

Pneumatology and Politics: The role of the Holy Spirit in the articulation of an Orthodox political theology

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In this paper an attempt is made to discuss the importance of the Holy Spirit in the development of an Orthodox political theology, by bringing into critical dialogue the recent contributions of two of the most known Orthodox theologians of the young generation, namely A. Papanikolaou and P. Kalaitzidis. It is commonly recognized that the Holy Spirit is closely related both to the very “constitution of the whole Church” in virtue of the Eucharistic event, as well as to the everyday charismatic lives of individual Christians due to the various forms or stages of ascetism. In this respect a careful comparative examination of these two important works, would highlight some invaluable elements (Eucharistic perspective, eschatological orientation, historical commitment, ethical action, open and critical dialogue with modernity etc.) toward a formulation of a comprehensive and urgently necessary political theology. This sort of political theology should have inevitable implications for the Christian perception of the communal and the individual ecclesial life. This “theo-political” program proposed by the two thinkers and founded on a robust Pneumatology, could be perfectly included, following the apostolic kerygma and the patristic ethos, into a new way of doing (Orthodox) Christian theology, that takes as its starting point the grammar of the self-Revelation of God in the ongoing history of salvation (“Church and World Dogmatics”).

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Introduction

It was commonplace¹ until recent times that Orthodox theology in particular had nothing to do at all with politics or social issues, due to its supposed meta-historical and liturgical dimension, while this political attitude was attributed explicitly to various trends of Western theology (i.e. liberation theology, theology of hope, etc)² characterized by a more profound historical

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¹ See the relative discussion about “why has orthodoxy not developed a political or liberation theology” in Pantelis Kalaitzidis *Orthodoxy and Political theology*, WCC Publications, Geneva 2012, p. 65-80.

² For a very comprehensive and detailed overview of the various theological trends in western tradition see: Rosino Gibellini, *La teologia del XX secolo*, Brescia ⁴1999. Especially on political theology see: Elizabeth Phillips, *Political theology. A Guide for the Perplexed*, Blooms-