and wholesome abstractions and reductions, but must rather also face entire streams of trivialising and banalising ideas, thoughts and emotionalisations which have been mentally exported and have now become ingrained in our communications and cultures. Fanaticising, brutalising and destructive dispositions and views are placed into circulation via the power of this same spirit (*Geist*) and gain incredibly binding social and political power. Over long periods of time, brutal mentalities spread, subtly and insidiously destroying and impoverishing everything around them.[4]

Countless appearances of the spirit are highly ambiguous and ambivalent – just as Paul Tillich suggested (cf. Tillich 1963). Monistic, dualised and dualistic forms of thought can, for example, successfully tame complex thoughts and ideas that span cultures. Rapid and dependable communication is made possible by these simplified mental forms ("I and thou", "God and the world", "friend or foe", "winner or loser", "freedom or dependence", et cetera.). Yet, at the same time, these successful mental reductions can also lead to acute deformations of thought and experience, and can distance us from the richness of real life and our possibilities to shape that life. When tied up with the production of strong emotions, such reductionist thought can blind people and entire societies, cultures and epochs in incredibly dangerous ways and can commit them to naive ideologies and understandings of the world. An "evil spirit" then begins to rule the people, and uses many of those great and praiseworthy mental abilities to destroy and corrupt the conditions of human and creaturely life. Thus simply from the outset associating the spiritual (*das Geistige*) world with goodness, the promotion of life, freedom or even the divine is dangerously negligent.[5]

These observations on the *deep ambivalence of the power of the spirit* have shown us that we cannot automatically associate our mental powers or their binding force with freedom. Using a critical and nuanced approach, we must try to understand the ways in which the human spirit and the divine Spirit relate

4 The poisoning of entire societies and epochs by racism and sexism, by deep imperialistic and colonialist dispositions and the use of force has become frighteningly clear and can no longer be denied. Well into the 1960s one could read in academic textbooks and reference works that water and air are "unlimited resources" and need not be accounted for economically. With such intellectual naiveté, ecological brutalism was propagated across the globe.

5 A most powerful documentation of these dangers and forces is offered by Dirk Smit in his essay "Under Pontius Pilate": On Living Cultural Memory and Christian Confession (2009) and his *Essays in Public Theology. Collected Essays 1* (2007).

to each other. The Apostle Paul offered us an excellent example of the way we can approach this task. He perceived the incredible complexity of the human spirit. On the one hand, he is fascinated with the ability of the spirit to enable contact over vast spatial and temporal distances, not only with other people, but also with God. Yet, on the other hand, he sees the helplessness of a human spirit overwhelmed by the glory of God. He tells us that the Spirit of God must intercede for us with "groans too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). He, furthermore, complains that the often mystically glorified, direct contact of the human spirit with God, such as in speaking in tongues, is deeply ambivalent (1 Cor. 14). In contrast, Paul recommends the use of reason and rationality, even in prayer and doxology, yet without allowing reason and rationality to monopolise all understanding.

A human spirit left to itself does not necessarily lead to clearer understanding and speech, nor does it grant a firm heart, clear reason, or a clear conscience – and it does not automatically produce freedom. The ocean of our rich yet restless spirit needs orientation. But in what form? Clarity alone is not enough (cf. Lewis 1963). Paul sees this quite soberly: even coherent speech, an apparently firm heart, a clear conscience and clear reason can be full of lies and deception, for example when it is steered and determined by the "spirit of the world" which can enslave the human spirit and isolate it from God (1 Cor. 2:12ff.). Even supposedly final and ultimate thoughts about God can be spiritually impoverished and empty despite their clarity and impressiveness – they can systematically distort and deform our relationship to God and hold us captive in religious stupidity and slavery.

At this point we can understand why we have so often been agitated and disconcerted with some of our more developed classic theologies. Luther's discussion of the *servum arbitrium* no longer seems so out of place, nor even his polemic against the "foolish Aristotle" (*Narristoteles*). In the same way Tillich's often rather mumbled and murmured talk about "ambivalence, ambiguity and estrangement" in morality, culture and religion starts to become thought-provoking (see Tillich 1963). Even Barth's tendency to rail against all those who would attempt to identify sin without using a Christological orientation (see Barth 2009: Vol. 22, 1ff., Vol. 25, 1ff., Vol. 28, 1ff.) now becomes comprehensible. When we understand the reality of the human spirit, its power and its ambivalence, and even its danger, then we can understand why continual testing and "the discernment of spirits" (1 Cor. 12) is such a vital and indispensable theological task, one that is not only important for faith communities but also for their social and cultural surroundings. It also becomes clear why it is so dangerously negligent to promote the popular claim that the Holy Spirit is a

numinous, intangible and incomprehensible power.[6] When dealing with matters of the Spirit, those who too rashly settle for and surrender to ideas of the unknowable, dark or numinous are simply rejecting the theological task to test and discern the spirits. But how are we to know that a spirit comes from God or has been sent by God?

Though it is unlikely to satisfy many people at first glance, the clearest answer Christianity can offer to this question is that: *The Spirit of God reveals itself as the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. It enables us, not only to recognise this person and his life and work in all its richness, but also connects the life of all believers with the life of the resurrected One, and allows us to gain a share in it.[7] Those who take part in the life of the risen Christ also share his world-shaping power. It is as the Spirit of "the Lord Jesus Christ" that the Spirit effects freedom. Sadly, for many today, this assurance sounds dark and even fundamentalist. They have experienced a whole range of so-called spirits of Christianity, ones which have been anything but freeing or supportive of freedom. Therefore, it is sensible today to approach this issue with two questions: In which forms and in which ways does the Spirit of God effect freedom?

GOD'S SPIRIT AND FREEDOM: PNEUMATOLOGICAL, LEGAL-THEOLOGICAL AND CHRISTO-PNEUMATOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

The classical, biblical discussions of the "outpouring of the Spirit" can reveal simplifications in our anthropomorphic concept of the spirit, which have arisen from the influence of Aristotelian metaphysics and related theories. And yet, recognising the need for orientation (triggered by the recognised ambivalence of the human spirit) seems at first simply to make things worse. Joel 2:28-29 tells us that God's Spirit will be poured out on men and women, old and young, male and female slaves. The Pentecost narrative in Acts 2 quotes much of Joel and adds that while there was a relativisation of the national, linguistic and cultural differences among the witnesses to this outpouring of the Spirit, the differences were by no means removed. Yet, since all the good old monohierarchical, patriarchal, ageist, classist, nationalistic and culture-chauvinistic

6 It is precisely this type of approach that I seek to critique throughout my book *God the Spirit;* see also *JBTh, Heiliger Geist* (2011).

7 Classic examples are offered, for instance, in the explications of the third article in Martin Luther's *Large Catechism* (1921:565-773); Barth 2009: esp. Volume 4: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, 1ff.; 13ff., but also in the pneumatological passages in Volumes 21-29.

guidelines have now been questioned and removed by this outpouring of the Spirit, it seems that this "outpouring" has led to a severe state of chaos. Can Paul really claim that the "Spirit of freedom" is not actually a Spirit of disorder (cf. 1 Cor. 14:33)?

The first response, dealing with the form and efficacy of the Spirit, helps us to address the concerns that the Spirit of God is just a "numinous being" and that the outpouring of the Spirit leads to simple religious and cultural "confusions" – yet it is also vital for the discourse between religions and other world views. This answer is that the efficacy of the Spirit of God stands in continuity and discontinuity with the legal traditions, with the Torah. In multiple messianic promises in the Book of Isaiah (Is. 11, 42 and 61), which the New Testament expressly and explicitly associates with the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, we find mention of "the Chosen One of God" upon whom the *Spirit of God rests*. It is said that he will bring justice among the nations, protection for the weak and knowledge of God. Justice, compassion and the knowledge of God – here we have the fundamental goals of the biblical law. Matthew 23:23 identifies "the most important matters of the law [as] justice, mercy, and faith". One can hardly overestimate the incredible influence on Western culture of the normative connection between these concepts.

Even today, the connection between justice and the protection of the weak continues to shape the dynamics behind the evolution of a just and humane law. Conversely, the connection between the protection of the weak and the law has led to the institutionalisation of a "culture of aid", not only in the social work of the church but also in the form of a legal, societal and national interest in general education, in basic economic welfare for all people, and in a dependable health-care system. It was hardly coincidental that after the fall of the Nazi regime, Germany sought to regain international trust and recognition by portraying itself as a "state under the rule of law" and as a "welfare state". There is no room in this context to examine the complex normative dynamics of the biblical legal traditions, which have been powerfully effective down into our modern era (cf. Welker 2010b, 2008b). Yet we must admit that the creation of the dichotomies "law and Spirit" and "law and gospel" have been fatal in both theology and the church: for even God's good law, as with the human spirit, can fall under the power of sin. The law can indeed take on highly dangerous forms, even degenerating into a "law of sin" (Rom. 8:2). But if Paul was operating with some primitive dichotomy between law and Spirit, then he could never have spoken of a "law of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:2), a "law of faith" (Rom. 3:27), or a "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Rather, what is characteristic for the work of the Spirit of God is the further development of the ethos of the law into an ethos of love, hope and faith. But the intentions of the law – to

promote justice, mercy and the knowledge of God (or perceptions of the truth) – remain intact. In a positive sense they have been "elevated".

This elevation also applies to the Spirit of Christ. For many people, even within the church, the "Spirit of the Lord" is still connected with the model of a monarchical "royal rule of Christ" or a "Christocratic brotherhood" in the sense of Barmen III,[8] the hierarchical-patriarchal tones of which are not easily associated today with a very heartening understanding of freedom. The Spirit of Christ can also be connected with the Spirit of *kenosis*, of sacrificial surrender and co-suffering – yet in which we easily lose all clear perspectives on the liberation and elevation of creation.

We can find a helpful alternative when, with Calvin, we reclaim the biblical and original understandings that Jesus Christ, upon whom the Spirit of God (the Spirit of justice, mercy and knowledge of God) rests, pours out this Spirit upon all "those who are his" (Dunn 2006). In his seminal work, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (I.II.15), Calvin emphatically notes that Christ the Messiah was not anointed with oil but with the Holy Spirit so that those who belong to him might have a share in his power:

> Therefore, the anointing of the king is not with oil or aromatic unguents. Rather he is called "Anointed" [*Christus*] of God because "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might ... and of the fear of the Lord have rested upon him" [Is. 11:2p.] ... he did not enrich himself for his own sake [*privatim*], but that he might pour out his abundance upon the hungry and thirsty[9] (*Inst.* II.15.5:499f., cf. II.15.2).

Here Calvin stresses the so-called "baptism of the Spirit" through the "Anointed by the Spirit", which became a groundbreaking spiritual experience for the early church, and which the global Pentecostal movement and twentieth-century charismatic renewal have made the centre of their piety (Macchia 2006).

In this re-orientation toward the resurrected and exalted Christ, Calvin also offers a second key insight that links us back to the Old Testament traditions and their broad spheres of remembrance and horizons of expectation:

> To know *the purpose* for which Christ was sent by the Father, and *what* he conferred upon us, we must look above all at *three things* in Him: the *prophetic office, kingship, and priesthood* (*Inst.* II.15:494).

8 While the Barmen Declaration was in its own time and still is today, a highly laudable and in many respects exemplary theological text, it does display significant pneumatological deficits; cf. Welker 2009.

9 Calvin continues: "The Father is said 'not to measure to have given the Spirit to his Son' [Jn. 3:34p.]. The reason is expressed as follows: 'That from his fullness we might all receive grace upon grace' [Jn. 1:16p.]" (*Inst.* II.15.5:500).

The doctrine of the "threefold office" of Christ (*munus triplex Christi*) helps us to understand the public and eschatological work of Jesus Christ in all its differentiated richness. It incorporates links to the Old Testament traditions – continuities in the work of the pre-Easter and post-Easter Christ with the actions of anointed kings, priests and prophets, constantly alluded to by the witnesses of the New Testament. Schleiermacher, Bath, and other leading theologians have taken up and developed this doctrine of the *munus triplex Christi*. Through the work of Johann Gerhard, it found a point of entry into Lutheran theology (cf. Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* (1610-22) *Loc.* IV.15) and it was also adopted by the Roman-Catholic (Scheeben 1954:226-305) and Orthodox Churches (Trempela 1959:143-203). Edmund Schlink (1985:414) notes that:

> In the spread of the doctrine of the *munus triplex Christi* we can witness a unique ecumenical phenomenon. For this point of doctrine did not achieve its dogmatic form before, but rather after the division of the churches. With its views on the salvific work of Jesus Christ, it established itself as common teaching across church divisions.

If we take the doctrine of the threefold office seriously from a pneumatological perspective, then we must develop it further into an understanding of the *three-dimensional kingdom of Christ*. Since this doctrine can often seem contrived or cobbled together, we should take care to orient these three dimensions on the pre-Easter life, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Due to the characteristics of Jesus' life and his charisma, the work of the pre-Easter Jesus is often attributed to the "prophetic office", with the cross signifying the "high-priestly office" (touching on sacrifice and the one who brings it), and the resurrection ushering in the "kingly office". *But if we begin with the presence of the resurrected Christ in the Spirit and then look back upon Jesus' formative life, we discover quite a different order.*

In the light of the pre-Easter life of Jesus, we suddenly see a brighter image of the *kingly rule of Christ* and of those who belong to him, an image which displays a clear message of realistic freedom. In the light of the outpouring of the Spirit, this royal rule revolutionizes hierarchical and monarchical forms of order, both in the church and in the state, for this king is a brother and friend, indeed even one who is poor and outcast. With its radical democratic and post-patriarchal concepts of order, this royal rule, on the one hand, can take on an uncomfortable and chaotic appearance; yet, on the other hand, it becomes exemplary for all those seeking to orient themselves toward the promotion of freedom.

This kingdom is marked by the praxis of loving and forgiving acceptance, by healing and by liberating teaching and education. In continuity and discontinuity with the Torah traditions, love and forgiveness are defined through one's *free and creative self-withdrawal* (Huber 2006:316f.; Bedford-Strohm 1993; Welker 1996) for the benefit of others. The freedom-promoting power that arises from this type of free, creative and (in the case of love) also joyous self-withdrawal for the benefit of one's neighbour is tremendous. The goal of love – which can be defined only in an unsatisfactory way by *eros, agape* and *philia* (Welker 2001) – is that "all things work together for the good" of the one who is loved; to set his or her feet "in a broad place". When it comes to the kingdom of God, it is vital to realise that we are not primarily aiming at propagating in ourselves a responsibility toward freedom-promoting action or behaviour, but rather to promote a joyous and thankful recognition of the *experience of free self-withdrawal which is done for our own good.* For this reason is it said that children express a particular closeness to the kingdom of God (Mt. 10:14; Welker 1992a). Yet an ethos of liberating joy and thankfulness is also fundamental for an ethos of benevolent social care in the church.

A thankful sensitivity to the enormous potential behind free and creative self-withdrawal in our family contexts, among friends and in our civil and societal organisations, together with a sensitivity to today's tremendous global welfare, educational, therapeutic, constitutional, ecclesiastical and intercultural challenges, can truly open our eyes to the incredibly formative and freedom-promoting forces of the *munus regium Christi*. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ take on form through many, often seemingly insignificant acts of love and forgiveness. And it is not only the direct witnesses who receive a share in this often inconspicuous, yet incredibly powerful, reign. "Christian humanism" (cf. Klemm and Schweiker 2008; Schweiker 2009) also shines upon other religious and secular forms of practiced love and compassion, while also receiving strong impulses from them. The boundaries of the freedom-promoting kingdom of Christ are broader than all churches, all times and all regions. "Whatever you did to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did for me", whether you recognised me in them or not (cf. Mt. 25:40 or 25:34ff.; Hoffmeyer 2009). Those who limit the reign of Christ to "Word and sacrament" alone fail to recognise the breadth of Christ's liberating presence in the power of the Spirit.

Understandings of the *priestly dimension* of the rule and kingdom of Jesus Christ are often linked with the Book of Hebrews, where the focus falls upon the difficult themes of "sacrifice and cross". In contrast to this narrow view

(Brandt 2001), when understanding the priestly office we should rather focus on the biblical witnesses to the appearances of the post-Easter presence of the resurrected Jesus Christ. Francis Fiorenza has helped us to see that the appearances of the risen Christ – which tell of greetings of peace, the breaking of bread, the expounding of Scripture, the command to baptise, and the sending of disciples into the world – all outline the fundamental forms of the life of the early church and its charismatic powers (*Ausstrahlungskräfte*) (Fiorenza 1997; cf. also Eckstein and Welker 2010:esp. 318ff.). A polyphony of church life and existence is bound together with the priestly office; and it is this priestly office in which the "priesthood of all believers" shares, and in which it finds its concretisation.

A continuous concentration on worship services and the celebration of the sacraments can already bring about extraordinary experiences of the liberating power of the Spirit. In baptism we bear witness to a change of lordship. The baptised person – whose life stands under constant threat of sickness and need, violence and mortality – now receives the promise of an enduring life of community together with God. The biblical texts describe this new life given to us in baptism with words that are hard to understand: liberation from the powers of sin and death, community with Christ, endowment with the power of the Holy Spirit, protection into eternal life. In these ways they describe a life that, on the one hand, has already materialised and been realised in the kingly rule of Christ; and yet, on the other hand, it extends far beyond mere human existence (EKD 2008). In the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the participating believers find themselves surrounded by the exalted Jesus Christ and his life. They celebrate that meal "in remembrance of him", they remember his life and his work, they especially remember "the night in which he was betrayed", they proclaim his death on the cross, they celebrate his resurrection and his presence, they look toward the *parousia* ("you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes").

The entire fullness of the life of Jesus Christ is present in this celebration – indeed we encounter there the entire presence of the trinitarian God. The *eucharistia,* the expression of thanksgiving to the Creator God and the creative Holy Spirit for the created gifts of bread and wine, is followed by the *anamnesis,* when we remember Jesus Christ and his salvific work in the events of the cross and resurrection. These, in turn, are followed by the *epiclesis,* the thankful and joyous invocation of the Holy Spirit, who elevates believers, forming them into members of the body of Christ and giving them a share in the new creation (Welker 2000; EKD 2003).

It is in this celebration of the presence of the sustaining, saving and exalting trinitarian God that *a liberation of liturgical and spiritual life, a liberation of spiritual imagination, feeling and thought* occurs. The celebration of the sacraments and a biblically-oriented proclamation and teaching repeatedly call into question all banal, artificial and oppressive concepts of God, as well as banal and oppressive religious and moral practices. This moment of table fellowship, symbolised by peace and justice, refers to the royal rule of Christ and to the church's actions of love. In our remembrance of the night of Jesus' betrayal and the events of the cross we are pointed to the prophetic office and to the richness of its radiant blessings.

The nature of the *prophetic office,* or the prophetic dimension of the kingdom of Christ, becomes particularly clear in the light of the cross. In order to recognise this, we must avoid reducing the message of the cross simply to the (admittedly important) revelation of a "suffering God". God's benevolent nearness in the poverty, weakness and powerlessness of the Crucified One is vitally important (Luther 1957:35-70; Bonhoeffer 2001:131-137; Moltmann 1993).

However, a concentration upon this "crucified God" should never obscure God's mighty confrontation with the powers and forces of this world – a confrontation that takes shape in the cross and resurrection. Jesus Christ brought us the message of the coming kingdom of God, gave us the power to heal, the power to care for children, for the weak, the outcast, the sick and the suffering; this Jesus Christ was condemned, unanimously, by the "principalities and powers" of this world.

Religion, law, politics, public morality and opinion all like to present themselves as "forces for good" that are here to "marvellously protect" us; yet, in the event of the cross they all conspire together to work against God's presence in Jesus Christ. The cross reveals the world "under the power of sin", a dark "night of God-forsakenness", not just for Jesus himself but rather as a constant threat to us all. It shows us that all our public and powerful protection mechanisms – such as the law, politics, religion, morality and public opinion – can fail us and our communities.[10] The great liberating importance of the Christian proclamation, the great importance of theological teaching, the indispensable, liberating mission of truth and justice-seeking communities – and here we mean not only the church, but also the sciences and the legal system – all become clear in the dimension of the prophetic office. As truth and justice-seeking communities (cf. Polkinghorne and Welker 2001:esp. chapter 9), the church of Jesus Christ allows itself to be filled with Christ's Spirit of freedom.

Actions ranging from the needful analysis and critique of current distorted social and global conditions to passive resistance against corrupt and perverted

10 Cf. Dirk Smit, 2009:Fn. 16. Smit also offers a most insightful and consolidated overview and evaluation of my various publications and comments on the theology of the cross.

politics, media influence, economics and even corrupt morality and religion – actions of critique and resistance grounded in the responsible search for truth, justice and care and respect for the weak – all become newly visible in the context of the prophetic office. In the confrontations with the powers of sin, we need spiritual and moral depth as well as analytical clarity. An opposition politics, superficially flavoured with religiosity and focussed simply on making moral appeals on trendy hot-button issues, hardly does justice to the tasks of the prophetic office. The boundaries of this office also extend far beyond the walls of the church, and may even turn against a self-glorifying, self-justifying or ideologically-blinded church and forms of ecclesiasticism.

Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom. Where the Spirit of Jesus Christ is, there is freedom. Yet if we are to attest to these truths, then we will need a Christology which has been renewed in the spirit of the Reformation. The Reformers, especially Luther and Melanchthon, launched an emancipatory educational revolution in the Spirit of Christ. And, despite many difficulties and problematic developments, the Reformers, particularly Calvin and those in the Reformed tradition, laboured to institutionalise the separation of political, legal, academic and religious powers, a feature which is indispensable for ensuring free living conditions. If theology and piety reflected upon the spiritual presence of the risen Christ and upon his kingdom, and if they allowed themselves to be caught up into the liberating and renewing Spirit of the exalted Christ, then nothing could stand in the way of such a renewal of Reformation theology. We are not promoting spiritual fantasies here, but rather a biblically and Christologically-oriented spiritual realism that can be just as fruitful now at the beginning of the third millennium as it was five hundred or two thousand years ago.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aristotle. 1935. *Metaphysics X-IX*, Tredennick, H. (ed.). Loeb Classical Library 287/18. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Barth, K. 2009. *Church Dogmatics*, Bromiley G. W. and Torrance, T. F. (eds.). New York, NY: T&T Clark.

Bedford-Strohm, H. 1993. *Vorrang für die Armen. Auf dem Weg zu einer theologischen Theorie der Gerechtigkeit.* Gütersloh: Gütersloher.

Bonhoeffer, D. 2001. *Letters and Papers from Prison,* Bowden, J. and Bethge, E. (eds.). London: SCM.

Brandt, S. 2001. *Opfer als Gedächtnis. Auf dem Weg zu einer befreienden Rede von Opfer,* ATM 2. Münster: LIT.

Calvin, J. 2006. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, McNeill, J. T. (ed.), tr. and indexed Battles, F. L. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.

Dunn, J. 2006. Towards the Spirit of Christ: The Emergence of the Distinctive Features of Christian Pneumatology. In Welker, M. (ed.), *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 3-26.

Eckstein, H-J. and Welker, M. (eds.). 2010. 4th edition. *Die Wirklichkeit der Auferstehung.* Neukirchen: Neukirchener.

EKD. 2003. 3rd edition. *Das Abendmahl. Eine Orientierungshilfe zu Verständnis und Praxis des Abendmahls in der evangelischen Kirche.* Gütersloh: Gütresloher.

EKD. 2008. *Die Taufe – Orientierungshilfe zu Verständnis und Praxis der Taufe in der evangelischen Kirche.* Gütersloh: Gütersloher.

Fiorenza, F. 1997. The Resurrection of Jesus and Roman Catholic Fundamental Theology. In Davis, S. T., Kendall, D. and O'Collins, G. (eds.), *The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 213-248.

Gertz, J. Forthcoming, 2012. Concepts of Freedom in Deuteronomy. In Welker, M. and Etzelmüller, G. (eds.), *Quests for Freedom: Biblical – Historical – Contemporary.*

Habermas, J. and Ratzinger, Cardinal, J. 2005. *Dialektik der Säkularisierung. Über Vernunft und Religion,* Schuller, F. (eds.). Herder: Freiburg/Basel/Wien.

Hoffmeyer, J. Christology and Diakonia. In Schuele, A. and Thomas, G. (eds.), *Who is Jesus Christ for Us Today: Pathways to Contemporary Christology.* Louisville, KY: Westminster, 150-166.

Huber, W. 2006. 3rd edition. *Gerechtigkeit und Recht. Grundlinien christlicher Rechtsethik.* Gütersloh: Gütersloher.

Huber, W. 2010. Verantwortete Freiheit als Lebensform. In Fuchs, T. und Schwarzkopf, G. (eds.), *Verantwortlichkeit – nur eine Illusion?* Heidelberg: Winter, 319-340.

Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie (2009) *[JBTh].* 2011. Vol 24. Heiliger Geist. Neukirchen: Neukirchener.

Jung, M. 2009. *Der bewusste Ausdruck: Anthropologie der Artikulation*, Berlin/New York, NY: De Gruyter.

Klemm, D. E. and Schweiker, W. 2008. *Religion and the Human Future: An Essay on Theological Humanism.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Lampe, P. Forthcoming 2012. Concepts of Freedom in Antiquity: Pagan Philosophical Traditions in the Graeco-Roman World. In Welker, M. and Etzelmüller, G. (eds.), *Quests for Freedom: Biblical – Historical – Contemporary.*

Lewis, H. D. (ed.). 1963. *Clarity is Not Enough: Essays in Criticism of Linguistic Philosophy.* London: Allen and Unwin.

Luther, M. 1921. Large Catechism, tr. Bente, F. and Dau, W. H. T. In: *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church.* St. Louis, MO: Concordia.

Luther, M. 1957. Heidelberg Disputation 1518. In *Luther's Works,* Vol. 31, Grimm, H. J. and Lehmann, H. T. (eds.). Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg, 35-70.

Macchia, F. 2006. *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Moltmann, J. 1993. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.

Polkinghorne, J. and Welker, M. 2001. *Faith in the Living God: A Dialogue.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.

Scheeben, J. S. 1954. *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik,* Vol. 5.2. Freiburg: Herder, 226-305.

Schlink, E. 1985. 2nd edition. *Ökumenische Dogmatik. Grundzüge.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Schweiker, W. 2009. Flesh and Folly: The Christ of Christian Humanism. In Schuele, A. and Thomas, G. (eds.), *Who is Jesus Christ for Us Today: Pathways to Contemporary Christology.* Louisville, KY: Westminster, 85-102.
Smit, D. J. 2007. *Essays in Public Theology. Collected Essays 1*, Conradie, E. M. (ed.). Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
Smit, D. J. 2009. "... Under Pontius Pilate": On Living Cultural Memory and Christian Confession. In Schuele, A. and Thomas, G. (eds.), *Who is Jesus Christ for Us Today? Pathways to Contemporaray Christology.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 19-49.
Tillich, P. 1963. *Systematic Theology* III. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Trempela, P. 1959. *Dogmatike tes orthodoxu katholikes ekklesias*, (Greek) Vol. II. Athen, 143-203.
Van Oorschot, J. Forthcoming 2012. Potentials for Freedom in Concepts of Order: Transformations of Wisdom and Political Theology in the Hebrew Bible. In Welker, M. and Etzelmüller, G. (eds.), *Quests for Freedom: Biblical – Historical – Contemporary.*
Welker, M. 1992a. Das Reich Gottes. *Evangelische Theologie* 52 (1992), 497-512.
Welker, M. 1992b. *God the Spirit.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.
Welker, M. 1996. Routinisiertes Erbarmen und paradigmatische Öffentlichkeit. "Generalisierung von Altruismus" in alttestamentlichen Gesetzesüberlieferungen. In May, H. (ed.), *Altruismus. Aus der Sicht von Evolutionsbiologie, Philosophie und Theologie,* Loccumer Protokolle 30/92. Loccum: Evangelishe Akademie Loccum, 143-160.
Welker, M. 1999. Was ist Pluralismus? *Wertepluralismus. Sammelband der Vorträge des Studium Generale der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg im Wintersemester 1998/99.* Heidelberg: Winter, 9-23.
Welker, M. 2000. *What Happens in Holy Communion?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
Welker, M. 2001. Romantic Love, Covenantal Love, Kenotic Love. In Polkinghorne, J. (ed.), *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis.* Eerdmans, MI: Grand Rapids, MI/London: Eerdmans/SPCK.
Welker, M. 2004. Divine Sustenance, Rescue, Salvation and Elevation: Toward a Non-Reductive Understanding of Human Personhood. In Jeeves, M. (ed.), *From Cells to Souls – and Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 223-232.
Welker, M. 2006. Theological Anthropology Versus Anthropological Reductionism. In Soulen, E. K. and Woodhead, L. (eds.), *God and Human Dignity.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 317-342.
Welker, M. 2006. *The Science and Theology Dialogue: What Can Theology Contribute?* Neukirchen: Neukirchener.
Welker, M. 2008a. Habermas und Ratzinger zur Zukunft der Religion. *Evangelische Theologie* 68, 310-324.
Welker, M. 2008b. Kommunikatives, kollektives, kulturelles und kanonisches Gedächtnis. *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*, Vol. 22: Die Macht der Erinnerung, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 321-331.
Welker, M. 2009. Barmen III: Woran orientieren? Die Gestalt der Kirche in gesellschaftlichen Umbrüchen. *Begründete Freiheit – Die Aktualität der Barmer Theologischen Erklärung.* Vortragsreihe zum 75. Jahrestag im Berliner Dom, Evangelische Impulse 1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 59-75.
Welker, M. 2010a. Die Anthropologie des Paulus als interdisziplinäre Kontakttheorie. In *Jahrbuch der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften für 2009.* Heidelberg: Winter, 98-108.
Welker, M. 2010b. Theologie und Recht. *Der Staat* 49(4), 573-585.

Theology for the twenty-first century – Going beyond Barth?

***Christo Lombard*[1]**

CHAPTER 7

BACKGROUND TO THE QUESTION

It is a privilege and pleasure to participate in this collaborative effort to honour a special friend and colleague, and one of South Africa's leading theologians Dirk J. Smit. His voice rings out near and far via an enormous range of publications – inspiring ordinary Christians, challenging aspiring theologians, faithfully serving his own church and its structures as well as the Reformed tradition and ecumenical agendas, and constantly addressing issues of general concern prophetically and pastorally in church and public media. What stands out – even stronger than the sheer brilliance of his tireless stream of contributions on all fronts – is the characteristically articulate and humble way in which he operates, avoiding controversy and seeking ways and means around unnecessary confrontation and pettiness.

In the late seventies, during my first years of teaching biblical studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Dirkie finished his post-graduate theological studies and became minister in one of the Stellenbosch Dutch Reformed

1 Christo Lombard did his MTh and DTh in systematic theology at the University of the Western Cape – with Jaap Durand as supervisor and Dirk Smit as an examiner for both theses. Since 2005 he has been Professor of Theology and Ethics, and Chair of Religion and Theology at UWC since 2010.