

I have argued that "no interpretation of the christological assertion can be complete without its political interpretation." But what, exactly, does this mean?

What it means depends, obviously, on what is understood by "politics" and its cognates. Specifically, is "politics" to be understood formally with Gamwell (and perhaps most others) simply in its usual stricter sense as "the activities of the state and the process by which these activities are decided or determined" ("the state," being understood as "that association whose identifying purpose is to order or govern the pursuit of purposes in the community and . . . , therefore, the one association in any society to which all individuals in the society must belong")? Or is "politics" to be understood formally in the broader sense I have proposed in defining it as action "to establish justice not only in the state and government but also throughout the whole social and cultural order—namely, by either maintaining or transforming all of the basic structures of this order so that each person is equally free with every other to be the active subject of his or her own self-creation, instead of being merely the passive object of the self-creations of others" (PC: 95)?

I do not doubt that it was this broader sense of "politics" I had in mind in arguing that interpretation of the christological assertion without its political interpretation is insofar incomplete. But, then, my difference from Gamwell (as well as others whose use of "politics" is stricter) is in no way a rejection of what he argues for in insisting that "politics is a Christian vocation," but only the contention that Christians are called to indefinitely *more* than his understanding of the term allows for. They are indeed called to democratic participation at both levels of the state and government—constituent, or constitutional, as well as governmental, or statutory. But they are also called to concern themselves with all other structures of order throughout society and culture—and that likewise at both levels.

To love is, first of all, to listen. But to listen is always to listen, not least, to the structures by which the situation is ordered, which, in the case of human beings, always include the structures of society and culture. And here, as in face

of all other structures, one must pray for wisdom to distinguish between the ones that cannot be changed and that, therefore, must be accepted with serenity, and the others that should be changed and that, therefore, can be changed, if only with courage.

16 December 2009