

**Chapter 1 : Economic Justice and Process Philosophy - Open Horizons**

*Process theology should become a political theology in that it should be fundamentally committed, with SÄ¶lle, to 'the indivisible salvation of the whole world.'" (Pg. 15) Later, he clarifies, "This, of course, does not mean becoming a disciple of Metz, Moltmann, or SÄ¶lle.*

**The Challenge of Political Theology** The main purpose of this book is to develop process theology in a way that responds appropriately to the challenge of political theology. When this is done, I claim, process theology must become a political theology. There is no intention to provide a history of political theology or to introduce the reader to the whole field of recent developments within that movement. Nevertheless, the argument cannot be understood apart from some clarification of how I perceive political theology and its challenge to process theology. Accordingly, this chapter begins with a brief survey of the history of the term, political theology. In the third section the effort is made to distil a few common features of political theology which can determine the use of the term in the remainder of the book. These clarify also the sense in which process theology is, or should become, a political theology. The chapter concludes with brief comments on the perspective and promise of process theology in its relation to political theology. I The term political theology can be traced back to the Stoics. By them it was contrasted with mythical and natural or philosophical theology. Political theology was the expression of those religious practices which served the needs of the state. By those who held the corporate life of the people to be of supreme importance, especially in Rome, political theology was often given pride of place. Augustine criticized this political theology by demonstrating that there are ends beyond the state which it cannot serve. It is the City of God and not the earthly city which constitutes the true end of human beings. The affirmation of this transcendent end undercut the persuasiveness of political theology for the medieval period. The desirable religion would be one which served the needs of human community, in short, a political religion, or what Rousseau called civil religion. The leaders of the Catholic Restoration stressed the importance of religion for society in their argument against the secularizing tendencies of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Although at first this argument was used to support a conservative form of Catholicism, as time passed it could also be used to derive norms by which religious beliefs could be judged. Only those which have a positive social function would then be acceptable. For example, he sees monarchy as correlative with theism and, indeed, the justification of monarchy as derived from theistic ideas. The supersession of monarchy by democracy is correlative with a more immanent conception of God. Theologians were disturbed by the suggestion that Christian teaching about God must bear responsibility for the particular forms taken by social and political authority. The label is used to refer to a quite different way in which theology can be related to political life. Whereas the earlier political theology sanctioned the status quo, the new political theology called for criticism and could support revolution. Johann Baptist Metz has been the key figure in the new political theology. He first used the term in his lectures in the winter terms 8. Nevertheless, she has helped to shape the understanding of political theology in the English-speaking world. Despite the difference between this form of political theology and that which had been discussed earlier, Hans Maier suggested that there are analogous weaknesses. Metz, too, emphasizes the difference between his project and the earlier ones also called political theology and acknowledges the negative weight of using the same term, lie considers the suggestion that he should speak instead of Sozial Theologie, Theologie publique, or simply Kritische Theologie, but he finds these alternatives still less satisfactory. They came to political theology from surprisingly different backgrounds, and these differences have some effect upon their methodologies and doctrines as these are referred to in later chapters. As a Roman Catholic theologian Metz was schooled in the tradition of transcendental Thomism. It emphasizes with Kant that the world that we know through sense experience and thought is a world that we ourselves construct. Unlike Kant, however, the transcendental Thomists have been preoccupied with the question of being. Here there is an affinity with Heidegger whose philosophy is primarily an inquiry into being on the basis of the analysis of the one who asks the question of being, that is, the human being. The most important of the transcendental Thomists has been Karl Rahner, and Metz has been very closely associated with Rahner. The

implications of this claim are enormous for the Christian understanding of modern thought. The extent to which Thomas did indeed inaugurate this shift so as to be the source for modern philosophy is debatable. Metz has been accused of reading back into Thomas what he learned from Kant. But this historical point need not detain us. He distinguishes between the content of a philosophy and its controlling understanding of being. Much Greek thought, for example, focuses on the human being and is, in this sense, anthropocentric in its content. But it views human beings in an objectifying way because its controlling understanding of being is taken from the objects of experience. For this reason Metz calls it cosmocentric. But Thomas has turned away from the object of experience to subjectivity itself for his fundamental grasp of what being is. This constitutes St Thomas as anthropocentric in the sense with which Metz is fundamentally concerned. It has its being in and as the self-externalization of human beings. Similarly God is not an object existing above human beings but is the transcendental subjectivity of human subjectivity. Although the world does not exist apart from human beings, this does not make it a private matter. Thus every experience of the world and the interpretation of the world based on it are inter-subjectively or intercommunicatively grounded. The theology of the world thus moves directly into political theology. It is a political theology. The creative -- militant hope behind it is related essentially to the world as society and to the forces within it that change the world. In *Christliche Anthropozentrik* God as the final end of human beings was thought of as the ground and content of future human fulfillment. Hence the note of futurity was present, but it was not central. But when Metz addressed the question of God again toward the end of the sixties he did so entirely in the context of the Christian hope for the coming of God. God is indissolubly related to the realm of freedom and peace that is promised and that comes to believers now as the call to realize freedom and peace concretely in our world. Already by this discussion gave rise to a book which also gave Metz the opportunity to reply to his critics. Deeply stamped by his experience as a prisoner of war, he returned to Germany after World War II to study theology. Referring to himself in the third person he writes briefly of how he was shaped during that period: There he imbibed the theology of the Confessing Church, inspired by Karl Barth and preserved throughout the years of struggle between the church and the Nazi state. We learned the origin of the Christian faith in the suffering of him who was crucified and in the liberating power of the risen Christ. That is what made us so Christocentric. He found in Bloch a philosophical conceptuality that enabled him to draw loose ends together and to understand his own intentions. It remained for Moltmann to bring the whole together in a new form with the stamp of his own experience and thought upon it. The term political was not prominent in *The Theology of Hope*, but the substance was already there. Hence no real change was involved when in the years after its publication Moltmann began to speak of his as a political theology, associating himself closely with the position of Metz. He points out that Christians now have considerable freedom in relation to our own traditions but that we have not attained similar freedom in relation to the political world. Consequently modern criticism asks about the practical, political, and psychic effects of the churches, of theologies, and of ways of believing. It can no longer self-forgetfully screen out its own social and political reality as the old metaphysical and personalistic theologies did. Political theology designates the field, the milieu, the environment, and the medium in which Christian theology should be articulated today. Form criticism has already made us aware of the social setting of our texts. As we become equally conscious of the social setting in which we stand, we can develop a political hermeneutic. She wanted to show how modern people can still find their identity in Christ as their representative. She calls instead for the strengthening of personal selfhood and the prizing of self-realization and personal fulfillment which express themselves in creative spontaneity and fantasy. But this does not lessen for her the importance of what is happening now to human beings in our world. This was a group which met once a month for political worship, that is, for analysis of particular social crises and reflection and prayer about them, followed by asking what could be done in response. Her book *Political Theology* grew out of that lecture and subsequent discussions. In the Enlightenment this method was employed politically. This intention is better fulfilled when the full breadth of Enlightenment criticism is recovered. This would involve moving from the existing recognition of the socio-political character of the text in its original setting to that of the socio-political meaning of the text in the contemporary setting as well. Where she deals most explicitly with this question she focuses on hermeneutic. It is critical of theology and of

the church. It is also critical of existing structures of society. Finally, it involves self-criticism, the acknowledgement of how one is bound up in the sin of society and has the tendencies which lead to the most vicious acts. But she does note that there is a place for a constructive role in relation to the political world. But what is striking is that, despite their diverse journeys to political theology, their views of what this is are so similar. All three see political theology as a hermeneutic. All three see it as criticism of church and theology. On one very important point with respect to the understanding of political theology, however, differences do appear. None of them see political theology as merely the expression in the political arena of a theology that in its core is not political. But the question remains whether all theology is or should be political theology, whether the political is the sole horizon for theological work. The critical question is whether personal salvation can be fully subsumed under political salvation. Political theology begins with a modified preunderstanding. Its guiding hermeneutical principle is the question of authentic life for all men. This does not mean that the question about individual existence must be suppressed or thrust aside as nonessential. But surely even that question can be answered only in terms of social conditions and in the context of social hopes. No one can be saved alone. Subjectivity is injected into even this process of social understanding, but not for the purpose of seeking understanding, for itself alone; rather it believes in and calls for the indivisible salvation of the whole world. Political theology does not reject the insights attained by existential theology. But the treatment of the individual is not exhausted by the existential meaning of the political message.

Chapter 2 : Process Theology Research Papers - theinnatdunvilla.com

*Process Theology as Political Theology* by John B. Cobb, Jr. John B. Cobb, Jr., Ph.D. is Professor of Theology Emeritus at the Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California, and Co-Director of the Center for Process Studies there.

Political theology Save Political theology investigates the ways in which theological concepts or ways of thinking relate to politics , society , and economics. Though the relationship between Christianity and politics has been debated since the time of Jesus , political theology has been an academic discipline since the 20th century. Scholars such as Carl Schmitt use it to denote religious concepts that were secularized and thus became key political concepts. Another term which often occupies similar space in academic discourse is public theology. It is said that political theology is directed more towards the government or the state, whereas public theology is more towards civil society. Writing amidst the turbulence of the German Weimar Republic , Schmitt argued in his essay Politische Theologie [8] that the main concepts of modern politics were secularized versions of older theological concepts. In China in the s, for instance, the Protestant Wu Yaozong advocated that a social revolution was necessary to save both China and the world. Germany The influence of the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel " is also evident throughout much of German political theology. This is particularly clear in the work of the Roman Catholic theologian Johann Baptist Metz born who explored the concept of political theology throughout his work. He criticizes what he terms bourgeois Christianity and believes that the Christian Gospel has become less credible because it has become entangled with bourgeois religion. His work Faith in History and Society develops apologetics, or fundamental theology, from this perspective. Political theologians try to balance the demands of a tumultuous region with the delicate but long history of Christianity in the Middle East. This has yielded a diversity of political theology disproportionate to the small size of Middle East Christian minorities. For many Christian leaders, the dominant approach to political theology is one of survival. Many Arab Christians see themselves as the heirs of a rich Christian heritage whose existence is threatened by regional unrest and religious persecution. Their chief political goal is survival, which sets their political theology apart. In other cases, Christian politicians downplay their faith in the public sphere to avoid conflict with their Muslim neighbours. His belief was that Christians should embrace Islam as part of their cultural identity because nationalism was the best way for Christians to be successful in the Middle East. Notable thinkers include Itumeleng Mosala, Jesse N. Mugambi , and Desmond Tutu. United States Reinhold Niebuhr also developed a theology similar to Metz in the practical application of theology. During the s, Niebuhr was a leader of the Socialist Party of America , and although he broke with the party later in life socialist thought is a prominent component of his development of Christian Realism. The work by Niebuhr that best exemplifies his relationship with political theology is Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study of Ethics and Politics One of the most influential developers of recent political theology is Stanley Hauerwas , though he considers his work to be better termed a "theological politics". Moreover, he has been a severe critic of liberal democracy , capitalism , and militarism , arguing that all of those ideologies are antithetical to Christian convictions.

**Chapter 3 : Process Theology as Political Theology - John B. Cobb - Google Books**

*The form of political theology to which a process theologian can aspire is a thoroughly ecological theology. For process theology, as an ecological theology, human beings are part of nature. We are a very special part with peculiar capacities and value.*

Process theology and process philosophy are collectively referred to as "process thought". For both Whitehead and Hartshorne, it is an essential attribute of God to affect and be affected by temporal processes, contrary to the forms of theism that hold God to be in all respects non-temporal eternal, unchanging immutable, and unaffected by the world impassible. In this sense theology influenced by Hegel is process theology just as much as that influenced by Whitehead. This use of the term calls attention to affinities between these otherwise quite different traditions. History Various theological and philosophical aspects have been expanded and developed by Charles Hartshorne " , John B. Today some rabbis who advocate some form of process theology include Bradley Shavit Artson, Lawrence A. Rosenthal, Lawrence Troster, Donald B. Rossoff, Burton Mindick, and Nahum Ward. The work of Richard Stadelmann has been to preserve the uniqueness of Jesus in process theology. It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World. It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God. The divine has a power of persuasion rather than coercion. Process theologians interpret the classical doctrine of omnipotence as involving force, and suggest instead a forbearance in divine power. These events have both a physical and mental aspect. All experience male, female, atomic, and botanical is important and contributes to the ongoing and interrelated process of reality. The universe is characterized by process and change carried out by the agents of free will. Self-determination characterizes everything in the universe, not just human beings. God cannot totally control any series of events or any individual, but God influences the creaturely exercise of this universal free will by offering possibilities. Some also call this "theocosmocentrism" to emphasize that God has always been related to some world or another. Because God interacts with the changing universe, God is changeable that is to say, God is affected by the actions that take place in the universe over the course of time. However, the abstract elements of God goodness, wisdom, etc. Charles Hartshorne believes that people do not experience subjective or personal immortality, but they do have objective immortality because their experiences live on forever in God, who contains all that was. Other process theologians believe that people do have subjective experience after bodily death. Young seeks a model for American society that goes beyond the alternatives of integration of Blacks into white society and Black separateness. He finds useful the process model of the many becoming one. Here the one is a new reality that emerges from the discrete contributions of the many, not the assimilation of the many to an already established one. Robert Mesle, in his book Process Theology, outlines three aspects of a process theology of liberation: God suffers just as those who experience oppression and God seeks to actualize all positive and beautiful potentials. God must, therefore, be in solidarity with the oppressed and must also work for their liberation. God is not omnipotent in the classical sense and so God does not provide support for the status quo, but rather seeks the actualization of greater good. God exercises relational power and not unilateral control. In this way God cannot instantly end evil and oppression in the world. God works in relational ways to help guide persons to liberation. Relationship to pluralism Process theology affirms that God is working in all persons to actualize potentialities. In that sense each religious manifestation is the Divine working in a unique way to bring out the beautiful and the good. Additionally, scripture and religion represent human interpretations of the divine. In this sense pluralism is the expression of the diversity of cultural backgrounds and assumptions that people use to approach the Divine. Rather God is incarnate in the lives of all people when they act according to a call from God. Process theologians argue that God does not have unilateral, coercive control over everything in the universe. Critics

argue that this conception diminishes divine power to such a degree that God is no longer worshipful. It is not exerted in a vacuum, but always by some entity A over some other entity B. To suppose that an entity A in this case, God, can always successfully control any other entity B is to say, in effect, that B does not exist as a free and individual being in any meaningful sense, since there is no possibility of its resisting A if A should decide to press the issue. The first distinction is between "coercive" power and "persuasive" power. Lifeless bodies such as the billiard balls cannot resist such applications of physical force at all, and even living bodies like arms can only resist so far, and can be coercively overpowered. While finite, physical creatures can exert coercive power over one another in this way, God—lacking a physical body—cannot not merely will not exert coercive control over the world. The arm may not perform in the way a person wishes it to—it may be broken, or asleep, or otherwise unable to perform the desired action. It is only after the persuasive act of self-motion is successful that an entity can even begin to exercise coercive control over other finite physical bodies. But no amount of coercive control can alter the free decisions of other entities; only persuasion can do so. The child, as a self-conscious, decision-making individual, can always make the decision to not go to bed. One classic exchange over the issue of divine power is between philosophers Frederick Sontag and John K. Roth and process theologian David Ray Griffin. One of the stronger complaints from Sontag and Roth is that, given the enormity of evil in the world, a deity that is [merely] doing its best is not worthy of worship. The implication is that a deity that is not doing its best is worthy of worship. This illustrates how much people can differ in what they consider worthy of worship. For Roth, it is clearly brute power that evokes worship. To refer back to the point about revelation: Roth finds my God too small to evoke worship; I find his too gross. Griffin argues that it is actually the God whose omnipotence is defined in the "traditional" way that is not worshipful. Robert Mesle puts it: Relational power takes great strength. In stark contrast to unilateral power, the radical manifestations of relational power are found in people like Martin Luther King, Jr. It requires the willingness to endure tremendous suffering while refusing to hate. It demands that we keep our hearts open to those who wish to slam them shut. It means offering to open up a relationship with people who hate us, despise us, and wish to destroy us. Rather than see God as one who unilaterally coerces other beings, judges and punishes them, and is completely unaffected by the joys and sorrows of others, process theologians see God as the one who persuades the universe to love and peace, is supremely affected by even the tiniest of joys and the smallest of sorrows, and is able to love all beings despite the most heinous acts they may commit. God is, as Whitehead says, "the fellow sufferer who understands."

**Chapter 4 : Political theology | Revolv**

*Process Theology as Political Theology by John B. Cobb, Jr. Chapter One: The Challenge of Political Theology. The main purpose of this book is to develop process theology in a way that responds appropriately to the challenge of political theology.*

Process theology Not to be confused with Process Church. Process theology and process philosophy are collectively referred to as "process thought. For both Whitehead and Hartshorne, it is an essential attribute of God to affect and be affected by temporal processes, contrary to the forms of theism that hold God to be in all respects non-temporal eternal , unchanging immutable , and unaffected by the world impassible. In this sense theology influenced by Hegel is process theology just as much as that influenced by Whitehead. This use of the term calls attention to affinities between these otherwise quite different traditions. History Various theological and philosophical aspects have been expanded and developed by Charles Hartshorne " , John B. Today some rabbis who advocate some form of process theology include Bradley Shavit Artson , Lawrence A. Rosenthal, Lawrence Troster, Donald B. Rossoff, Burton Mindick, and Nahum Ward. The work of Richard Stadelmann has been to preserve the uniqueness of Jesus in process theology. It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World. It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God. The divine has a power of persuasion rather than coercion. Process theologians interpret the classical doctrine of omnipotence as involving force, and suggest instead a forbearance in divine power. These events have both a physical and mental aspect. All experience male, female, atomic, and botanical is important and contributes to the ongoing and interrelated process of reality. The universe is characterized by process and change carried out by the agents of free will. Self-determination characterizes everything in the universe , not just human beings. God cannot totally control any series of events or any individual, but God influences the creaturely exercise of this universal free will by offering possibilities. Some also call this "theocosmocentrism" to emphasize that God has always been related to some world or another. Because God interacts with the changing universe, God is changeable that is to say, God is affected by the actions that take place in the universe over the course of time. However, the abstract elements of God goodness , wisdom , etc. Charles Hartshorne believes that people do not experience subjective or personal immortality , but they do have objective immortality because their experiences live on forever in God, who contains all that was. Other process theologians believe that people do have subjective experience after bodily death. Young seeks a model for American society that goes beyond the alternatives of integration of Blacks into white society and Black separateness. He finds useful the process model of the many becoming one. Here the one is a new reality that emerges from the discrete contributions of the many, not the assimilation of the many to an already established one. Robert Mesle, in his book Process Theology, outlines three aspects of a process theology of liberation: God suffers just as those who experience oppression and God seeks to actualize all positive and beautiful potentials. God must, therefore, be in solidarity with the oppressed and must also work for their liberation. God is not omnipotent in the classical sense and so God does not provide support for the status quo, but rather seeks the actualization of greater good. God exercises relational power and not unilateral control. In this way God cannot instantly end evil and oppression in the world. God works in relational ways to help guide persons to liberation. Relationship to pluralism Process theology affirms that God is working in all persons to actualize potentialities. In that sense each religious manifestation is the Divine working in a unique way to bring out the beautiful and the good. Additionally, scripture and religion represent human interpretations of the divine. In this sense pluralism is the expression of the diversity of cultural backgrounds and assumptions that people use to approach the Divine. Incarnation Christianity Contrary to Christian orthodoxy , the Christ of mainstream process theology is not the mystical and

historically exclusive union of divine and human natures in one hypostasis, the eternal Logos of God uniquely enfleshed in and identifiable as the man Jesus. Rather God is incarnate in the lives of all people when they act according to a call from God. Process theologians argue that God does not have unilateral, coercive control over everything in the universe. Critics argue that this conception diminishes divine power to such a degree that God is no longer worshipful. It is not exerted in a vacuum, but always by some entity A over some other entity B. To suppose that an entity A in this case, God, can always successfully control any other entity B is to say, in effect, that B does not exist as a free and individual being in any meaningful sense, since there is no possibility of its resisting A if A should decide to press the issue. Lifeless bodies such as the billiard balls cannot resist such applications of physical force at all, and even living bodies like arms can only resist so far, and can be coercively overpowered. While finite, physical creatures can exert coercive power over one another in this way, God—lacking a physical body—cannot not merely will not exert coercive control over the world. The arm may not perform in the way a person wishes it to—it may be broken, or asleep, or otherwise unable to perform the desired action. It is only after the persuasive act of self-motion is successful that an entity can even begin to exercise coercive control over other finite physical bodies. But no amount of coercive control can alter the free decisions of other entities; only persuasion can do so. The child, as a self-conscious, decision-making individual, can always make the decision to not go to bed. One classic exchange over the issue of divine power is between philosophers Frederick Sontag and John K. Roth and process theologian David Ray Griffin. One of the stronger complaints from Sontag and Roth is that, given the enormity of evil in the world, a deity that is [merely] doing its best is not worthy of worship. The implication is that a deity that is not doing its best is worthy of worship. This illustrates how much people can differ in what they consider worthy of worship. For Roth, it is clearly brute power that evokes worship. To refer back to the point about revelation: Roth finds my God too small to evoke worship; I find his too gross. Relational power takes great strength. In stark contrast to unilateral power, the radical manifestations of relational power are found in people like Martin Luther King, Jr. It requires the willingness to endure tremendous suffering while refusing to hate. It demands that we keep our hearts open to those who wish to slam them shut. It means offering to open up a relationship with people who hate us, despise us, and wish to destroy us. Rather than see God as one who unilaterally coerces other beings, judges and punishes them, and is completely unaffected by the joys and sorrows of others, process theologians see God as the one who persuades the universe to love and peace, is supremely affected by even the tiniest of joys and the smallest of sorrows, and is able to love all beings despite the most heinous acts they may commit.

**Chapter 5 : Systematic theology - Wikipedia**

*For process theology to become a political theology, argues Cobb, it must affirm certain aspects of the programs of Moltmann, Metz, and S  lle but it must move beyond the Kantian anthropocentrism inherent in their systems.*

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**Chapter 6 : Process theology**

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Author/Artist Review I'm the author/artist and I want to review Process Theology as Political Theology.*

If we are among the privileged and powerful, we must be suspicious of ourselves. I am repeatedly impressed how quickly I, and other well-meaning Christians, turn from impassioned statements about the evil of oppression and hunger on a global scale to talk of our need for better salaries, our hopes for economic security in retirement, and our boats or summer cottages. This is not to say that we are insincere in our profession of concern for the poor. It is to say that the bulk of our activity responds to other urgings and binds us more tightly into the system that produces and depends upon oppression. That this is true of intellectual work, including our theology, is to be expected. My point here is that we need to take our social location very seriously, to be suspicious of ourselves, and to work constantly to correct for the bias that our location introduces. Individualist images of self are misguided. Much of our Western conceptuality has made it difficult to understand this solidarity of mutual involvement of human beings. The individual mind or the individual organism is often conceived ontologically as self-contained and as related to other individuals only externally. That is, the relation is viewed as incidental to the being of the individual. The individual exists as what he or she is and then, without any essential change, relates to other individuals. This individualist ontology has been challenged in some forms of idealism, including the Hegelian form which influenced Marx. Individuals exist through participation in this totality. In the Marxist transformation the proletariat, in so far as it is conscious of its mission, constitutes the true subject of history. Collectivist images of self are misguided, too. Neither the individualist ontology nor the collectivist one expresses the Biblical sense of the solidarity of individuals who participate in one another. For Whitehead the ultimate individual is a moment of experience. Such an individual does not first exist and then enter into relations with others. On the contrary, it is constituted by its relations and has no other existence than as a creative synthesis of these relations. The richness of its experience is the richness of its relations. The idea of an individual apart from community is nonsensical. Even if we extend the term individual to its usual designation of personal existence from birth to death, the idea of an individual apart from community is meaningless. Persons are communal beings. Rich experience is possible only in community with others whose experiences are rich. We are creative, relational selves who are responsible to, and enriched by, the lives of others. Christian teaching falls heavily on the side of human solidarity. It has been the merit of the social gospel and of political theology to emphasize this point in the twentieth century, but it is certainly not new. It was dominant in the Old Testament. We are individuals, but we are individuals who participate in one another and cannot be saved in isolation. Unfortunately, most economic theory is based on individualist and collectivist views of human beings. The collectivist view encourages the ruthlessness of which Heilbroner wrote, liberal society is somewhat restrained by its commitment to individuals, but it has paid a high price for its individualist economic theories. We all know at a common-sense level that we human beings exist in families and communities whose welfare matters greatly to us. A person who is insensitive to the interests of other members of the community or of the community as a whole and seeks only to obtain private wealth is a monster. Economic activity is viewed as the competition of such persons for scarce resources. Further, it has been a highly successful abstraction, illuminating much of our human behavior. Nevertheless, it is an abstraction from which theory and practice alike have suffered greatly. The implication of such an elevation is that the gains of one person are inherently at the expense of others. This is qualified by the confidence of most theorists that as we all behave rationally, that is, seek competitive advantage, the total pool of goods and services will so increase that all will improve their condition. But this does not erase the fact that the theory describes and encourages the quest for competitive advantage. Economic thinking can be redirected toward community, the environment, and a sustainable future. If instead we view the economic situation from the perspective of relational thinking, we will focus on different examples and derive different principles. Consider a professor who is a member of a faculty. He or she may gain some satisfaction from success in competition with other members of the faculty, for example,

from gaining a larger salary at the expense of others. But this cannot go very far. The satisfactions of the professor will depend more on the general quality of life in the institution than on a competitive superiority in income. Thus it is more rational for the professor to seek to contribute to the general health of the community than to seek a competitive advantage within it. The point here is simply that since the richness of our individual experience depends upon the richness of the experience of others with whom we associate, the growth of our good is a function not primarily of competitive advantage but of communal well-being. I have not focused on the economic advantages of the communal approach, but these are not lacking. The same sum of money can accomplish more if its use is planned with a shared sense of the diverse needs of the community. Further, the institution as a whole is likely to increase its resources more if a communal spirit prevails. This trivial illustration can be magnified by reference to a comparison between German and British industry in the years since World War II. In Germany a more communal spirit prevailed between capital and labor and both have profited. In Britain the mood has been competitive and confrontational, and the British economy has suffered. A realistic economy theory needs to take account of our normal sense of being parts of a larger whole whose welfare is important rather than treating us as self-enclosed individuals whose relations to others are primarily competitive. When economics is in service to community, trade-off thinking can be replaced by both-and thinking. The model of competition has dangerous effects in other ways as well. It is expressed in the important role played by the idea of the trade-off. The assumption is that if individually or collectively we satisfy one desire, this will typically be at the expense of satisfying another. It is often argued, for example, that if we satisfy our desire for a clean and healthful environment, we must pay a price in terms of fewer goods and more unemployment. No one supposes that such a competitive relationship exists between all the goods we desire. Arthur Okun, for example, notes that an increase in equality of opportunity for all can contribute to an increase in efficiency of the economic system. There is no trade-off there. But the basic economic model encourages us to think of tradeoff relations as primary and normal. In general, he insists, approximation of equality can only be obtained at the expense of decrease in efficiency. But we will look primarily for ways in which both desirable variables can be increased in mutually supportive fashion rather than quickly settling for the trade-off. For example, we will challenge the easy assumption that the goals urged by environmentalists can only be attained at the expense of shortage of goods and unemployment. Amory Lovins has argued in detail that an environmentally desirable energy policy will also employ more persons in more desirable ways and produce as much usable power as we need. It may also turn out that more policies can be devised to increase equality in ways that even increase the production of material goods. We have begun to speak of a world community, and there is an emerging sense of co-humanity with all people. One motivation for the limited aid that is now made available by the industrialized nations to the poorer ones is this sense of a global community. Economists may well say that any such sense of community is too weak to enter into their picture of how individuals and nations operate. But they need to recognize that the model they use works against the strengthening of this community. Since every model helps to shape the events it intends to describe and predict, it is important for the economic model to encourage the growth of the sense of world community. Our existing experiences, and even more our destinies. A model of human reality that cannot express this fundamental fact is too abstract and too distorting to be acceptable as a guide to economic behavior. The nation-state system can evolve into multipolar world that is a community of communities of communities. Increasingly throughout the world people are hoping for a different kind of order, one based on multiple poles of influence rather than a single pole of influence. In the words of John B. Indeed, they yearn for a world that is a community of community of communities rather than a world that dominated by Empire; riddled with war and the threat of nuclear war, poverty, deprivation, inequality, and disease. What is clear is that, if hopes for a post-imperial world are to be realized at all, foreign and domestic policies alike must be based in a worldview that values relational power over unilateral power. At least this is how those of us influenced by the relational perspective of Alfred North Whitehead see things. The Political Implications of Relational Power Economics and politics alone cannot solve the problem; a new kind of culture is needed. The culture exported from the so-called developed countries, which we are adopting unthinkingly is at the heart of the crisis. We never ask the question: This growing multinational culture must be destroyed because it leads to economic chaos,

increased social disparities, mass poverty and filthy affluence in coexistence, environmental degradation, and ultimately civil strife and war. The biggest intellectual and political challenge of our times is to articulate and demonstrate this new kind of development. Women invariably suffer more from unbalanced development and environmental degradation. Especially within families where basic needs are gathered, it is women who are left to fend for the family. The new development process will demand that women and men share equal power in society. The world is not an aggregate of information but rather a republic of stories. In the old paradigm, priorities are shaped by a mechanistic worldview that privileges whatever can be numbered, measured, and weighed; human beings are pressured to adapt to the terms set by their own creations. Macroeconomics, geopolitics, and capital are glorified. In the new paradigm, culture is given its true value. The movements of money and armies may receive close attention from politicians and media voices, but at ground-level, we care most about human stories, one life at a time. Art, Artists, and the Future "Growing up through the cracks of the broken worldview we call modernity are verdant green shoots we call stories" human stories built of words and images and feelings and connected threads of subjective experience. We see them everywhere, not only in film and literature, but in the daily lives of regular people telling their own stories about where they come from and what makes them happy or sad, about people they love and animals that make them laugh or weep. About what makes life meaningful. These are the messy, imperfect bursts of life that modernity views with suspicion.

**Chapter 7 : Process Theology As Political Theology by John B. Cobb Jr.**

*Process Theology as Political Theology responds to the challenge of providing a theological base for the Christian activist. Pastors, seminarians, and students will find it to be a stimulating evolutionary work, derived from the author's concern for the planet earth.*

In this philosophy God is not a casual adjunct introduced for reasons of religious apologetics, but is necessary for its overall coherence. Process theism is also significant for its challenge to classical theism, a challenge that may well further contemporary efforts at de-Hellenizing the Christian faith. Whitehead was particularly troubled by the problem of evil. If God wills or allows all that is, having the omnipotence to change whatever is, then He may be faulted for the evil that exists. Even if God permits our evil decisions for the sake of fostering human freedom, He could prevent or ameliorate their consequence. But need omnipotence be understood in this fashion? It cannot mean the monopoly of all power, for then we would have no power, and power is essential for freedom. Hartshorne argues that perfect power means all the power appropriate to a divinely perfect being that is consistently conceivable with creaturely power. If God does not compete with creatures for power, his power must be persuasive, not coercive. Instead of causes producing their effects, the effects produce themselves out of their causes, guided by the lures received from God. Without the ordering possibilities of divine persuasion, finite occasions would simply be random combinations of their causal pasts, quickly degenerating into chaos. The occasion freely modifies and actualizes the divine aim. This is its self-creativity. It is free from the causal determinism of the past insofar as it selectively appropriates from that past according to the divine aim, but it is also free from divine determinism insofar as it allows that aim to be modified by the past it appropriates. Now a plurality of free decisions, insofar as they are uncoordinated, will inevitably though not necessarily lead to conflict, which is the source of evil. Divine coordination prevents total chaos, but it can achieve total harmony only to the extent to which creaturely occasions freely actualize divine aims. On this view freedom is ontologically basic. It is not as if God can create some creatures with freedom and some without, for any lacking freedom would be merely intentional objects of the divine imagination, having no separate reality. In place of the traditional dualism of an uncreated creator and creatures that cannot create, all actualities are self-creative. Because each finite actuality requires a past to appropriate, there is an infinite chain of causal pasts. The world is seen as having no beginning. Hartshorne argues that the existence of the world, like God, is abstractly necessary, though the concrete character it assumes is contingent. For him the metaphysical principles which entail, among other things, the necessary existence of some world or other have no consistent alternative, and hence are determined by no one, not even God. He is not explicit on the point, but if the existence of God without a world is a valid metaphysical alternative, then God in determining the metaphysical principles would be in effect determining whether to create or not to create. But this is nontemporal decision, applicable to all times, including the infinite past. God as the perfect being is necessarily all-loving, but what God loves is dependent upon whatever there is to love. Far from being absolute and immutable, God is supremely relative, sensitively responding to every change in the world. Our actions thus contribute to the enrichment of the divine experience, and find their ultimate meaning in being cherished by God forever. This objection derives its force from the traditional axiom that the cause is superior to its effect, which implies a hierarchy of causes culminating in God as first cause. Thus God is supreme as the effect of the world as well as the ultimate source of all its final causes. John Cobb, in addition to writing some foundational studies, has explored some important ways in which process thought has enriched our understanding of, among other things, world religions, evolutionary biology, economics, ecology, and political theology. Daniel Day Williams has attempted the first full-scale process theology centered on the interpretation of love. Others have considered its implications for the doctrine of the Trinity. Catholic interest in process theology has been increasing since Vatican II, as the static categories of the natural and supernatural have given way to more dynamic, biblical categories. Teilhard de Chardin, faithful to the biblical witness, looks forward to the final consummation of all things in God; while Whitehead, attuned to the unending advance of creative freedom, insists that there is no one perfection capable of embracing all other perfections

within itself. God seeks the actualization of all perfections, each in due season. Joseph Bracken, SJ has sought to interpret Catholic theology in process terms, especially with respect to the Trinity as three persons in interaction. There has been particular interest in correlating Whitehead with St. Thomas Aquinas, as evidenced by recent work by James W. Felt, SJ, and Stephen T. Norris Clarke, SJ gives an excellent Catholic assessment of process theism in the book cited below. *God in Process Theism*. For process theism, God is both abstract and concrete, necessary and contingent, unchanging and changing, independent and dependent upon the world. These contrasting predicates can be applied to the same individual, provided they apply to diverse aspects: God is abstract, necessary, unchanging with respect to metaphysical attributes, but concrete, contingent, and changing in the experience of the world. Insofar as God is held to be radically simple, excluding all but nominal distinctions, this logic is inapplicable. But Whitehead agrees with Duns Scotus in affirming formal distinctions. As the subjective unity of a multiplicity of prehensions, God experiences many distinct objective data, but these prehensions are not separable because of the indivisible unity, even simplicity, of their subject. The use of formal distinctions grounded in prehensive unity obviates one need for analogy. Analogy would also be needed to speak about God if our experience were only sensory. Whitehead, however, defends our nonsensuous experience of divine purposing. In this he is reviving a version of Augustinian illumination, yet in a context that takes full cognizance of the role of efficient causality as developed in contemporary science. Nevertheless, the analogy of being plays a role in process thought: Because God is constantly being enriched by the experience of novel events in the world, many have assumed that the God of process theism must be finite. Although Whitehead holds all determinate being to be finite, God is by contrast infinitely becoming, constantly in process of determination. *A Trinitarian Cosmology* London and Toronto

**Chapter 8 : Process Theology as Political Theology**

*Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.*

After World War I, theology had reached a kind of equilibrium wherein the Protestants were constellated about the three giants, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich, and the Catholics were still operating under the auspices of the scholasticism evoked by Pope Leo XIII in 1879, when he called for a renewal of Thomism. These deficiencies were registered within the mainly academic context of European and North American theology through the increasing influence of the nineteenth-century "masters of suspicion," Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. In his unforgettable image of the "last man," Nietzsche had limned the outcome of the liberal democratic and socialist solutions to the political problem. This radical crisis of meaning and value was explored during the mid-20th century in a variety of Christian theologies: Philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose *Truth and Method* became required reading for theologians in the 1950s and 1960s, resumed the meditation of Martin Heidegger upon the crisis indicated by Nietzsche and formulated the issue as follows: Since all normative traditions have been rendered radically questionable, hermeneutics the auxiliary science of interpretation has become a universal issue. However, the challenge of hermeneutics to theology is usually diffused in one of two ways. In academic theology hermeneutics is trimmed down to conventional scholarly dimensions, whereafter theology is subjected to subdisciplines that divide up the data on Christian religion for ever more minute and critical study. Alternatively, hermeneutics may be subsumed within a transcendental-metaphysical reflection as in Rahner or a wholly ontological reflection as in process theology. These responses to the issue of a universal hermeneutic as formulated by Gadamer—fragmenting on the one hand, and totalizing on the other—bore the earmarks of that sort of interpretation that Marx, in his famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, said needed to be supplanted by practice. It became a real question whether theology was anything more than either a species of intellectual history or an academically domesticated speculation without any practical bearing or importance. During the 1950s and 1960s this question became inescapable. At the same time a common awareness was starting to emerge of the spiritual impoverishment arising from what were cynically labeled state-controlled monopolies in the East and monopoly-controlled states in the West. In the developing nations, dissatisfaction spread at the popular, grass-roots level in opposition to the dependence engendered by colonialist and imperialist policies of advanced industrial societies. In brief, the stage was set for theology to shift from hermeneutical methods of mediating Christianity with contemporary cultures to new approaches known as political or liberation theologies. By it was already manifest that there were two distinct originating points for political theology: It is clear that both styles of theology are seeking to come to terms with the universal hermeneutic problem as portrayed by Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur. The leading exponents of political theology in Europe, the German Catholic J. There is no split between change and interpretation: Human and even revolutionary change is at root interpretative; and, especially when it comes to the reality of God, interpretation is primarily a matter of practical reorientation conversion and concrete action transformation of individual and collective life. Liberation theologies emanate less from the academic superstructure than from basic communities at the popular level. In liberation theology the experiences of political and social oppression and of massive poverty have provoked a reading of the Bible and a celebration of ecclesial sacraments that are immediately political in the sense of being directly linked to the issue of emancipation from "structural" sin. Bourgeois social, political, and economic theories do not adequately explain the institutionalized schemes of recurrence that define the Latin American experience of oppression. This approach places liberation theologians under a double constraint since, on the one hand, genuine evangelical experience of God and faith in Jesus Christ Liberator is for them the wellspring and motive for social critique and action in a way that neither Marx nor Lenin could envisage, and, on the other hand, the theoretical weaknesses in Marxist analysis and practice sometimes threaten liberation theology with collapse back into the posture of the secularist dialectic of enlightenment. Added to this, liberal democratic

and orthodox Christian misunderstanding and opposition perhaps unwittingly force the practitioners of liberation theology into increasing partisanship with secularist Marxist-Leninists. Both European political theology and Latin American liberation theology have the Marxist orientation toward overcoming specifically bourgeois biases. In other advanced industrial countries like the United States and Canada, the Marxist analysis of structural sin in terms of class yields to three other emphases: Like the liberation theologies of Latin America, each of these orientations struggles with the ambivalence between its roots in Christian religious experience and the terms of power and legitimacy as these terms were first formulated by secularist Enlightenment thinkers. Miscomprehension and unfavorable criticism force them, too, into stances ever more indistinguishable from their secularist counterparts. But then, reactions to such extremes among their cohorts have also led to recoveries and discoveries of Christian meanings and values. Another increasingly prominent aspect of political theology is being explored by Ernest Fortin and James V. Schall, students of political philosopher Leo Strauss — Straussians bring out the tension between Christianity and liberal and socialist democracies. They tend to render Christianity as utterly apolitical; as a result, whereas liberation theology tends to flatten out into Marxism, Straussian political theory is perhaps too content with Platonic or Aristotelian reasons for espousing liberal democracy at the cost of solidarity with the poor. The work of political scientist Eric Voegelin —, as demonstrated by his multivolume *Order and History* —, makes the tension of human existence — lived out in "the in-between" "metaxy" as expressed paradigmatically in noetic and pneumatic differentiations of consciousness — normative for practical and political thought and action. Lonergan, by demanding that the criteria of authentic performance in science, in scholarship, and in ordinary living be reconnected with the criteria for being authentically human thematized in his notions of religious, moral, and intellectual conversion, has given political theologians a useful framework for the mediation of saving meaning and value in history. His stance toward the future in the light of the past, along with his germinal but still little-known work in economics, Lamb suggests, provides Christians with the first genuine alternative to either Marxist or liberal democratic political and economic theory. Whatever may be the fate of political theology as we know it, its reintegration of earlier forms of theology — emphasizing retrieval of past meaning and doctrinal and systematic restatement — into foundational, practical, and political questions about the right way to live can only be salutary for the practice of faith in society both now and in the future. Many contemporary theologians believe that political theology is, in fact, the chief symptom and response to the paradigm change theology is undergoing. *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*. Translated by David Smith. New York, Translated by Robert Wilson and John Bowden. Uses themes from critical social theory as transposed into the perspective of the interaction between Father and Son in the crucifixion. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra B. An extended commentary on the intrinsic nexus between language and life-form as the key to initiating a reflection upon and transformation of life-practice and to our becoming subjects instead of objects of history. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. Translated and edited by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Probably the classic text embodying the demarche of liberation hermeneutics, it correlates biblical texts on emancipation with the contemporary social situation as brought to light through Marxist social theory. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. A semiannual journal devoted to feminist research, discussion, and dialogue in all areas of religious studies, with articles regularly by all the leading theorists as well as newcomers. *New Woman, New Earth*. Here one of the most solid theorists not only retrieves many feminist motifs centrally important to secular feminism but goes on to use them to show how the concerns of feminist social critique are of intrinsic value to other emphases related to racism, ecology, and so forth. *In Memory of Her: Black Political Theology* West, Cornel. *An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*. A brilliant work from the second generation of black theologians that brings the emancipatory thrust of black theology into dialogue with a large number of influential "discourses," including those of Jacques Derrida. *A Documentary History*, — An excellent "background" with all the most influential statements and figures, along with bibliography. *Miscellaneous Works* Fiorenza, Francis S. *An Inquiry into Their Fundamental Meaning. Toward a Theology of Social Transformation*. A difficult yet rewarding look at the possibilities of a comprehensive, differentiated, yet committed framework for the tasks articulated by Metz, the Latin Americans, and the critical social theorists

to be found in the thought of Bernard Williams. *A Study of Human Understanding* Reprint, San Francisco, 1980. The best elucidation to date of the foundations of theology as practical and political in a differentiated society. *Natural Right and History*. The best available account of the moral and political revolution from the classic tradition of natural right and natural law to the modern horizon of natural and human rights, along with its profound ambiguities. *Six Essays* by Leo Strauss. Edited by Hilail Gildin. *Order and History*, vol. 1. Baton Rouge, La. 1975. *God of the Oppressed*. The *Desire of Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology*. Ellis, Marc, and Otto Maduro, eds. *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion*: New York and London, 1986.

## Chapter 9 : Process Theology | [theinnatdunvilla.com](http://theinnatdunvilla.com)

*Process theology is a type of theology developed from Alfred North Whitehead's () process philosophy, most notably by Charles Hartshorne () and John B. Cobb (b. ). Process theology and process philosophy are collectively referred to as "process thought".*